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CRITICAL COMMENTARY

AND

PARAPHRASE

ON THE

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT

AND THE

A P O C R Y P H A.

BY

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A
COMMENTARY
ON THE
BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

VOL. II.

JUDGES, RUTH,
I. SAMUEL,
II. SAMUEL,
I. KINGS,

II. KINGS,
I. CHRONICLES,
II. CHRONICLES,
EZRA,

NEHEMIAH,
ESTHER,
JOB,
PSALMS.

BY THE

RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD,

DR. SYMON PATRICK,

LORD BISHOP OF ELY.

THE BOOK OF J U D G E S.

THIS book is called by the name of SHOPHETIM, or JUDGES, because it treats principally of the great things done by those illustrious persons, who were raised up by God, upon special occasions, after the death of Joshua, till the time of making a king, to judge, that is, to rule the people of Israel, and to deliver them from their oppressions. It consists of two parts; the one containing the history of the Judges, from Othniel to Samson, which ends with the sixteenth chapter (the history of the last two Judges, Eli and Samuel, being not recorded here, but in the following book); the other containing several memorable actions, which were performed in or about the time of the Judges; with which the holy writer would not interrupt their history, but reserved them to be related by themselves in the conclusion, viz. in the seventeenth and the following chapters, unto the end of the book.

It is but conjectured who was the writer of it. Some think Ezra; but it is more probable the prophet Samuel, who was the last of the judges; and, by the direction of God, brought down their history unto his own days, when they desired a king to be set over them. The Talmudists, in Bava Bathra (cap. 1) are of this opinion; which Kimchi, Abarbinel, and other great authors follow. And, indeed, there is reason to think, that he who wrote the conclusion of the book of Joshua was the writer of this book also; in the second chapter of which he inserts part of that which is written there. And it is manifest it was written before the second book of Samuel, where mention is made of a passage in this book; which would not have been so commonly known, if it had not been published here, 2 Sam. xi. 21, out of Judges ix. 53. David, also, in Ps. lxxviii. 7, 8, seems to allude unto what we read in the song of Deborah, v. 4 (see Du Pin). Certain it is, it was written before David's reign; for the Jebusites were possessed of Jerusalem when this author lived (ver. 21 of the first chapter), who were driven out of it by David (2 Sam. v. 6), and therefore this book was written before that; and is of wonderful use, Procopius Gazæus observes, to represent unto us the mighty power of true religion to make a nation happy, and the dismal calamities which impiety brings upon it. And therefore, saith he, St. Paul thought fit to propound a great many examples to us out of this very book; such as Gideon, and Barak, and Samson, and Jephthah, who did marvellous things by the power of faith.

CHAPTER I.

1 *The acts of Judah and Simeon.* 4 *Adoni-bezek justly requited.* 8 *Jerusalem taken.* 10 *Hebron taken.* 11 *Othniel hath Achsah to wife for taking of Debir.* 16 *The Kenites dwell in Judah.* 17 *Hormah, Gaza, Askelon and Ekron taken.* 21 *The acts of Benjamin.* 22 *Of the house of Joseph, who take Beth-el.* 30 *Of Zebulun.* 31 *Of Asher.* 33 *Of Naphtali.* 34 *Of Dan.*

I Now after the death of Joshua it came to pass, that the children of Israel asked the Lord,

saying, Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them?

CHAP. I.

Ver. 1. *Now after the death of Joshua*] And of Eleazar, it is probable (for this book gives an account of what followed after those things that are mentioned in the foregoing), but how long after cannot be certainly determined: but we have reason to think it was not till they were multiplied so much, as to be able to people more of the country than they had yet in possession.

The children of Israel] There was no person appointed by Joshua to succeed him in the government, as he was appointed by Moses to be his successor;

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but the government was left in the hand of the elders. For it is a mere fiction which we meet withal in the Samaritan Chronicle, that at the last assembly (mentioned Joshua xxiv.) he chose twelve of the chief of the tribes, and cast lots which of them should hold his place when he died; and that the lot fell upon one whose name was Abel, and his nephew; to whom he assigned his authority, and set a crown upon his head (see Hottinger, in his *Smegma Orientale*, cap. 8, p. 522).

Asked the Lord,] Inquired of him by *urim* and *thummim*, as the manner was in all cases that concerned the whole congregation of Israel. For which

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2 And the LORD said, Judah shall go up: behold, I have delivered the land into his hand.

3 And Judah said unto Simeon his brother, Come up with me into my lot, that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I likewise will go with thee into thy lot. So Simeon went with him.

4 And Judah went up; and the LORD delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into

end, it is to be supposed, that some who represented the body of the people (their elders, perhaps, or heads of their tribes) were sent to Shiloh, where the sanctuary was, and desired Phinehas the high-priest to represent their case to God, and beseech his directions. Here the Jews raise a question, why we never read that Joshua, in all his wars, consulted God by the oracle, but the elders immediately after his death did. To this they give several answers (see Numb. xxvii. 21).

Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them?] They being increased, as I said, to such a number, that they were to people more of the country; and beginning to be straitened for want of room, thought of enlarging their possessions; but would not adventure without God's approbation and direction to do anything; and therefore desired he would tell them who should make the first attempt; that the rest, being encouraged by their success (of which they did not doubt, if they had his warrant for what they did), might have the like. For it is evident by these words, "go up for us," that all the tribes on this side Jordan were concerned in this matter.

Ver. 2. *Judah*] i. e. The tribe of Judah, who were very populous, and no less valiant.

Shall go up:] And assault the mountainous country, which was the lot of this tribe. According to the prophecy of Jacob, Gen. xlix. 9, where, comparing Judah to a lion's whelp, he saith, "From the prey, my son, thou art gone up."

I have delivered the land into his hand.] That is, all the land belonging to their lot. By this it seems plain, that the answer by *urim* and *thummim* was given by a voice which uttered these words. Here Abarbanel endeavours to give satisfaction to the question before mentioned, why Joshua did not inquire in this manner, though it be expressly said (Numb. xxvii. 21), that "he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, and ask counsel of the Lord, after the judgment of *urim*." He thinks he did so all the time after that, till Moses's death, to show he was made the leader of God's people, for none but such could inquire by *urim*: but, after his death, he was endued with the spirit of prophecy, as Moses was, and so had no need to inquire in that manner, being immediately directed by God in his proceedings. But, after his death, there being none endued with the prophetic spirit, the children of Israel were constrained to have resort to this oracle. Which is an account very much below the judgment of so great a man; for Moses, being a prophet, did frequently ask counsel of God at the sanctuary, which was the same as if he had inquired by *urim*. Therefore the true answer is, that Joshua did thus inquire of the Lord in the case of Achan: and it is highly probable he did the same in the management of his war, and other great occasions, though it be not expressly mentioned in so many words.

Ver. 3. *Judah said unto Simeon his brother,*] They were brethren by the same father and mother; and also nearly joined in their situation, the lot of the tribe of Simeon being taken out of that of Judah (Josh. xix. 9).

their hand: and they slew of them in Bezek ten thousand men.

5 And they found Adoni-bezek in Bezek: and they fought against him, and they slew the Canaanites and the Perizzites.

6 But Adoni-bezek fled; and they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes.

7 And Adoni-bezek said, Threescore and ten

Come up with me into my lot,—against the Canaanites;] Which people, with the Perizzites (as is further declared in the next verse), still possessed a considerable part of the lot which fell to Judah.

I likewise will go with thee into thy lot.] To drive them out of that part of the country which was the portion of Simeon.

So Simeon went with him.] They joined their forces together in this expedition, under the conduct, no doubt, of some eminent leader. And who so fit as Caleb! who, though an old man, was full of vigour, and fit for war (as he himself declared not long ago, Josh. xiv. 10, 11), and had not yet got possession (as appears by the sequel) of the portion which, by God's commandment, was assigned him.

Ver. 4. *Judah went up:*] They were the principal persons concerned in this expedition, and therefore only mentioned, though the children of Simeon also went up with them.

The Lord delivered] We meet with no such religious expression (which occurs often here in these holy books) in any heathen writer.

The Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand.] Though most of the people properly called Canaanites dwelt by the Mediterranean Sea, yet many of them were scattered up and down in other parts of the country (as I observed upon Numb. xiv. ult.), and particularly in these mountains and woody places, where the Perizzites dwelt (see Josh. xvii. 15, 16).

They slew of them in Bezek ten thousand men.] In the country near to Bezek, which was a city in the tribe of Judah, not far, some think, from Bethlehem. Here they chose to make their rendezvous (as we now speak) of their forces, and wait to receive the children of Judah, that, if they were worsted, they might easily find a strong place of retreat.

Ver. 5. *They found Adoni-bezek in Bezek.*] He was the king, or lord of this place, as his name imports, whom they surprised, as the word *found* signifies (see Bochart. Hieroz. par. i. lib. ii. cap. 21), by a sudden assault upon this city, whither he seems to have fled when he had lost the field. Theodoret makes this king the same with Adonizedek (mentioned in Josh. x.), but as their names are different, so he was king of Jerusalem, and this of Bezek, where he was overcome; but the former in Gibeon, who was killed also with the sword, and then hanged on a tree; but this had only his thumbs and toes cut off, and so brought to Jerusalem, where he died.

They fought against him,] Took the city wherein he thought to have defended himself, and the remainder of his army, which escaped hither.

They slew the Canaanites and the Perizzites.] Put all the people of those two nations, whom they found there, to the sword.

Ver. 6. *Adoni-bezek fled:*] He made his escape.

They pursued after him, and caught him,] They found which way he went, and pursued him so close, that they overtook him before he could get to the strong fortress of the Jebusites; where, it is likely, he hoped to secure himself.

Cut off his thumbs and his great toes.] That he might be made incapable of war hereafter, being un-

kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered *their meat* under my table: as I have done, so God hath required me. And they brought him to Jerusalem, and there he died.

8 Now the children of Judah had fought against Jerusalem, and had taken it, and smitten it with the edge of the sword, and set the city on fire.

9 ¶ And afterward the children of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites, that dwelt in the mountain, and in the south, and in the valley.

10 And Judah went against the Canaanites that dwelt in Hebron: (now the name of Hebron

before was Kirjath-arba:) and they slew Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai.

11 And from thence he went against the inhabitants of Debir: and the name of Debir before was Kirjath-sepher:

12 And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjath-sepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife.

13 And Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it: and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife.

14 And it came to pass, when she came to him, that she moved him to ask of her father a field: and she lighted from off her ass; and Caleb said unto her, What wilt thou?

able to handle arms, by reason of the loss of his thumbs; or to run swiftly (which was a noble quality in a warrior), by the loss of his great toes. This had been his own practice, it appears by his confession in the next verse, which made them think it reasonable to serve him in his kind.

Ver. 7. *Adoni-bezek said, Threescore and ten kings.*] In those days the chief persons in every city had a kingly power: as we learn from the history of Joshua, who found many kings in Canaan when he conquered it. And seventy such petty princes Adoni-bezek had subdued: who were not kings of so many several cities, but some of them, it is likely, kings of the same place, who successively opposed him, and were dethroned by him.

Gathered their meat under my table.] He was proud and insolent, as well as cruel, treating those kings whom he conquered as if they had been dogs.

As I have done, so God hath required me.] Justice was defined by the Pythagoreans to be τὸ ἀρεσκονόσος, "to make others feel the hurt they had done, by their suffering the like punishment." Which Harmanopolus calls τανατάσεια, "suffering the very same;" as Grotius notes, lib. ii. De Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 20, n. 32. Now, Adoni-bezek's acknowledgment of God's justice in this punishment, hath made some think he was a penitent, and became a convert to the true religion; for he speaks of God in the singular number, and not of the gods, as the heathen manner was; which might possibly be the reason why they spared his life, and did not kill him. Certain it is, his pride and arrogance was very much humbled by his punishment, which extorted this confession from him. For it carried in it (as Mr. Mede observes on these words) the very stamp and print of the sin for which it was inflicted.

They brought him to Jerusalem.] Which, as it follows in the next verse, was now in the possession of the children of Judah: though the Jews think they had not yet taken the city; but having begirt it, they brought him prisoner thither, and he died in the time of the siege.

There he died.] After he had lived some time, perhaps, to perfect his repentance.

Ver. 8. *Now the children of Judah had fought against Jerusalem, and had taken it.*] We do not read of its being taken by Joshua, though it seems to me highly probable, that when he took the king of Jerusalem, he also took his city, and did to it as he did to the rest of the cities of those kings, mentioned Josh. x. 3, 23. But when he was gone to conquer other parts of the country, it is likely the old inhabitants returned again and took possession of it; for the land was not then divided among the Israelites: after which, this city falling in part to the share of Judah, they dis-

possessed the Jebusites that dwelt there of all but the strong fortress on the top of Mount Sion, which held out till the days of David (see upon Josh. x. 1, and xv. 63).

Set the city on fire.] As Joshua had done to Jericho, Ai, and Hazor: this being a city, it is probable, deeply infected with idolatry; from which they thought fit entirely to purge it before they rebuilt it.

Ver. 9. *The children of Judah went down.*] From Jerusalem (I suppose) which stood high.

To fight against the Canaanites, that dwelt in the mountain.] There were several mountains round about Jerusalem (Ps. cxxv. 2), and we often read of the mountains of Judah, which were possessed, it seems, by the old inhabitants till after the death of Joshua.

The south.] Towards the wilderness of Paran.

The valley.] Or the flat country about those mountains, some of which are mentioned in the following verses.

Ver. 10. *Judah went against the Canaanites that dwelt in Hebron.*] This shows the old inhabitants of the country had returned to this place after it had been destroyed by Joshua, as we read it was, Josh. x. 36, 37. Who were now again expelled by the children of Judah after his death, this city being in their lot.

The name of Hebron before was Kirjath-arba.] As much as to say, the city of Arba, who was the father of Anak (see Josh. xiv. ult. xv. 13).

They slew Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai.] These were the three sons of Anak, as we read there, Josh. xv. 14, where it is said that Caleb drove them out from thence: for he was the conductor of the children of Israel in this expedition (as I observed upon ver. 3), and had great reason to go up against this city, because this part of the country was given to him by a particular direction of God (Josh. xiv. 13, 14, xv. 13). But he did not conquer it till after the death of Joshua, as this place shows us.

Ver. 11. *Debir.*] Another city which had been taken by Joshua in the beginning of the war (Josh. x. 38, 39); but, while he was gone to bring under other parts of the country, was reinhabited by the Canaanites, who were not expelled till after Joshua's death: when Caleb (to whom it was given, together with Hebron, for his portion, Josh. xv. 15), drove them out again and possessed himself of it.

Ver. 12. *Caleb said.*] Hence it still appears that the children of Judah fought under the conduct of Caleb as their general.

He that smiteth Kirjath-sepher—to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife.] This, and the three following verses, 13—15, have been explained upon Josh. xv. 16, &c., where the portion of Judah being

15 And she said unto him, Give me a blessing: for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the nether springs.

16 ¶ And the children of the Kenite, Moses' father in law, went up out of the city of palm trees with the children of Judah into the wilderness of Judah, which *lieth* in the south of Arad; and they went and dwelt among the people.

17 And Judah went with Simeon his brother, and they slew the Canaanites that inhabited Zephath, and utterly destroyed it. And the name of the city was called Hormah.

18 Also Judah took Gaza with the coast

thereof, and Askelon with the coast thereof, and Ekron with the coast thereof.

19 And the LORD was with Judah; and he drove out *the inhabitants* of the mountain; but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron.

20 And they gave Hebron unto Caleb, as Moses said: and he expelled thence the three sons of Anak.

21 And the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem unto this day.

22 ¶ And the house of Joseph, they also went

described, there is a particular mention of what was given to Caleb, and how he disposed of it. Which relation seems to have been taken out of this book, and inserted there by the authority of Ezra, for the fuller illustration of all that belonged to that tribe, whether by lot or peculiar donation before the division of the land. For any one may see that the description of Judah's lot is entirely coherent (as Huetius truly observes), if all between the twelfth and the twentieth verses were left out. And that all things here mentioned were not done till after the death of Joshua, is so evident, by the narration which is here made of all that fell out after that time, as to leave no doubt of it.

Ver. 16. *The children of the Kenite, Moses' father in law.*] See Numb. x. 29, where Hobab, the son of Jethro, was invited by Moses to accompany him into the land of Canaan, and in all probability accepted the invitation, as I there observed.

Went up out of the city of palm trees.] That is, Jericho, which was in a flat country (see Deut. xxxiv. 3). Here it seems they were pleased to settle themselves at their first coming into Canaan, where Moses promised, that whatsoever goodness God should show to the Israelites, they should have their share in it: and there was no sweeter place in that country, than this about Jericho, in the territory of which they dwelt, for the city itself was destroyed.

With the children of Judah.] Admiring the courage and success of this tribe, they seem to have contracted a particular friendship with them, and to have accompanied them in this expedition into the high country.

Into the wilderness of Judah, which lieth in the south of Arad.] In the southern part of the land of Canaan, where Arad was (Numb. xxi. 1), which, as Procopius Gazæus here observes, was a city of the Amorites, near to the wilderness of Kadesh, which is Paran: in his time it was a village four miles from Malaathon: but twenty from Hebron.

Dwelt among the people.] They removed from the city of palm-trees, which was in the tribe of Benjamin, and settled themselves among the people of Judah. Yet not all of them; for some went into the northern parts among the tribe of Naphtali, as appears from iv. 10, 11. What should be the reason of their forsaking so pleasant a place, as that where they were first settled, is but conjectured. Some think it was the love of solitariness and retirement; which they gather from Jer. xxxv. 6, &c. Or, as I said, out of their great affection to the children of Judah; under whose protection they hoped for greater safety than in other places.

Ver. 17. *Judah went with Simeon his brother.*] Having finished, as far as they were able, the conquest of what belonged to the tribe of Judah, they went to assist the Simeonites, according to their mutual engagement (ver. 3).

Zephath.] Some think this was the name both of a

city and of a small region; but whereabouts it was situated is not known.

The city was called Hormah.] From the utter destruction before mentioned. Some think this was the same place with that mentioned Numb. xxi. 2, 3. But there he speaks of more cities that were laid waste; here but of one.

Ver. 18.] These three cities were in the land of the Philistines, upon the sea-coast; which the Israelites did not hold long, before the Philistines recovered them again. For the Israelites contenting themselves with taking these cities, without destroying the people (as they did in other places, and ought to have done here), and only making them tributaries, it was not hard for them to regain their liberty.

Ver. 19. *The Lord was with Judah.*] The Targum here uses the same language, which we find all along in the book of Joshua, when he speaks of God's presence with him (see Josh. xiv. 12) "And the Word of the Lord helped the house of Judah."

He drove out the inhabitants of the mountain.] God gave them such success wherever they went, that it ought to have encouraged them to go on with their enterprise; which they did not, as the following words tell us. This mountain, it is very likely, was Mons Casius, which was near to Gaza.

But could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron.] Here now the fountain of all the ensuing evils which befell the Israelites begins to be opened. In that, either through sloth, or covetousness, or distrust of God's power, or more lenity than the law of Moses allowed, they did not attempt those people that were stronger than ordinary; or, being unfaithful to God, failed in their attempt; or, having some success, only brought them under tribute. And, it is most likely, that they were so affrighted at the iron chariots (which were in use in the plain country, though not in the mountains,) that they were quite disheartened; and did not remember what God had promised them (ver. 2 of this chapter), and how undauntedly Joshua set upon those that came thus dreadfully appointed (Josh. xi. 4, 6). Concerning these chariots, see Josh. xvii. 16, 18, where I have observed they are frequently mentioned in profane authors. And see Dilherrus, tom. i. Disput. Academ. p. 129.

Ver. 20.] Thus ends the account of the wars of the tribe of Judah: which concludes with a repetition of what part in their country was given to Caleb; because he was their leader (as I have often said), and this was his reward, viz. the country about Hebron; the city itself belonging to the Levites.

Ver. 21. *Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem.*] This tribe, and that of Judah, had an interest in Jerusalem: but though both of them joined together, they could not drive the Jebusites out of the south part of it, where they had

up against Beth-el; and the Lord *was* with them.

23 And the house of Joseph sent to descry Beth-el. (Now the name of the city before *was* Luz.)

24 And the spies saw a man come forth out of the city, and they said unto him, Shew us, we pray thee, the entrance into the city, and we will shew thee mercy.

25 And when he shewed them the entrance into the city, they smote the city with the edge of the sword; but they let go the man and all his family.

26 And the man went into the land of the

a strong fortress upon Mount Sion (see Josh. xv. 63). Nay, of that part of the city which belonged to Judah, they were not dispossessed till the forenamed expedition.

The Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin.] That is, they keep possession of that fortress, from which they were not able to drive them; but they dwelt there in the days when Samuel wrote this book, being not expelled till the reign of David. And they seem also to have dwelt with the Benjamites in that part of the city belonging to them; which though conquered, yet the inhabitants were not destroyed, but only brought under tribute. For this was very agreeable to the lazy and covetous humour which now began to prevail in Israel.

Ver. 22. *The house of Joseph,*] viz. The tribe of Ephraim (Josh. xvi. 1).

They also went up against Beth-el:] They, following the example of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin, endeavoured to enlarge their border by taking Beth-el.

The Lord was with them.] As the success demonstrated. The Targum bath it (as before, ver. 19), "The Word of the Lord was their helper."

Ver. 23. *The house of Joseph sent to descry Beth-el.*] They proceeded very cautiously; sending spies (as we read in the next verse) to view the strength of the place, and to discover how it might be best approached.

Luz] See Gen. xxviii. 19; Josh. xvi. 2.

Ver. 24. *The spies saw a man come forth out of the city,*] Whom they apprehended, as he passed by the place where they lay to make their observations, and get intelligence.

Shew us, we pray thee, the entrance into the city.] Where it may be most easily entered. For they did not inquire the way to the gate, which was common and plain enough; but for the weakest part, where the walls were lowest, or most out of repair, or had the least guard. Or, they desired him, perhaps, to show them some private way to get into it, which none knew but the inhabitants.

We will shew thee mercy.] As they spake civilly and gently to him when they apprehended him, so they make him a promise of kind usage, when they got into the city, by sparing his life, and all belonging to him, as they did Rahab and her family: which, it is highly probable, he begged of them, being fallen into their hands; and it was not unlawful for them to grant, if he changed his religion, or left the country, as we find he afterward did.

Ver. 25. *When he shewed them the entrance into the city,*] Notice, I suppose, was immediately sent to the army, which lay not far off.

They smote the city] Came upon them on a sudden, and assaulted them where they least expected it; so that they found little resistance.

But they let go the man and all his family.] Did

Hittites, and built a city, and called the name thereof Luz: which is the name thereof unto this day.

27 ¶ Neither did Manasseh drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shean and her towns, nor Taanach and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Ibleam and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns: but the Canaanites would dwell in that land.

28 And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them out.

29 ¶ Neither did Ephraim drive out the Ca-

them no harm; but gave them their liberty, as well as lives, to go whither they pleased.

Ver. 26. *The man went into the land of the Hittites,*] A colony of this nation, I suppose, had planted themselves heretofore in some of the neighbouring countries, Syria, or Arabia, or some of those that fled upon Joshua's invading the land, settled themselves there. To whom this man thought good to go with his family, being, perhaps, of the same nation.

Built a city,] Which is an argument, that the children of Ephraim were so kind as to dismiss him and his family, with all their goods and estate.

Called the name thereof Luz:] To preserve the memory of the place from whence he came. The founders of cities are mentioned with honour by all authors; and this seems to be so intended.

Unto this day.] It kept this name to the time of the writing of this book, and long after. For it seems to be the same city mentioned by Josephus in Arabia (not far from Judea), which he calls Λούσσα (lib. xiv. Antig. cap. 2). And Bochartus observes, that this place had its name originally from the great plenty of almonds growing there; from whence also it may be Lusitania had its name (lib. i. Canaan, cap. 35).

Ver. 27. *Neither did Manasseh*] He speaks of that part of this tribe which was seated on this side Jordan.

Drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shean, &c.] Hitherto several of the Israelites had showed some valour; and expelled some of the Canaanites. But now he begins to show how cowardly others of them were; for these do not seem to have attempted any thing against the places here mentioned, or anywhere else. Beth-shean was a city not far from Jordan. See Josh. xvi. 11, where the rest of the cities here named in this verse are mentioned.

But the Canaanites would dwell in that land.] Not only in the cities, where they might have been straitened and kept under, but in the towns and villages, where they had the same liberties with the Israelites, and perhaps held some of the ground belonging to them. For so some think the word *dwell* signifies; that they enjoyed all the benefits that any others had. And this they demanded as their right; which the Hebrew word *jaal* imports; a settled resolution not to quit that land (see Josh. xvii. 12).

Ver. 28.] Herein they acted contrary to the law, whereby they were enjoined to destroy them, when they were able. And being strong enough to make them tributaries, they might, no doubt, have utterly expelled them out of the land. But they found more profit in making them pay tribute; and it cost them less pains to bring them into some subjection, than to destroy them. And this seems to be here noted, as the common fault of all the children of Israel, that, when they grew strong, they did not use their power to destroy or expel the Canaanites: but let them live quietly under them, upon payment of tribute.

naanites that dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them.

30 ¶ Neither did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, nor the inhabitants of Nahalol; but the Canaanites dwelt among them, and became tributaries.

31 ¶ Neither did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Accho, nor the inhabitants of Zidon, nor of Ahlab, nor of Achzib, nor of Helbah, nor of Aphik, nor of Rehob:

32 But the Asherites dwelt among the Ca-

naanites, the inhabitants of the land: for they did not drive them out.

33 ¶ Neither did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh, nor the inhabitants of Beth-anath; but he dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: nevertheless the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh and of Beth-anath became tributaries unto them.

34 And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain: for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley:

Ver. 29. *Neither did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer;*] See Josh. xvi. 10. It is very probable, they did not so much as exact a tribute from them (which is not here mentioned), but made a covenant of friendship with them; which was still a higher crime. And this the next words seem to import.

But the Canaanites dwelt—among them.] Which is a form of speech not used in the foregoing exceptions. And to dwell among a people signifies a quiet settlement, with the enjoyment of all their rights. As in 2 Kings iv. 13, when Elisha offered the Shunammite to do her any kindness at court, she expresses herself satisfied with her condition, in these words, "I dwell among my own people."

Ver. 30. *Neither did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, nor—Nahalol;*] Which was the greater crime, because this last city was ἀποσπασμένη Ἀεφραΐταις, "one of those that were separated for the Levites," as Eusebius speaks (see Josh. xxi. 35). Yet they did more than the Ephraimites; for though they let them dwell among them, they made them pay a tribute.

But the Canaanites—became tributaries.] They troubled themselves no further than to make them pay a tribute to them; when they might, with a little more pains, have expelled them. This laziness, or covetousness, or whatsoever it was that made them act in this manner, brought them into a dangerous snare.

Ver. 31. *Neither did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Accho,*] A city near the Mediterranean Sea, called by Strabo and others Ace; and afterward Ptolemais, as Eusebius saith, who observes, that the Asherites did not drive out the Ἀλλοφύλους from hence. Procopius saith the same.

Zidon,] Which every one knows was another great city upon the same sea.

Ahlab, nor of Achzib.] We find no mention of the former of these elsewhere; but the latter is in Josh. xix. 29, and was called in aftertimes *Ecdippa*, as Eusebius relates.

Nor of Helbah, nor of Aphik, nor of Rehob.] The two latter of these we read of in Josh. xix. 28, 30, but nothing of the former, unless it be the same with Helkath, mentioned there, ver. 25.

Ver. 32.] They seem to have entered into a league of friendship with the Canaanites; so that they were mixed with them as if they had been the same nation, which was most strictly forbidden by the law of Moses: for they did not so much as make them tributaries; but the Asherites seem to have submitted to the basest condition of all the other tribes: for it is not said, as of the other tribes, that the people dwelt among the Asherites; but that the Asherites dwelt among them. As if the Canaanites remained still the lords of that country, and the Asherites were only permitted to live among them.

Ver. 33. *Neither did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh, nor—Beth-anath;*] Both these

cities are mentioned as in the lot of Naphtali, Josh. xix. 38.

But he dwelt among the Canaanites,] Imitating the Asherites, in letting the old inhabitants live promiscuously with them; or rather contenting themselves with the liberty to live quietly among the Canaanites.

The inhabitants of Beth-shemesh and of Beth-anath became tributaries] In this they were more valiant than the Asherites, that they brought these two cities under contribution, and made them acknowledge them for their lords.

Ver. 34. *The Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain:*] The condition of the Danites was the worst of all the tribes: for they could neither expel the old inhabitants of their country, nor make them tributaries, nor so much as possess it together with them; but the Amorites distressed them sorely, by penning them up in the cities that were in the mountainous parts of their country, not suffering them to dwell below in the plain.

They would not suffer them to come down] Being very strong, it is likely, in chariots of iron (which were of use, I observed, in the flat country, though they could do no service in the mountains), which the Danites so dreaded, that they durst not venture to encounter them.

Ver. 35. *The Amorites would dwell in Mount Heres in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim:*] And, to add to their affliction, would not let them enjoy all the mountainous country, but possessed these three cities there: which constrained the Danites to seek for larger quarters in other parts; and seems to have been the occasion of that expedition mentioned Josh. xix. 47, where, ver. 41, we read of the two last-mentioned cities (see my notes there).

Yet the hand of the house of Joseph] That is, the Ephraimites, who were next neighbours to the Danites, in one part of their country.

Prevailed.] Against the Amorites, as the LXX. expound it, ἐλαβὼν δὲ τὴν χεῖρ οἴκου Ἰωσήφ ἐπὶ τὸν Ἀμορῆταιον, "The hand of the house of Joseph was heavy upon the Amorites;" for they came to the assistance of their brethren, when they were grievously distressed.

They became tributaries.] They brought the Amorites so much under, that they made those three cities before mentioned pay tribute to the Danites, if not all the low countries which they inhabited; for he saith, in general, "They became tributaries," speaking of all the Amorites thereabouts.

Ver. 36.] We find mention of the going up to Ak-rabbim in Josh. xv. 2 (see my notes there). And the Vulgar by the rock (in Hebrew, *selah*) understands the city called Petra, which was upon the borders of Edom, and by Amaziah called Joktheel, in 2 Kings xiv. 7. Some take these words to signify the large extent of the country which the Amorites inhabited; but I take them rather to denote, that the children of Ephraim gave such a check to their insolence, that they were confined to this country, which reached

35 But the Amorites would dwell in mount Heres in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim: yet the hand of the house of Joseph prevailed, so that they became tributaries.

from Akkrabbim and Selah, to the mountains here mentioned. By this it appears, the Israelites let so many of the old inhabitants remain in Canaan, that they settled themselves among them; insomuch, that, in the days of Solomon, we read of a remnant of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites

36 And the coast of the Amorites *was* from the going up to Akkrabbim, from the rock, and upward.

(1 Kings ix. 20, 21), and in far later ages, as I have often observed, the Gergesenes remained in the days of our Saviour (Matt. viii. 28), though it is likely they were all become proselytes so far as to worship the God of Israel, though not entirely of their religion.

CHAPTER II.

1 *An angel rebuketh the people at Bochim.* 6 *The wickedness of the new generation after Joshua.* 14 *God's anger and pity towards them.* 20 *The Canaanites are left to prove Israel.*

I AND an angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers; and I said, I will never break my covenant with you.

2 And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this?

CHAP. II.

Ver. 1. *An angel of the Lord*] The Jews by an angel here understand a prophet, who was sent by God as his messenger; which the word angel imports: and they commonly take it to have been Phinehas, who was employed on this message. But I see no reason to depart from the natural signification of the word, when there is no absurdity in it, and it is not usual to speak in this metaphorical style: for there can no instance be given, that I remember, of a prophet called "an angel of the Lord;" which I take to signify more than an angel, which appeared from heaven on this occasion; that is, the angel of the covenant.

Came up from Gilgal] Angels are not commonly said to come up, but to come down; which is one reason, I suppose, why this angel hath been taken for a prophet. But if we consider whence he was seen to come, and why from Gilgal, this phrase will appear to be most proper; of which I shall give an account presently.

To Bochim.] This was not the name of the place before, but was given it on this occasion (ver. 5). In all probability it was Shiloh; for there was no other place where all the people of Israel were wont to assemble, as they were now when this angel appeared to them (ver. 4).

I made you to go up out of Egypt,] These words evidently show, that this was not a created angel, but an uncreated; even that very person who appeared to Joshua hard by Jericho, Josh. v. 13, 14, which I have shown there was God himself; for who but God could speak in this style, "I made you to go out of Egypt?" No prophet, nor any created angel, durst have been so bold; but would have prefaced to this speech in some such words as these, "Thus saith the Lord, I have made you to go." &c. Supposing, then, this angel to be the same with him that then appeared, it was fit for him to appear now as coming from Gilgal, to put them in mind of that illustrious appearance of God near that place, and the assurance he then gave them of his presence with them in the con-

3 Wherefore I also said, I will not drive them out from before you; but they shall be as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare unto you.

4 And it came to pass, when the angel of the LORD spake these words unto all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voice, and wept.

5 And they called the name of that place

quest of the land, and the solemn covenant they made with him, by the renewing of circumcision in that place: which upbraided them with their base ingratitude to God, and their sloth in not endeavouring to expel the Canaanites.

And have brought you unto the land] Of which he had given them possession.

I will never break my covenant with you.] If they proved not false to him, he assured them they should always find him present with them, to make good his promises to them. This Joshua told them they knew very well, that not one good thing had failed which he promised; and bade them be confident he would still continue the same faithful God (see Josh. xxi. 45, xxiii. 14).

Ver. 2. *And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants*] Or rather, "But ye shall make no league," &c. For this was the condition of the covenant on their part, Deut. vii. 2, and long before that, Exod. xxiii. 32, xxxij. 12, and again more lately, Josh. xxiii. 12.

Ye shall throw down their altars.] See Exod. xxxiv. 13; Deut. vii. 5, xii. 3.

Why have ye done this?] That is, you can give no account of your disobedience to such plain, and express, and repeated commands.

Ver. 3. *I will not drive them out*] God, therefore, resolved to make good the threatenings pronounced in his covenant; as hitherto he had performed his promise (see Josh. xxiii. 13).

They shall be as thorns in your sides.] To vex and gall them, as Joshua there told them.

Their gods shall be a snare unto you.] As Moses had foretold them (Exod. xxiii. 33, xxxiv. 12). For they were taken, by their conversation with idolaters, as beasts are in a toil, and drawn to the worship of their gods, which was their ruin.

Ver. 4. *When the angel of the Lord spake these words*] By this it appears they were all met at some solemn festival, as they were bound to do three times every year (for otherwise it cannot be conceived what should occasion such an assembly of the whole congregation), and, consequently, the place where these words were spoken to them was Shiloh.

Bochim: and they sacrificed there unto the LORD.

6 ¶ And when Joshua had let the people go, the children of Israel went every man unto his inheritance to possess the land.

7 And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD, that he did for Israel.

8 And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, *being* an hundred and ten years old.

That the people—wept.] They made doleful lamentations; some it is likely, when they reflected on their sin: others, when they thought of their danger.

Ver. 5. *Bochim:]* Which signifies *weepers*. It is possible the place where the angel, or where they stood, was called by this name, in memory of this great goodness of God; which, for the present, mightily wrought upon their hearts, as appears by what follows.

They sacrificed there] This shows it was the place of public worship where they now were; and offered upon this occasion whole burnt-offerings unto God, by way of supplication and prayer to him, with thanksgiving for his goodness in calling them to repentance. Some think, indeed, that they offered expiatory sacrifices to make atonement for their sin: but they would not have been called simply *sacrifices*, which commonly are meant of whole burnt-offerings, or peace-offerings by which they acknowledged him to be the Lord, and promised to serve no other god.

Ver. 6. *And when Joshua had let the people go,]* Or, "Now when Joshua had broke up that last great assembly which he held before his death" (xxiv. 28), so some expound it. But the next words seem to direct us rather to understand it of his dismissal of them after he had cast lots, and divided the land among them (Josh. xix. 51, xxi. 43).

The children of Israel went every man unto his inheritance] To take possession of that land which fell to their share, and settle themselves in it. And they went with a resolution, no doubt, to serve the Lord only; as, we cannot but think, he exhorted them before they parted: for the lots were cast in Shiloh before the Lord, as we are often told in the book of Joshua, xviii. 6, 8, 10, xix. 51. From whence they going to take possession of their lot, it is reasonable to think he did not dismiss them without his blessing, and with a solemn charge to observe the laws of God, such as he gave to the two tribes and a half (xxii. 5, &c.). And this is the reason why the author of this book repeats this out of the book of Joshua, to show when their apostasy began, and how it came about; for though they went to their possessions well-disposed, yet their love of the world, and study of their own private advantages, so increased, that they made them forget the public good, and take little care of their religion.

Ver. 7. *The people served the Lord all the days of Joshua,]* According to his exhortation, and their solemn promises, a little before he died (Josh. xxiv. 14—16, &c.).

All the days of the elders that outlived Joshua,] Such as Eleazar, and the rest mentioned Josh. xix. 51, who were men of great authority, as well as piety; and often, no doubt, admonished them of their duty, and put them in mind of their promises made to Joshua in Shechem, where he made a covenant between God and them, and wrote it in the book of the law of God (xxiv. 25, 26, &c.).

9 And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash.

10 And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.

11 ¶ And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim:

12 And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of

Who had seen all the great works of the Lord,] Both among the Egyptians, and in the wilderness, and in Canaan; which Joshua had represented to them as a motive to fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity (Josh. xxiv. 5, 6, &c., 14, 15). Of these things the elders, we may reasonably suppose, frequently reminded them, and thereby kept them steadfast in their religion (see Josh. xxiv. 21). For whatsoever bad inclinations they had in them, they were restrained, by the reverence they bare to these great men, from breaking loose from God while they lived.

Ver. 8. *And Joshua—died,]* After he had made that excellent speech to them before mentioned, and engaged them in a solemn covenant to be God's people (see Josh. xxiv. 29).

Ver. 9.] This is mentioned only to show that they honoured him after his death, by attending his funeral, as they had done in his life (see Josh. xxiv. 30).

Ver. 10. *Also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers:]* I suppose he means, not only all those who had seen the works of God in Egypt and the wilderness, but those also who had seen Jordan dried up, the walls of Jericho fall down, and the sun stand still at Joshua's word, and their enemies smitten down with hailstones, &c. Which had made such impressions on their hearts, that they generally continued in the service of God while they lived; and kept others in obedience to him.

There arose another generation—which knew not the Lord,] But the next generation did not regard the Lord, nor mind their religion; but only studied to settle themselves, on any terms, in their possessions, by making peace with the Canaanites, whom they should have driven out.

Nor yet the works which he had done for Israel,] Which they did not keep in mind, as they ought to have done; being wholly intent to their earthly concerns in building houses, planting vineyards, and improving their lands. Unto which they were invited by the peace they enjoyed; by which men's minds are wont to be corrupted; as the Greeks and Romans were in future ages. According to those known words of the Roman satirist:

"Nunc patimur longæ pacis mala." —

Ver. 11. *Did evil in the sight of the Lord,]* By this forgetfulness of God and of his works, and by their familiarity with the people of Canaan, they soon learned to do as they did, and that openly and publicly, not fearing the dreadful sentence of God against such evil doers, who were most odious to him, whatsoever excuses men make for them. So that phrase, "in the sight of the Lord," may be interpreted.

Served Baalim:] The gods of the nations whose land they possessed, who were called by this general name, which signifies *lords*. For among the heathen, as St. Paul observes, there were *gods many, and lords many*. In Hebrew he would have said *many Baalim*, who were their deified great men, as Mr. Mede hath

the people that *were* round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger.

13 And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth.

14 ¶ And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round

about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies.

15 Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil, as the Lord had said, and as the Lord had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed.

16 ¶ Nevertheless the Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hands of those that spoiled them.

shown (p. 776, of his works). For, Baal (in Chaldee, *Bel*) the king of Babel next after Nimrod, was the first that was deified, and reputed a god after his death, from whence they called all other demons by the name of Baalim; as from the first Roman emperor who was called Cæsar, all that followed him were styled Cæsars. Baalim, therefore, being the general name of the gods of Syria, Palestine, and the neighbouring countries, there were as many Baals as there were nations: for example, Baal of the Sidonians, and Baal of the Amorites, of the Moabites, and Ammonites, and the rest of the people thereabouts, who had their Baalim (see also Selden, *De Diis Syris*, Syntagm. ii. cap. 1).

Ver. 12. *They forsook the Lord God of their fathers—and followed other gods.*] By "other gods" may be meant the gods of the people of Canaan: which did not content them, but they worshipped also the gods of other neighbouring nations, none of which had bestowed any benefit upon them. This was a very high aggravation of their sin; that when all other nations made to themselves such gods as they thought had done them good, or could be helpful to them, they forsook the greatest Benefactor to their nation, who had made them a free people, and worshipped such gods as had done nothing for them, nor had been able to preserve those that worshipped them from destruction.

Bowed themselves unto them.] They did not only own them for gods, but publicly adored them.

Provoked the Lord to anger.] Who had told them he was a jealous God, and could not bear any rival (Exod. xx. 1, 2). It is not easy to give an account what moved them to forsake their God after such wonderful things as he had done for them, and their most solemn engagements to him. It is not unlikely that one reason was, the unusual rites prescribed in his Divine service, much different from all other nations: and several laws that made them unlike all the rest of the world, who hated them upon this account. This they could not bear, desiring to be conformable to other people and to gain their friendship. For Hosea saith, viii. 12, they looked upon the great things of the law as a strange thing.

Ver. 13. *They forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth.*] Especially they worshipped the sun, and the moon, or Venus; which some understand by Ashtaroth. In the next chapter it is said they worshipped *Baalim and the groves*, iii. 7. For in those groves several goddesses, under the name of Ashtaroth, were worshipped, as Mr. Selden conjectures in his Syntagm. ii. *De Diis Syris*, cap. 2, where he shows there were many Astartes among the heathen, as there were Baals: and therefore the Scripture speaks of them in the plural number (as the LXX. here doth, ταῖς Ἀστάρταις) because of the multitude of images representing Juno, or Venus, or Diana, which had the name of Ashtaroth, signifying (as some think) as much as *Beatas, blessed*.

Ver. 14. *The anger of the Lord was hot*] Brake out in very dreadful effects upon them.

That spoiled them.] Carried away their cattle and their goods.

He sold them into the hands of their enemies] Who carried away their persons, as well as their goods, and made them slaves. For that seems to be the meaning of *selling them*, which is a phrase often used in this book (iii. 8, iv. 2), and in other places (Deut. xxxii. 30, Ps. xlv. 12, &c.). This was a just punishment of God upon them, that, as they served the gods of the people round about them (ver. 12), so they should be slaves to all those nations round about them.

They could not any longer stand before their enemies.] Being so far from being able to make any further conquests, that they could not defend themselves.

Ver. 15. *The hand of the Lord was against them for evil.*] They had ill success in all their affairs, whether private or public business.

As the Lord had said.] See Deut. xxviii. xxx. 17, 18, xxxi. 16, 17, and many other places.

They were greatly distressed.] As soon as they slackened their endeavours to drive out the Canaanites, and made leagues with them (as we read in the foregoing part of this chapter), God began to withdraw himself from them and would not drive out their enemies from before them (ver. 3). But when by this means they were ensnared to worship their gods, as he foresaw they would (ver. 4), then he gave them up into the hands of those enemies, with whom they had made friendship, and suffered them to tyrannize over them and use them cruelly.

Ver. 16. *The Lord raised up judges, &c.*] Extraordinary rulers and governors, whose authority, I take to have been chiefly in time of war; they being raised up (by a particular inspiration and excitation from God), as it here follows, "to deliver them out of the hands of those that spoiled them." So that commonly, when they had wrought deliverance for the people, and their army was dismissed, they became private men again: as appears by the story of Jephthah, who would not undertake to lead them against the Ammonites, unless he might be their governor when the war was done (Judg. xi. 9); and of Gideon, who refused to rule over them, when they offered the government to him, after the conquest of the Midianites (viii. 22, 23). Their business, therefore, principally was to preserve the people's liberties, to restore them, together with God's true religion, and to prescribe what was to be done in such cases: being a kind of dictators, whose power continued as long as there was occasion for it. Yet it must be acknowledged, that some of them had an established authority for their life over those whom they had rescued from slavery (not over the whole commonwealth of Israel, part of which was some time in peace, when another part was oppressed), and managed political matters, when they were too hard for the ordinary judges to decide them (see Deut. xvii. 9). Thus we read that Deborah, a prophetess, judged Israel, and that the people came to her for judgment, before she excited Barak to vindicate their liberties: but commonly they seem to have contented themselves with this, not minding judgment; as Samuel, the last of them, chiefly exercised his authority in matters of justice, 1 Sam. vii. 15, &c. where he is said in his

17 And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the LORD; but they did not so.

18 And when the LORD raised them up judges, then the LORD was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the LORD because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them.

19 And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them;

house at Ramah to have judged Israel, and ended their controversies, and done right to every man: and when, by reason of age, he could do this no longer, he committed it to his sons (see Corn. Bertram, De Repub. Judaica, cap. 9, p. 109, &c.).

Ver. 17. *They would not hearken unto their judges,*] Not constantly; but revolted again (ver. 18, 19).

But they went a whoring after other gods,] Worshiped them publicly; which is commonly called going a whoring from God, who had espoused them to himself.

They turned quickly] As soon as the judge was dead, who had wrought deliverance for them.

Which their fathers walked in,] In the days of Joshua, and the elders who survived him (ver. 7).

But they did not so,] Whom the next generation would not imitate.

Ver. 18. *When the Lord raised them up judges,*] This is the constant phrase wherein he speaks of these great men, whose spirit was stirred up by an extraordinary motion from God, to undertake things beyond the reach of human wisdom or power.

The Lord was with the judge,] Endued him with heroic courage, and gave him wonderful success. Here the Targum continues the same language, "The Word of the Lord was the helper of the judge" (see ch. i. 19, 22).

Delivered them—all the days of the judge:] As long as he ruled over them, and kept them in obedience to him. This signifies, that if they did not exercise their authority, yet the effects of it remained all the days of their life.

For it repented the Lord because of their groanings] He altered the course of his providence, when they not only sighed and groaned under their oppressions, but cried unto him for help, and promised amendment, as we find they did, iii. 9, 15, vi. 7, 8, &c.

Ver. 19. *When the judge was dead, that they returned,*] To their former idolatry.

And corrupted themselves more than their fathers,] Who lived in the former judge's time, and had sorely smarted for this sin, till God, upon their repentance, sent them deliverance.

In following other gods] They either multiplied more strange gods, or devised still new rites of worship contrary to God's law. The common service they paid to every one of them was building temples to their honour, setting up altars, planting groves, burning incense, and sacrificing beasts.

They ceased not from their own doings,] In the Hebrew "Would not let fall their own inventions;" but

they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way.

20 ¶ And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and he said, Because that this people hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice;

21 I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died:

22 That through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the LORD to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not.

23 Therefore the LORD left those nations, without driving them out hastily; neither delivered he them into the hand of Joshua.

retained them, notwithstanding all that God had done to bring them off from their idolatry.

Nor from their stubborn way,] But obstinately persisted in their evil courses, as if nothing had been done to reclaim them.

Ver. 20. *The anger of the Lord was hot*] This highly incensed the Divine displeasure, and provoked him to punish them more grievously.

Because that this people hath transgressed my covenant, &c.] By making leagues with the Canaanites, and not throwing down their altars, &c. Arius Montanus very well observes, that this verse expresses what great reason there was for God's being exceeding angry with them. First, because they had forsaken him, to whom they owed their being a nation. Secondly, because they had violated that covenant, which was not a new or obscure thing, but made long ago with their fathers, who, it was very well known, had reaped the benefit thereof. And, thirdly, because (as this verse concludes) *they had not hearkened unto God's voice*: i. e. though he had often admonished them, by his prophets, of their duty, and chidden and threatened them; yet they would not mind what he said, but in a most rebellious manner gave themselves up to the impieties of other nations.

Ver. 21. *I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them*] That is, not presently, or so soon as he intended, if they had pleased him (see ver. 23).

Of the nations which Joshua left] For God never intended they should be all rooted out at once, as hath been often noted from Exod. xxiii. 29, 30, yet their expulsion had been more speedy, if they had obeyed him, than now he resolved it should be. Nor could it well be otherwise; for, by being delivered into their enemies' hands, to spoil and to enslave them, their increase was thereby hindered; so that they were not able to people all the land so soon as they might have done if they had been obedient: for then God promised to multiply them exceedingly (Deut. vii. 13, 14, &c.).

Ver. 22.] That it might appear, whether they would continue firm, as their fathers resolved, in the service of God (Josh. xxiv. 16, 24), or revolt from him to serve other gods.

Ver. 23.] This was one reason they were not all cast out at once, by the victorious hand of Joshua; for if none of them had been left remaining, there would have been no temptation to worship their gods: which would have been all abolished with them. Another reason is given of this, in the place before mentioned, Exod. xxiii. 29, 30, and Deut. vii. 22.

CHAPTER III.

1 *The nations which were left to prove Israel.* 6 *By communion with them they commit idolatry.* 8 *Othniel delivereth them from Chushan-rishathaim.* 12 *Ehud from Eglon.* 31 *Shamgar from the Philistines.*

1 Now these are the nations which the LORD left, to prove Israel by them, even as many of Israel as had not known all the wars of Canaan;

2 Only that the generations of the children of Israel might know, to teach them war, at the least such as before knew nothing thereof;

3 *Namely*, five lords of the Philistines, and all the Canaanites, and the Sidonians, and the Hivites that dwell in mount Lebanon, from mount Baal-hermon unto the entering in of Hamath.

4 And they were to prove Israel by them, to know whether they would hearken unto the

commandments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.

5 ¶ And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites:

6 And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods.

7 And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgat the LORD their God, and served Baalim and the groves.

8 ¶ Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot

CHAP. III.

Ver. 1. *These are the nations which the Lord left,*] Having said in general, that God thought fit not to drive out all the Canaanites, that he might try the care and fidelity of his people in his service (ii. 22), he now names the particular nations that remained unsubdued.

Even as many of Israel as had not known all the wars of Canaan;] Such as were born since the war was ended; and had seen none of the wonderful works of God in the conquest of the land; God intended to prove them, whether they would worship him, when they saw what they must expect if they did not; viz. that he would let the Canaanites, their mortal enemies, loose upon them.

Ver. 2. *To teach them war,*] There was another reason why they were left remaining, as was observed before in the last verse of the foregoing chapter: but this had been sufficient, if there had been no other; that the Israelites might not grow sluggish for want of some to awaken and exercise their courage, and to keep up martial discipline among them; and that they might, by having powerful enemies so near them, betake themselves to God constantly, and depend upon his help and succour, by whose power their fathers had brought them under.

At the least such as before knew nothing thereof;] If this was not needful for all, it was at least for such as had never handled arms; that they might be trained up to be ready upon occasion to fight with their enemies. For they being wholly bred to husbandry, and feeding of cattle, would have had no military discipline among them, if they had not had the Canaanites so near to them.

Or this may be the meaning of this verse, "They shall know what it is to be left to themselves:" for their fathers fought by a Divine power, but now they shall learn what it is to fight like other men, without God to go along with them.

Ver. 3. *Five lords of the Philistines,*] See upon Josh. xiii. 2, 3, and Judg. i. 18, where, it appears, that three of them had been, in some measure, conquered; but it seems had recovered their country again, by the sloth of the Israelites.

All the Canaanites,] These were a particular people of that country (as hath been often said), near to the midland sea, many of which still remained scattered up and down the land.

The Sidonians,] Who lived in the territory belonging to the famous city of Sidon: who was one of the sons of Canaan (Gen. x. 15).

The Hivites that dwell in mount Lebanon,] A famous mountain in the north part of Canaan.

Mount Baal-hermon] See in Josh. xi. 3, xiii. 5.

Ver. 4.] That their virtue might appear, if they did not imitate these people; or their baseness, if they did.

Ver. 5.] The Israelites soon discovered their bad disposition, in suffering all sorts of the wicked people of this land to remain and dwell with them; as if they were still the possessors of this country, and the children of Israel but intruders among them.

Ver. 6. *They took their daughters to be their wives, &c.*] Which was not only directly contrary to the law of God (Deut. vii. 3), but a higher breach of their covenant with him than the mere making leagues with them.

Served their gods,] As Moses, in the same place, foretold they would (Deut. vii. 4), if they contracted such marriages with them.

Ver. 7. *Did evil in the sight of the Lord, and forgat the Lord their God,*] They grew in time so very wicked, that they not only worshipped other gods, together with the Lord; but quite forgot him, and worshipped them alone.

Served Balaam and the groves,] Some here take *groves*, literally, for the trees themselves that composed those shady places, which were anciently consecrated to heroes; being, sometimes, the place of their sepulchre; where their *manes* were supposed to haunt. For Baalim were the same with *heroes*; and trees were accounted sacred things, by the ancient heathen, who consecrated them to this or that deity, and trimmed them up with ribands, and adorned them with lights, and made vows to them, and hung the spoils of their enemies upon them. Inasmuch, that travellers were wont to stop when they were to pass by them, as if they had been the habitation of some god. But Mr. Selden thinks, that by *groves* are to be here understood the *images* of their gods in the groves; as it is certain they must signify in some places (see upon ch. vi. 25). And he probably conjectures, that there were several goddesses, under the name of Ashtaroth, worshipped in them (see the place mentioned above, in his *De Diis Syris*, Syntag. ii. cap. 2).

And it is evident, that these deities, whatsoever they were, were different from Baalim; for the prophets of Baal, and the prophets of the *groves*, were distinct persons, in 1 Kings xviii. 19.

Ver. 8. *The anger of the Lord was hot*] This expression we have twice before (see ch. ii. 14, 20)

He sold them] See in the same place.

against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Chushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia: and the children of Israel served Chushan-rishathaim eight years.

9 And when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel, who delivered them, even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.

10 And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war: and the LORD delivered Chushan-risha-

thaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed against Chushan-rishathaim.

11 And the land had rest forty years. And Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

12 ¶ And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the LORD.

13 And he gathered unto him the children of Ammon and Amalek, and went and smote Israel, and possessed the city of palm trees.

Into the hand of Chushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia:] Of that country which lay between the two great rivers of Euphrates and Tigris. So the first enemy that oppressed them were the Syrians; who, either out of hatred, or desire to enlarge their dominions, came over Euphrates and invaded them.

Served Chushan-rishathaim eight years.] He forced them to buy their peace upon hard terms, and brought them under tribute to him: but did not impose garrisons upon them; so that they more easily recovered their liberty, when one appeared to head them. When these eight years began (that is, how long after the death of Joshua), is variously disputed; but it is certain it was in the next age (which in Scripture signifies about three-and-thirty years) after Joshua and the elders that survived him (during whose time they served God and lived in freedom). For Caleb's younger brother, as it here follows, was the first judge whom God raised up to them.

Ver. 9. When the children of Israel cried unto the Lord,] Returned to him, and acknowledged him to be their only God, of whom they earnestly begged pardon, and implored help with fervent prayer; beseeching him to deliver them from this cruel servitude; as he did Jacob their forefather, from the bondage of Laban the Syrian.

Raised up a deliverer] All the judges are called by the name of *saviours, or deliverers*, in Neh. ix. 27, because they rescued them from the oppression of their enemies, when they could not help themselves.

Even Othniel the son of Kenaz,] So he is called, i. 13, concerning which, see Josh. xv. 17.

Ver. 10. The Spirit of the Lord came upon him,] He had an extraordinary motion from God to take upon him the government of the people; which none durst presume to do, but such as were appointed by God, who was their king. Josephus thinks that God appeared to them, or some way revealed his will to them, in these matters; so that they were sure they acted by his authority. The Chaldee paraphrast seems to favour the latter opinion, who calls this spirit, "the Spirit of prophecy." Certain it is, that they had not only an inward incitement to undertake the deliverance of God's people, but were endowed with extraordinary courage and conduct; and it is likely with a singular gift of Divine eloquence, to persuade the people to forsake their idolatry, and vindicate their liberty.

He judged Israel, and went out to war:] This was the first part of the office of a judge, to plead their cause, and avenge them of their oppressors; as this phrase of judging is used, Deut. xxxii. 35, 36, and other places. Though here being set before going to war, it may be thought that he first rectified what was amiss among them, and especially reduced them to the worship of the Lord alone; and then went to fight against their enemies.

The Lord delivered Chushan-rishathaim—into his hand;] They overthrew and entirely routed all his

forces, and, as the words seem to import, took or slew the king himself.

His hand prevailed against Chushan-rishathaim.] So that he could not recover his strength to oppress them any more.

Ver. 11. The land had rest forty years.] It doth not suit with my design to enter into chronological disputes; and therefore I remit the learned reader to the Canon Chronicus of Sir J. Marsham, lib. ii. where he supposes the idolatrous generation to have risen in the thirty-fourth year after the death of Joshua; who lost their liberty, and fell under the oppression of Chushan, for the space of eight years, and after their deliverance from it, lived happily forty years. Which will appear in the sequel to be more reasonable, than to interpret these words as if they signified, "The land rested in the fortieth year after Joshua first settled them in peace and quiet." So our great primate of Ireland (vide A. M. 2599).

Othniel—died.] It is not certain in what part of these forty years of rest he died; nor is it material whether in the beginning, middle, or end of it.

Ver. 12. The children of Israel did evil again] Fell into the sin of idolatry after Othniel was dead.

The Lord strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel,] As he raised up deliverers to Israel when they were penitent; so he stirred up enemies to them, and gave them power also to oppress them, when they revolted from him. And the next enemy to the Syrians were the Moabites; for since they worshipped the gods of the people round about them (ch. ii. 12), it was fit they should be punished by those very people.

Ver. 13. He gathered unto him—Ammon and Amalek,] Persuaded these two nations, who were his near neighbours (Moab lying between them), to associate themselves with him in this war. Unto which they were easily inclined; especially Amalek, who had an old grudge to the Israelites.

Went and smote Israel,] Either by a sudden invasion, or in a pitched battle.

Possessed the city of palm trees.] That is, Jericho, as appears from Deut. xxxiv. 3; Judg. i. 16. Which, though it was destroyed by Joshua, yet the place where it stood remaining, it is likely they made fortifications, and placed a strong garrison there, that they might the better keep the whole country in subjection. For, as the country thereabouts was fertile (of which they deprived the Israelites, and sent the riches of it to their own country, which was not far off), so they hindered all communications between those on this side Jordan, and those on the other side, but what they pleased to allow; and maintained a correspondence with their own people, from whom they could receive more forces, if there were need, by having the command of the passages over Jordan. By which means also they thought to secure their retreat, if there should be occasion, to their own country.

14 So the children of Israel served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years.

15 But when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised them up a deliverer, Ehud, the son of Gera, a Benjamite, a man left-handed: and by him the children of Israel sent a present unto Eglon the king of Moab.

16 But Ehud made him a dagger which had two edges, of a cubit length; and he did gird it under his raiment upon his right thigh.

17 And he brought the present unto Eglon

Ver. 14. *Served Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years.*] He ruled all this time as an absolute master over them, and imposed what burdens he pleased upon them; of which, it is likely, the Ammonites and Amalekites had a share, as a reward of their help and assistance.

Ver. 15. *But when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord.*] Humbled themselves before him, acknowledged their offence, begged his pardon, and besought his help; as before, ver. 9.

The Lord raised them up a deliverer.] As he had done before (see ver. 9).

Benjamite] Which tribe was the most immediately oppressed (the country of Jericho being in it), and therefore one of them was very proper to be their deliverer.

A man left-handed.] The Hebrew words *itter jad jemin* are very obscure, being used nowhere else but here, and *xx. 16.* In both places the LXX. translate them *ἀμφοτερόδεξος*, whom the Vulgar follows, *qui utraque manu pro dextra utebatur*, "who could use both hands, as we do our right." This the Hebrew phrase will bear, which literally signifies, as we translate it in the margin, "shut of his right hand;" i. e. who did nothing with it, but used his left, though he could use both alike: or, as Josephus will have it, *τὸν χειρῶν τὴν ἀριστερῶν ἀμείων*, "who of the two could use his left hand best."

By him the children of Israel sent a present unto Eglon] Some understand by this the tribute that was laid upon them; but it rather signifies a voluntary present, above their ordinary payments; whereby they hoped to mollify him, and make him favourable to his loving subjects: for *mincha* is used for such offerings as were presented to God to obtain his favours.

Ver. 16. *But Ehud made him a dagger*] Privately prepared this weapon, intending to make use of this opportunity for their deliverance.

Of a cubit length;) Therefore Josephus calls it *ξηπίδιον*, "a little sword;" which was long enough to do execution, but so short as to be easily concealed.

He did gird it under his raiment] Which the LXX. and the Vulgar takes to have been a military garment; but the Hebrew word *mad* signifies any sort of raiment.

Upon his right thigh.] To avoid all suspicion (for men used to wear their swords on their left side), and that he might more readily draw it out and use it with his left hand, when he should find occasion.

Ver. 17. *He brought the present unto Eglon*] Was admitted into his presence, and delivered the present with his right hand, as men usually do; which he could use, I suppose, as well as his left, though not, perhaps, with so much strength.

Eglon was a very fat man.] Which made him unwieldy, and less able and ready to rise up, and avoid or defend himself from a sudden stroke. The LXX. translate it *ἄνθρωπος ὑπερβαρὴς σφόδρα*, "an exceeding civil or courteous man;" which made it the more easy for Ehud to give the blow, when he embraced him,

king of Moab; and Eglon was a very fat man.

18 And when he had made an end to offer the present, he sent away the people that bare the present.

19 But he himself turned again from the quarries that were by Gilgal, and said, I have a secret errand unto thee, O king: who said, Keep silence. And all that stood by him went out from him.

20 And Ehud came unto him; and he was

perhaps, or stooped, when he rose out of his seat to receive his message, in an obliging manner.

Ver. 18. *When he had made an end to offer the present.*] Which was done (as appears by this) with such ceremony as was in use in those days.

He sent away the people that bare the present.] It was brought by some of his retinue (consisting, it is likely, of several things), who being all withdrawn, and gone some part of their way homeward with him, he bade them go forward, and leave him to despatch some private business, which he pretended: for such designs, as he had in his mind, seldom succeed where many are engaged in them.

Ver. 19. *He himself turned again*] As if he had forgotten something, or had met with some new instructions by the way.

From the quarries that were by Gilgal.] Some understand by the word we translate *quarries*, a place where they digged or hewed stones: others, the twelve stones which Joshua placed in Gilgal. But the LXX. and the Vulgar take it for *graven images*; for, so indeed, the word *pesil* commonly signifies in Scripture, and so we translate it in the margin of our Bible: which when Ehud beheld, his spirit was mightily stirred within him (as Conradus Pellicanus explains this passage), and he proceeded no further in his return home, but went back, with a resolution to revenge this affront to God, as well as the oppression of his people. For it is to be supposed, the Moabites had set up these *graven images* in this place, rather than any other; which had been famous for the presence of God for a long time in it.

I have a secret errand unto thee, O king.] Being admitted again into the king's presence, he desired a private audience of him.

Keep silence.] He bade Ehud say no more till all his attendants were withdrawn, whom he would not have to hear the message.

All that stood by him went out] It may seem strange, that a prince should trust himself alone with one of that nation, who he knew groaned under his yoke; but his mind was blinded by the present, and by the compliments wherewith it was delivered; and God deprived him at this time, of his wanted prudence. For, as Solomon observes, "There is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord;" who intended he should be destroyed (Prov. xxi. 30).

Ver. 20. *Ehud came unto him*;) Approached nearer to his person.

He was sitting in a summer parlour.] In a cool room (as the Hebrew word imports), where he was defended from the heat of the sun, and enjoyed the fresh air.

Which he had for himself] Where he would retire from all company, when he had a mind to sleep, perhaps in the heat of the day, or to despatch business with which he entrusted nobody.

I have a message from God unto thee.] Which in some sense was true, but not in that wherein the king understood it; who thought he had met with some

sitting in a summer parlour, which he had for himself alone. And Ehud said, I have a message from God unto thee. And he arose out of his seat.

21 And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly :

22 And the haft also went in after the blade ; and the fat closed upon the blade, so that he could not draw the dagger out of his belly ; and the dirt came out.

23 Then Ehud went forth through the porch, and shut the doors of the parlour upon him, and locked them.

Divine apparition in the way, or been at some oracle ; for he doth not say he had a message from Jehovah the God of Israel (whom he would have despised, perhaps, as Pharaoh did), but from Elohim, which was a common name to all gods (xxiv. 2, 15).

He arose out of his seat] Out of reverence as to God, whose words, he supposed, he was to hear. A remarkable instance of the ancient veneration men paid to whatsoever carried the name and authority of God in it, and reproaches those who now behave themselves irreverently, even in his worship and service (see Numb. xxiii. 18 ; 2 Kings xxiii. 3).

Ver. 21. *Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh.*] If the king had his eye upon his hands, it was upon the right, and not the left, so that he might more unobservedly employ it as he designed.

Thrust it into his belly.] So that it pierced his heart (as Josephus understands it), or some other vital part ; upon which he immediately died, without speaking a word, or making a noise to alarm his servants who were without. Nothing can justify this fact but an order from the Lord, which he not only pretended, but really had (see ver. 23).

Ver. 22. *The haft also went in after the blade.*] The thrust he made was so violent, that not only the blade of the dagger, but the handle also, went into his bowels.

The fat closed upon the blade.] And the haft, so that they could not be seen.

He could not draw the dagger out.] But left it there, because he could take no hold of it.

The dirt came out.] All agree that the word *parshedona*, which is nowhere found but here, signifies the dung or excrements ; which came not out at the wound (for that was closed), but at the usual place ; it being common for bodies to purge after they are dead, especially such corpulent ones as his was, in whose bowels, no doubt, there were violent convulsions made by this sudden stroke.

Ver. 23. *Ehud went forth through the porch.*] It is very uncertain what the Hebrew word *misredona* signifies which we translate *porch*. Some take it for the guard chamber (as the LXX. seem to understand it), or a place where the king's servants sat ; through which he passed boldly, that he might give no suspicion of any mischief he had done : or, as Kimchi explains it, the place where the people sat, who waited for audience.

Shut the doors of the parlour upon him, and locked them.] As he came out of the parlour he not only shut the doors after him, and locked them ; but, it is likely, took the key away with him. There seems to have been double doors, an inward and an outward, as is usual.

Ver. 24. *When he was gone out, his servants came ;*] Seeing Ehud was gone from the king, his attendants

24 When he was gone out, his servants came ; and when they saw that, behold, the doors of the parlour were locked, they said, Surely he covereth his feet in his summer chamber.

25 And they tarried till they were ashamed : and, behold, he opened not the doors of the parlour ; therefore they took a key, and opened them : and, behold, their lord was fallen down dead on the earth.

26 And Ehud escaped while they tarried, and passed beyond the quarries, and escaped unto Seirath.

27 And it came to pass, when he was come, that he blew a trumpet in the mountain of

came into the antechamber (as we speak), to be ready at the king's call, to wait his pleasure.

Surely he covereth his feet in his summer chamber.] They concluded he was easing nature, as this phrase is commonly understood here, and 1 Sam. xxiv. 3, for when they were about that business, the long garments which they wore in those countries were so disposed as to cover their feet (see Gataker in his Cinnus, lib. ii. cap. 3). But it may be understood, I think, of laying himself down to sleep, which they were wont to do in those countries in the heat of the day (2 Sam. iv. 5) ; and then, lying down in their clothes, it was necessary to cover their feet for decency's sake, to keep their garments from slipping up, and exposing those parts which should not be seen. And this suits better with the story than the other ; for they thought fit to wait a great while before they entered the chamber, that they might not disturb his rest ; whereas the other business being soon despatched, would not have occasioned their waiting so long (see the Arabic and Syriac version, both here and upon 1 Sam. xxiv. 3).

Ver. 25. *They tarried*] Waiting in the antechamber.

Till they were ashamed] Till they were in a great confusion, not knowing what to think should be the cause that he slept longer than ordinary.

He opened not the doors of the parlour ;] At which, it is likely, after tedious expectation, they knocked, and had no answer.

They took a key and opened them.] For in kings' courts, there were more than one who had keys to the same room.

Their lord was fallen down dead on the earth.] Perhaps they did not at first perceive that he was killed ; which might something retard their pursuit of Ehud.

Ver. 26. *Ehud escaped while they tarried.*] Their long expectation of the king's awaking out of sleep, gave him the advantage of making his escape.

Passed beyond the quarries] From whence he returned to do this exploit (ver. 19), which had been murder, if he had not had a Divine warrant for what he did : unto which none can pretend now, without blaspheming God as the author of sin ; but then was evident, by the wonderful gifts of wisdom, and courage, and might, wherewith such men were divinely inspired (see Grotius, De Jure Belli et Pacis, lib. i. cap. 4, sect. 19, n. 4).

Escaped unto Seirath.] Gilgal was so near to the garrison which the Moabites had in those territories, that he did not think himself safe till he got out of the tribe of Benjamin into the mountainous country of Ephraim, where this town was, upon the confines of the tribe of Benjamin.

Ver. 27. *When he was come,*] To Seirath. *He blew a trumpet in the mountain of Ephraim,*]

Ephraim, and the children of Israel went down with him from the mount, and he before them.

28 And he said unto them, Follow after me : for the Lord hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand. And they went down after him, and took the fords of Jordan toward

To summon those who were disposed to recover their liberties, to take arms and follow him.

The children of Israel went down with him from the mount.] A considerable body of men, no doubt, presently met together (being before prepared, it is likely, by his emissaries), and marched after him into the country of Benjamin, where the Moabites were settled.

He before them.] He led them on as their captain; and was joined by many more, in all probability, as he marched further into the country.

Ver. 28. Follow after me:] Be not afraid to venture your lives, as I will do, for the liberty of your country.

The Lord hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand.] He was assured that God, who had succeeded his enterprise, and deprived the Moabites of their supreme head (whereby, no doubt, they were in great confusion), would accomplish what he had begun, and give them a perfect deliverance: with this belief he endeavoured to possess their souls, as if the thing was already done, which he knew would inspire them with such courage as could not be withstood.

They went down after him, and took the fords of Jordan] He proceeded prudently, as well as courageously; and therefore led them directly to the fords of Jordan, of which they possessed themselves; that the Moabites who had settled themselves in that part of Judea (ver. 13), might not be able to save themselves by retreating into their own country, nor they in Moab be able to come to their assistance.

Suffered not a man to pass over.] To carry or bring any intelligence.

Ver. 29. They slew of Moab—about ten thousand men,] Who had taken possession of the city of palm-trees (ver. 13), and posted themselves thereabout, to keep the Israelites in subjection.

All lusty,] In the Hebrew it is, *all fat men*; that is (as some understand it), men of estates, or very wealthy persons: men of quality, or of the better sort (as others expound it), who chose to transplant themselves hither, because of the richness and deliciousness of this country; but it may be interpreted *strong men*, as our translation imports, who were called out from among the Moabites, to keep the Israelites in greater awe.

Men of valour,] Who had given proof of their undaunted spirit in war.

There escaped not a man.] But they were all cut off, either by those that guarded the fords, and intercepted their passage into their own country, or by the other part of the army of Israel who fell upon them, and drove them thither.

Ver. 30. So Moab was subdued that day] This doth not signify that they brought the country of Moab under their subjection, as the Moabites had brought theirs, but that they freed themselves from the yoke they had laid upon them, and served them no longer (see ver. 14).

The land had rest fourscore years,] Which the same great man, mentioned in the foregoing chapter, thus interprets: ad A. M. 2679. Et quievit terra anno octogesimo. post quietem priorem ab Othniel restitutam. "And the land had rest in the eightieth

Moab, and suffered not a man to pass over.

29 And they slew of Moab at that time about ten thousand men, all lusty, and all men of valour; and there escaped not a man.

30 So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest fourscore years.

year, after the former restored to it by Othniel;" but there is another way which some learned writers among the Jews suggest, of bringing the years of servitude and of peace, mentioned in this book, into such a compass, as may agree with what is said in 1 Kings vi. 2, concerning the number of years that passed from the deliverance out of Egypt to the building of Solomon's temple: for they suppose that there was scarce any of the judges who ruled over the whole country of Israel, but some in one part and some in another; so that at the same time there were several judges in several parts of the land; and peace in one part, when there was war in another. Accordingly our learned chronologer Sir J. Marsham (who follows this opinion) understands here by "the land which had rest fourscore years," not the whole land of Israel, but the eastern part of it, which had shaken off the yoke of Moab; but in the meantime the Philistines invaded the western parts, as it here follows, and were repulsed by Shamgar, while the eastern countries enjoyed perfect peace. "This I take to be the clearest account of these words, "the land had rest fourscore years;" that is, the eastern part of the country, which had shaken off the yoke of Moab, not the whole land of Israel: for, as the Philistines invaded the western parts, so Jabin afflicted the northern (as it follows in the next chapter), while the oriental tribes remained in peace.

Ver. 31. After him was Shamgar.] It is not said of what tribe he was, and it is in vain to inquire about it; but it is probable he was one of those tribes that bordered upon the Philistines, because what he did was against them, and those were Judah, Dan, and Ephraim: nor is there the least signification how long he judged them; but he succeeding Ehud, his government was in some part of the fourscore years before mentioned: and, perhaps, it was not long before that time wherein Jabin oppressed Israel in the northern parts, as may be probably gathered from ver. 6.

Which slew of the Philistines six hundred men] Now some of the people of Canaan made an attempt upon the Israelites, in the western parts, to bring them under their power. And these words sound as if Shamgar alone made opposition to them, and slew the number mentioned; being excited by the mighty power of God, which gave him unwonted courage and strength; for he was raised up, as the two foregoing great men had been, by a Divine inspiration, to be their judge, as appears by the last words of this verse.

With an ox goad:] The Vulgar takes the Hebrew word *malmd* for a *plough-share*, and the LXX. favour this interpretation: but if we may judge by the derivation of the word, our translation is more probable; wherein we follow Kimchi and other learned Jews, who take it for the instrument whereby oxen are provoked (and, as it were, put in mind of their duty) when they draw the plough lazily. And thus Lycurgus is said to have overthrown the forces of Baeceus, without any other arms but *βοῦταγμα*, an *ox-goad*. So Homer describes the Baecha as put to flight ἀνδροφθόνιος Λυκούργου βουταγμα. (see Bochartus. lib. i. Canaan, cap. 18).

He also delivered Israel.] From hence it appears

31 ¶ And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath, which slew of the Philistines six

that he was a judge as well as the two former, though some both ancient and modern have questioned it; for this is the very phrase whereby they are described, ii. 9, 15. And the first words of this verse signify as much; which say, that *after him* (i. e. Ehud) was Shamgar, who succeeded him; that is, in the office of a judge, as the words naturally signify: and the great slaughter he made of the Philistines argues the same; for it manifestly was an heroic act, like that of Samson, who slew a thousand with the jaw-bone of an ass: neither of which could have been performed but by a divine power wherewith they were possessed. It is not said here, indeed, how long he continued to judge them, nor from what oppressors he delivered them; but he is a deliverer who preserves a nation from being oppressed, as well as he who rescues them from oppression when they groan under it: and that it is likely was the case of Shamgar, who, when the Philistines came to invade his country, gave them a repulse with the loss of six hundred of their men; which, it is probable,

hundred men with an ox goad: and he also delivered Israel.

discouraged them from further attempts. And this being done without any weapon but an ox-goad, it is likely he was at plough when the Philistines made this inroad to plunder and spoil the country; feeling a strong impulse upon him to oppose them, though he had no other arms, nor any to assist him, but such of his servants as were, perhaps, at plough with him. Thus some great men among the ancient Romans were called from the plough to be their dictators. But I will only add a strange passage out of the Midrash upon Lev. xvii. 3, who, mentioning these words, "and he also delivered Israel," saith, "Thus he saved them by the hand of other judges, who being but flesh and blood, yet fell into slavery again: but in the age to come (i. e. of the Messiah) I in my own substance will redeem you, and ye shall not be reduced into servitude any more. According to what Isaiah saith, xlv. 17, 'But Israel shall be saved by the Lord with an everlasting salvation,'" &c. (see Raymund in his *Pugio Fidei*, p. 510).

CHAPTER IV.

1 Deborah and Barak deliver them from Jabin and Sisera. 18 Jael killeth Sisera.

1 AND the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD, when Ehud was dead.

2 And the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor;

the captain of whose host was Sisera, which dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles.

3 And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron;

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 1. *Israel again did evil*] See iii. 12.

When Ehud was dead.] And Shamgar. Concerning whom there is no further mention made, because he did nothing more than this one memorable act; religion being reformed by Ehud, who left it so at the time of his death; when, it is likely, the Philistines, seeing their chieftain gone, made the forenamed inroad upon the Israelites; but they being not yet openly fallen into idolatry, God was pleased to raise up Shamgar to give them a repulse, before they could possess themselves of any part of the country, as the Moabites had done. After which blow, given them by this single champion, it was a long time before we read of any disturbance they gave them; though Shamgar, it is probable, lived but a short time after this noble achievement. And then, when Ehud and he had been some time dead, the Israelites forgot the wonderful works of God, and returned to their old sin; for so the words in the Hebrew are to be understood, which run thus, "and Ehud was dead:" for that participle *ve*, which we translate *and*, oft-times signifies *because*; and here makes these words the reason of their relapse, "because Ehud was dead," who had been the great instrument of bringing them back to God, and keeping them, while he lived, in his service.

Ver. 2. *The Lord sold them*] Delivered them up to be made slaves (see iii. 8).

Into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan.] Of that part of the country where the people, properly called Canaanites, now dwelt under his government.

That reigned in Hazor] In the region belonging unto Hazor; for the city itself was burnt by Joshua (Josh. xi. 10), and the king of it also slain, as we read there, xii. 9, whose name also was Jabin (Josh. xi. 1), of whose posterity it is probable this Jabin

was; whose name was common to all the kings of that country, as Pharaoh was to the king of Egypt. It is possible, indeed, that Hazor might be re-built, as some other cities were, and possessed by the ancient inhabitants; but there is no need to suppose that; for he might reign in Hazor, just as the Moabites possessed Jericho; that is, the region appertaining to it. And according to the opinion I mentioned in the foregoing chapter, ver. 30, Jabin is supposed to have invaded and brought under only the northern tribes; those in the east remaining at the same time in peace, after the expulsion of the Moabites; twenty years after which (Sir John Marsham makes account) Jabin's dominion over the northern tribes began. The text, indeed, makes no such distinction, "the children of Israel" in general being represented as sold under Jabin for their sins; yet it is said, ver. 10, that Barak gathered his army out of the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali, which are the tribes supposed to be alone oppressed by Jabin. Other tribes, indeed, joined with them, and they that did not, are very much blamed for it by Deborah in her song, even the Reubenites, and they beyond Jordan (v. 14—16), for it might very well be expected, that they who lived in peace and ease should be ready to assist their brethren who were heavily oppressed.

Sisera, which dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles.] If we suppose that Hazor lay in its ruins, then Harosheth was the royal city, wherein Jabin dwelt, as well as Sisera. Which is called "Harosheth of the gentiles," because people of several nations fled hither to be under his protection, when they heard that he had possessed himself of that country, and kept the Israelites out of it.

Ver. 3. *Israel cried unto the Lord: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron*] His power was so increased, that they had no hope to redeem their liberty but by the help of the Lord. It may seem strange,

and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel.

4 ¶ And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time.

5 And she dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Beth-el in mount Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.

that in this petty kingdom they should be so strong in chariots, when Mithridates had but a hundred in his army, and Darius no more than two hundred, as good authors inform us (see Bochartus, in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 9. p. 156). I suppose they placed their chiefest strength in these, being not able to set out a great number of horsemen.

Twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel.] Who groaned under a long servitude; during which time Jabin squeezed them, I suppose, by heavy exactions, which enabled him to raise greater forces than he had at first, when he brought them under his power. For God's anger increased by their frequent revolts from him; and he punished them more severely than he had done before by the Moabites; the Canaanites being the old inhabitants of the land, who hated them mortally, and kept them under a sorer as well as a longer oppression than the Moabites had done.

Ver. 4. *Deborah, a prophetess.*] Such a one as Miriam, endued with Divine gifts of wisdom to instruct, direct, and govern others. For she was not only instructed with the knowledge of Divine things, but also was excited by the Holy Spirit (as Kimchi here notes) to declare the will of God to the people (which was the proper office of a prophet), as appears by the following part of this history. Her name in Hebrew signifies a *bee*: which hath been given (as learned men have observed) by other nations, to illustrious women. As among the Greeks, the nymph, said to be the nurse of Jove, is called Melissa; and the wife of Periander king of Corinth had the same name.

Wife of Lapidoth.] Or, as others translate it, "a woman of Lapidoth;" taking this word to signify a place, not a person. But our translation seems the most natural, and is to be preferred to that of R. Solomon and others, who translate it a *woman of splendours*; that is, an illustrious woman.

She judged Israel at that time.] Had the supreme authority over them; being so well known to be divinely inspired, that it procured her universal reverence, and submission to her judgment.

Ver. 5. *She dwelt under the palm tree of Deborah.*] Or, as the LXX. and the Vulgar understand it, "she sat under the palm-tree," when she administered judgment. Whence the tree was called by her name; because it was the place where all resorted to her.

Between Ramah and Beth-el.] That is, in the confines of the tribes of Benjamin and Ephraim. For Ramah was a city in the tribe of Benjamin, and Beth-el in the tribe of Ephraim.

In Mount Ephraim.] In one of the mountains in the borders of that country; for though the tree was near both tribes, yet it stood in the tribe of Ephraim. The Jews (as appears by the Chaldee paraphrase) from hence conclude she was a very great woman, who had noble plantations in Jericho, Ramah, Beth-el, and other places; that is, of palms, saith R. Solomon, in Jericho, of vineyards in Ramah, and of oliveyards in the plain of Beth-el. And from her dwelling in a mountain, and being a prophetess, and a governess, and other things, some learned men imagine

6 And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedesh-naphtali, and said unto him, Hath not the LORD God of Israel commanded, saying, Go and draw toward mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun?

7 And I will draw unto thee to the river

the story of the Theban sphinx was invented by the Greeks (see Bochartus, lib. i. Canaan, cap. 6).

Israel came up to her for judgment.] For direction and the ending of differences, by deciding causes; which none could do with such satisfaction as she did. By which it appears, that though Jabin oppressed them sorely, yet it was rather by rigorous taxations, than infringing all their laws; the course of which he did not stop, but suffered to be administered by their own officers. And he took the less notice of it, perhaps, because the supreme judicature was exercised by a woman: from whose power and authority he thought there was no reason to apprehend any danger. It may be probably hence gathered, that there was no such Sanhedrin in these days, as the Jews conceive there always was in the most early times: for why should they go to her for judgment, if there were a court of seventy eminent persons, then sitting at Shiloh?

Ver. 6. *She sent and called.*] A plain act of authority, which was owned by the whole nation.

Barak the son of Abinoam.] Concerning whom we know no more (for, that he was Deborah's husband, or, as others say, her son, are ungrounded conceits of some of the Jews), but that he was born or dwelt in a famous city in the tribe of Naphtali, as it follows in the next words.

Out of Kedesh-naphtali.] There were several cities of this name. One in the tribe of Issachar (1 Chron. vi. 72), another in the tribe of Judah (Josh. xv. 23), and therefore, for distinction's sake this is called Kedesh-naphtali; which was a city of great note, in the upper Galilee, belonging to the Levites, and a city of refuge.

Hath not the Lord God of Israel commanded, saying.] She could not think he doubted of the commission she now gave him from God; which he received as an oracle.

Go and draw.] The Vulgar takes the word *draw* to signify gathering forces together: but the LXX. take it to be of the same import with the foregoing word; signifying that he should go till he drew near to Mount Tabor.

Toward mount Tabor.] A noble mountain in Galilee, not far from Kedesh, in the tribe of Zebulun, and in the confines of Issachar and Manasseh; which had a very large plain at the top of it, as Josephus tells us, who calls it Staburium, lib. iv. De Bello Jud. cap. 2. where he might draw up an army, and exercise them very conveniently.

Take with thee ten thousand men.] Who were moved to list themselves under him, by the proclamation of this commission, which he brought with him from God.

Of the children of Naphtali and—Zebulun?] She thought he need go no further than these two tribes, which were nearest to him; but others also offered their services out of Manasseh and Issachar, as appears from ver. 14, 15.

Ver. 7. *I will draw unto thee.*] These are the words of God (which Deborah pronounced in his name), signifying, as Arius Montanus understands the word *draw*, that he would, by his secret providence, incline Sisera to come within his power to

Kishon Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thine hand.

8 And Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go.

9 And she said, I will surely go with thee: notwithstanding the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honour; for the Lord shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. And Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh.

10 ¶ And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; and he went up with ten thousand men at his feet: and Deborah went up with him.

11 Now Heber the Kenite, which was of the

destroy him; as hunters (unto whom warriors are compared) entice wild beasts to fall into their toils.

To the river Kishon] Which was near Mount Tabor; having its beginning at the foot of it.

Sisera,—with his chariots and his multitude;] Where-with he intended to encompass this mountain; and block up Barak till he forced him to yield up himself unto him.

I will deliver him into thine hand.] This shows Deborah to have been endued with the highest gift of prophecy; which was to foretell certainly things to come.

Ver. 8.] He is commended for his faith in God by the apostle, Heb. xi. 32, as well as other great worthies in ancient time; though it was so weak and imperfect, that he made conditions with God's messenger and absolutely refused to obey unless they were granted. He had great reason, he thought, for it; because he might want her advice in doubtful matters, and her authority also, both to gather soldiers, and to keep them together in good order, and to inspire them with courage. The LXX. here add a great many words, which make this the reason of his backwardness; that without her he should not be able to know the best time of giving Sisera battle.

Ver. 9. I will surely go with thee:] She saw he had faith enough to undertake the enterprise, and therefore consented to his proposal.

The journey that thou takest] In the Hebrew it is "the way that thou takest." Which may signify the course which he had resolved upon, not to go without her.

Shall not be for thine honour;] Though his faith was accepted, yet the weakness of it something eclipsed his glory.

The Lord shall sell Sisera into the hands of a woman.] It is a great part of the glory of a conqueror to take the general of the enemy's army, or to kill him with his own hand; which she tells him should be denied him, as a small punishment of his backwardness to do as he was bidden; and as he would not go without a woman, so a woman should take away this honour from him.

And Deborah arose,] She made no delay, but immediately accompanied him to his own city; where he began, I suppose, his levy of men.

Ver. 10. Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh;] He caused proclamation to be made of God's command, and his own intentions, in these two tribes, who resorted to him in great numbers.

Went up with ten thousand men] He picked, I suppose, ten thousand men out of those who flocked to him, and went with them to Mount Tabor.

At his feet:] That is, they followed him as their

children of Hobab the father in law of Moses, had severed himself from the Kenites, and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaim, which is by Kedesh.

12 And they shewed Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam was gone up to mount Tabor.

13 And Sisera gathered together all his chariots, even nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that were with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles unto the river of Kishon.

14 And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the Lord gone out before thee? So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him.

15 And the Lord discomfited Sisera, and all

leader. Though it may signify that they were all footmen; there being no horses in Judea, which they brought out of other countries. This made the victory the more glorious, by the overthrow of a great many chariots and horses in the opposite army.

Deborah went up with him.] To encourage him and his forces, now they were gathered.

Ver. 11. Now Heber the Kenite.] See Numb. x. 29. This is interposed to explain what follows concerning Jael, who was Heber's wife.

Had severed himself from the Kenites,] Who went along with the children of Judah, to settle among them (Judg. i. 16). What the reason was of Heber's leaving them, as they all left the plain of Jericho, is not known; but there was a special providence of God in it.

Pitched his tent] The Kenites lived after the manner of the Midianites (from whom they descended), in tents, not in houses.

Unto the plain of Zaanaim.] A place in the tribe of Naphtali (Josh. xix. 33), where there was a plain or (as the LXX. expound the Hebrew word *alon*) a grove of oaks, under the shadow of which their tents were pitched.

By Kedesh,] Though they loved to live in the open fields, yet not far from a city.

Ver. 12.] They could not want intelligence of a thing done so publicly as this was; and the words seem to import that Sisera had many who informed him of all that passed.

Ver. 13. Sisera gathered together all his chariots,] In which (as I said ver. 3), their main strength consisted. But they being unfit for service in mountainous countries, as I have often observed, it is probable they placed them so below the mountain as to coop up Barak there; by seizing all the avenues, and hindering all provisions from being brought to him.

All the people that were with him,] As great a number of footmen, as came to him upon the summons he sent forth, to require them to appear on this occasion. For so the word *gathered together* signifies in the Hebrew (as we observe in the margin of our Bibles), "gathered by cry or proclamation."

From Harosheth of the Gentiles unto the river of Kishon.] With whom he marched from that city to this river; which descended, as I said, from the foot of Mount Tabor.

Ver. 14. Up;] Make no delay.

This is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand:] She speaks of the victory as already gained, that she might work in him a full assurance thereof. This doth not contradict what was said ver. 9, that God would "sell Sisera into the hand of a woman;" for both were true; he and

his chariots, and all his host, with the edge of the sword before Barak; so that Sisera lighted down off his chariot, and fled away on his feet.

16 But Barak pursued after the chariots, and after the host, unto Harosheth of the Gentiles: and all the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword; and there was not a man left.

17 Howbeit Sisera fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite: for there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite.

18 ¶ And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and

his army were delivered into the hand of Barak, to be routed by him; but he, in his flight, fell into Jael's hands to be killed. How long this was after Sisera encamped at the river Kishon, we have no means to know; but it was upon some day when Deborah knew the army of Sisera lay secure in their quarters, or were about fortifying the passages more strongly; or were to be joined with greater forces; or some other way might be taken at advantage.

Is not the Lord gone out before thee? As a general doth before his army; to animate, and raise their courage.

So Barak went down from mount Tabor,] It is not said that Deborah went with him any farther than to Mount Tabor: where, it is likely, his faith was grown so strong, that he durst undertake any thing without her presence with him.

Ver. 15. The Lord] Who conducted Barak, as he did his army (ver. 14).

Discomfited Sisera, and all his chariots, and all his host,] They did not expect such a bold sally as this, which struck a sudden terror into them; for he fell upon them, it is likely, before they were aware, which put them into the greater confusion. The Lord also struck a terror into them (as the word *hanam* imports), by a noise of thunder and lightning; as the word is used 1 Sam. vii. 10, and also in Josh. x. 10, where we read the Canaanites were discomfited by great hailstones falling down upon them: or he made a terrible sound of horses and chariots rattling in their ears, by the ministry of his angels, in the clouds; as he did in the days of Elisha (2 Kings vii. 6), which seems to be acknowledged by Deborah, in her song in the next chapter (ver. 20.)

With the edge of the sword] This terror and confusion wherein they were, exposed them to be slain easily.

Sisera lighted down off his chariot,] Which he thought did not make haste enough to carry him out of danger; and, besides, made it known where he was.

Fled away on his feet.] As a common soldier, that he might not be discovered; and that he might likewise secure himself, by his speedy running: for anciently valiant men were wonderfully swift of foot, as it is noted of Asahel, 2 Sam. ii. 18, and every one knows it was the character of the famous Achilles among the Greeks.

Ver. 16. Barak pursued—unto Harosheth] He resolved to follow his blow to the very gates of their own city.

All the host of Sisera fell] In the pursuit, he and his men cut off all they overtook.

There was not a man left.] Which was their whole army; not one escaping to carry the news of their defeat to Jabin. Or, there was not one man to be seen in the way to Harosheth; but they were all scattered to shift where they could for themselves.

Ver. 17. Howbeit Sisera fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael] Only Sisera, by his swift running, got, as he thought, into a place of safety, in the tent

of Jael; her husband, perhaps, being abroad in the field, and she only at home. Women also had their apartment by themselves, in a tent of their own, as appears by Gen. xxiv. 67, see there, and Gen. xxxi. 33, where he imagined no search would be made for him.

19 And he said unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink; for I am thirsty. And she opened a bottle of milk, and gave him drink, and covered him.

20 Again he said unto her, Stand in the door of the tent, and it shall be, when any man doth come and enquire of thee, and say, Is there any man here? that thou shalt say, No.

21 Then Jael Heber's wife took a nail of the

of Jael; her husband, perhaps, being abroad in the field, and she only at home. Women also had their apartment by themselves, in a tent of their own, as appears by Gen. xxiv. 67, see there, and Gen. xxxi. 33, where he imagined no search would be made for him.

There was peace between Jabin—and the house of Heber] It seems Heber was a considerable person, who had a great family, and many dependants; like that of Abraham, Gen. xiv. 14. How he came to escape the sore oppression under which the Israelites groaned (being incorporated into their nation and religion), and to live at ease in a time of great distress, we can but conjecture. Perhaps their manner of life, retired from towns and company, made Jabin not fear any danger from them; and if they still kept close to their religion, when the Israelites were apostates, God inclined the heart of Jabin to be favourable to them, and give no molestation to his harmless neighbours; who, perhaps, purchased their freedom from vexation by their frequent incursions.

Ver. 18. Jael went out to meet Sisera,] She watched, it is likely, to hear the event of Sisera's expedition; and seeing him come with great speed towards her house, went out, to invite him there to repose himself.

Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; fear not.] She assured him there was nobody in the tent to do him any hurt. Which was true; and it is not certain that she now intended to do, what afterward she did.

When he had turned—she covered him with a mantle.] Being weary, he desired to take some rest; when it was proper to throw a covering over him, to preserve him, being very hot, from taking cold. What kind of covering this was, which the Hebrews call *semicha* (and we translate *mantle*), is not very material. They say it was a thick covering, which hath flocks of wool on both sides; such as our double rugs (see Bochart, lib. i. Canaan, cap. 42).

Ver. 19. For I am thirsty.] By the heat of the fight, and his long running.

She opened a bottle of milk.] Out of respect to him, she brought him the best liquor she had, and of the best sort; for it appears by ver. 25, of the next chapter, that the cream was not taken off of it. It is possible also she might design, by this draught, to throw him into a sounder sleep; for milk, when largely drank, flies up into the head, and causes drowsiness. But however that be, it is certain milk was anciently accounted the most agreeable nourishment, which Hippocrates calls *ἀδελφόν και συγγενές* to human bodies. And therefore the most warlike nations lived upon it, more than any other food: as Hermannus Conringius hath shown at large in his book *De Habitibus Germanorum Corporum Causis*.

Gave him drink, and covered him.] He rose up to drink; and then lying down again, she covered him as before.

Ver. 20. Stand in the door of the tent,] Because he doth not say, Stand I pray thee (as he did before when

tent, and took an hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and fastened it into the ground: for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died.

22 And, behold, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said unto him, Come, and I will shew thee the man whom thou seekest. And when he came into her

he asked for drink), some fancy (particularly Arius Montanus) that he spake this imperiously; laying his commands upon her, as a confederate of his master; but I see no ground to think, that, when he was in such need of her friendship, he would take upon him so much as to give her a charge to do any thing, but rather entreat it of her.

Is there any man here?] Who was not of their own family.

Say, No.] They imagined there was no harm in telling an officious lie to deceive an enemy; that they might preserve a friend or ally, as he was.

Ver. 21. *Then Jael—took a nail of the tent.*] Or one of the great pins wherewith the tent was fastened to the ground. For she had no better instrument at hand (sword, or suchlike weapon, being not usually kept in women's tents), and this she knew how to use more readily than any other; being accustomed, it is likely, when they removed from one place to another, to take up her tent, and to fasten it again by striking such nails into the earth.

Smote the nail into his temples.] Where it would most easily enter (being the thinnest part of the skull), and most speedily despatch him.

Fastened it into the ground.] Upon which he lay, (not on a bed), with a carpet, or some such thing under him; as the manner was in those countries.

He was fast asleep and weary.] His weariness made him sleep soundly.

So he died.] She might as well have let him lie in his profound sleep, till Barak came, and took him; if she had not felt a Divine power moving her to this, that the prophecy of Deborah might be fulfilled.

tent, behold, Sisera lay dead, and the nail was in his temples.

23 So God subdued on that day Jabin the king of Canaan before the children of Israel.

24 And the hand of the children of Israel prospered, and prevailed against Jabin the king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

Nothing but this authority from God, of which she was certain, could warrant such a fact as this. Which seemed a breach of hospitality, and to be attended with several other crimes; but was not so, when God, the Lord of all men's lives, ordered her to execute his sentence upon him.

Ver. 22. *Jael came out to meet him.*] As she had done Sisera (ver. 18).

Come, and I will shew thee the man whom thou seekest.] Before he made any inquiry, she knew he was desirous, above all men, to take Sisera; and, perhaps, she knew, by an inspiration, that he was in quest of him.

Sisera lay dead, and the nail was in his temples.] He lay in the place and posture wherein he was killed, that Barak might see the prophecy of Deborah made good.

Ver. 23.] So that he was not able to oppress them any longer, but they were restored to perfect liberty.

Ver. 24. *The hand of the children of Israel prospered.*] They prosecuted this day's victory with new successes; wherein his forces were overthrown in other battles, and his cities taken.

Until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.] To the utter ruin of this kingdom of the Canaanites in Hazor: for Jabin himself, as Arius Montanus thinks, was slain at the brook Kishon, Ps. lxxiii. 9 (though, it must be confessed, that may be meant only of his forces), so that we hear of none of his name in future times. And herein the Israelites seem to me to have begun to be sensible of their duty; which was to extirpate the people of Canaan, and not merely to bring them under tribute (Deut. vii. 2—4).

CHAPTER V.

The song of Deborah and Barak.

1 THEN sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam on that day, saying,

2 Praise ye the Lord for the avenging of Is-

rael, when the people willingly offered themselves.

3 Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes;

CHAP. V.

Ver. 1. *Then sang Deborah and Barak*] It was composed by Deborah (ver. 7), being a prophetess, one of whose special gifts was to sing God's praises (1 Chron. xxv. 1—3), and commanded to be sung by the authority of Barak; who was now, I suppose, become a judge, upon this great deliverance God had wrought by him. For it is not to be thought that these two persons alone sang this song; but all the elders of the people were called together in one assembly to sing it with them; and they afterward delivered it to the people. It was likely it was composed and sung after they had completed their victory by the destruction of Jabin's kingdom. For the prophets were taught such sublimity of thought and speech, as is used in these songs, by their admiration of such wonderful events as they observed.

Ver. 2. *Praise ye the Lord for the avenging of Israel.*] It is evident to all, that this hymn is expressed

in another kind of language than the historical part of this book; and in a language so majestic, in such variety of elegant figures, and such native expressions of those affections which the occasion required, that none of the ancient Greek or Latin poets have equalled; at least it appears, there was a most excellent spirit of poetry among the Hebrews, especially such of them as were divinely moved, when the Greeks lay in dark ignorance.

And first she excites all the people to give thanks unto God, and acknowledge his wisdom and power, in taking vengeance of their oppressors, and in moving the hearts of so many especially in Naphtali and Zebulun, voluntarily to list themselves to fight against the Lord's enemies; where it is to be noted, that she very wisely excites them so to ascribe the victory unto God, as not to forget the instruments he used to obtain it; for that she knew would be a great encouragement to others in the time to come, to engage themselves in such enterprises, when they saw these

I, even I, will sing unto the LORD; I will sing praise to the LORD God of Israel.

1 LORD, when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou marchest out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water.

5 The mountains melted from before the LORD, even that Sinai from before the LORD God of Israel.

6 In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath,

men so highly praised, and looked upon as employed by God in his service.

Ver. 3. *Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes;*] Next she calls upon all the neighbouring potentates to give attentive heed unto her song; whereby they might understand what God had done for Israel, and learn from thence not to oppress them, when it was in their power; for fear of the same vengeance which God had taken upon Jabin.

I will sing praise to the Lord God of Israel.] Who she would have the world know was superior to all in power, and would defend his people, while they depended on him alone.

Ver. 4. *Lord, when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou marchest out of—Edom,]* This is but a repetition of the same thing; Edom and Seir signifying the country where the posterity of Esau dwelt, who refused to give Israel a passage through their land, as the Lord led them into Canaan; and therefore he conducted them from thence another way, and made them encompass that land (Numb. xxi. 4; Deut. ii. 1); and when they had left it behind them (which is here called *marching out of Edom*), then he wrought for them astonishing things, as it follows in the next words.

The earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water.] These are poetical phrases, to express the great consternation in which all those countries were, when they saw Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og the king of Bashan, overthrown on a sudden by the Israelites, and utterly destroyed (see Numb. xxi. 21, &c.).

Ver. 5. *The mountains melted]* All the inhabitants of those mountains.

Even that Sinai] Just as Sinai trembled and quaked at the giving of the law.

In these two verses she turns her speech unto God, and commemorates his wonderful acts in former times, with which she compares the glorious deliverance he had given them now: as much as to say, his power was not at all decayed, but he was as terrible to his enemies in her days, as he had been in former times.

Ver. 6. *In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath, in the days of Jael,]* The sense of this verse will be very plain, if we translate these words, as I think the Hebrew will bear, "from the days of Shamgar," &c. After his death they fell into sin and great misery. And Jael is here mentioned, not as a judge (as Rasi and Ralbag fancy), but as a great woman of a masculine and valiant spirit, who yet could do nothing to hinder those spoils that were committed.

The highways were unoccupied,] The people being corrupted in their religion, broke out into all manner of violence, and turned highway-robbers; so that men durst not travel in the common road upon their occasions, but were fain to seek for by-paths, because the highways were infested by thieves: or this may be meant of robberies which Jabin's soldiers committed, after he had brought them in subjection to him; who took no care to protect the Israelites, but suffered their country to be ravaged by his troops.

in the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through by-ways.

7 *The inhabitants of the villages ceased,* they ceased in Israel, until that I Deborah arose, that I arose a mother in Israel.

8 They chose new gods; then was war in the gates: was there a shield or spear seen among forty thousand in Israel?

9 My heart is toward the governors of Israel,

The travellers walked through by-ways.] In the Hebrew (as in the margin of our Bibles is observed) the words are, "the walkers of paths:" by which we may understand men accustomed to travel, who, though they went in great companies together, yet durst not venture in the direct road, but went about through *crooked ways* (as the Hebrew word signifies, which we translate *by-ways*), by which means commerce was very much obstructed.

Ver. 7. *The inhabitants of the villages ceased,]* Men were not safe in their own houses; which were broken open, if they lived in villages, and therefore they forsook them, and fled to walled towns, and fortified places.

Until that I Deborah arose,] This some of the Jews take to be a proud and arrogant expression, for which the Holy Spirit was taken from her: but Rasi (who reports this conceit) soberly acknowledges, that they are not words of boasting, but of joy and gladness.

That I arose a mother in Israel.] A judge or ruler of God's people. For, as men that governed were called fathers of their country, so it was proper for her, being a woman, to call herself a "mother in Israel;" among whom she did such great things, and governed with so much prudence, that it made her famous in other countries. For very learned men think, as I noted above, that the story of Sphinx among the Greeks was made out of the history of Deborah, she being a judge among the Beotians, as Deborah was in Israel (see Bochart in the book before-named; and Hermannus Witsnius more lately, in his *Miscellanea Sacra*, lib. i. cap. 23).

Ver. 8. *They chose new gods:]* That is, the Israelites, after the death of Ehud, forsook the Lord, and served Baalim and Ashtaroth (as they had done formerly, ii. 13, iii. 7), or perhaps they introduced the worship of some other gods, whom they had not served before, fancying they might be more powerful than their former had proved.

Then was war in the gates.] This was the fountain of all their calamities; for God immediately delivered them into the hand of some enemy or other, who possessed themselves of their cities and strong holds; for that is the meaning of "war in the gates." Their enemies seized on their cities and fortresses; for their strength was in their *gates*; where sat also the courts of justice.

Was there a shield or spear seen among forty thousand in Israel?] They were generally disarmed, for the securing their subjection to the Canaanites; as afterwards the Philistines took the same course with them (1 Sam. xiii. 19). Here the Targum makes a strange excursion in mustering up the many thousand commanders, and sword-men, and spear-men, and archers, &c., that were in the army of Sisera.

Ver. 9. *My heart is toward the governors of Israel, that offered themselves willingly.]* It seems there were some of the greatest men in the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun, who, of their own accord, hazarded their lives, among the common people, in this service: towards whom she expresses a singular affection; and,

that offered themselves willingly among the people. Bless ye the LORD.

10 Speak, ye that ride on white asses, ye that sit in judgment, and walk by the way.

11 *They, that are delivered* from the noise of archers in the places of drawing water, there shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the LORD, even the righteous acts toward the inhabitants of his villages in Israel: then shall the people of the LORD go down to the gates.

12 Awake, awake, Deborah: awake, awake,

with the praises of God, mixes the commendation of those who were his instruments in this deliverance.

Bless ye the Lord.] This is added, like a prophetic, who, when she commends the most deserving men, carries their thoughts up to God, who gave them that courage and good success. Abarinel had a conceit came into his head, as he tells us, when he was commenting on these words, that by *chokkec Israel* (which Kimchi interprets as we do, "the great men of Israel"), are meant the *scribes*, whose office it was to register all notable passages, particularly the causes of wars, and their events; whom Deborah exhorts to bless the Lord, and when they wrote the history of this war, to ascribe the success to the Divine favour. But it is not likely they had such scribes in these ages, as it is likely they had in future times; much less such plenty of them now in these confused days, that Deborah should make a particular address to them to do their duty.

Ver. 10. *Speak,*] i. e. Give thanks to God.

Ye that ride on white asses,] She calls upon such men, as the governors before mentioned, to proclaim aloud the praises of God. There were no horses in Judea, but what were brought out of other countries, so that the greatest persons rode on asses, as appears by the Scripture story; but in this country they were commonly of a red colour (whence an ass hath the name of *chamor*, as Bochart observes, lib. ii. Hieroz. cap. 12), and therefore white asses (or, as he translates this word, *whitish*, or that were of a colour inclining to white) were highly esteemed for their rarity, and used only by honourable persons; who could not appear in any splendour during their servitude under Jabin, but now were restored to their dignity; for which she would have them praise the Lord.

Ye that sit in judgment,] With whom she exhorts the judges to join, who now sat in the gates, as they were wont to do, which were not possessed by their enemies (ver. 8). Or perhaps this belongs to the foregoing clause, it being probable that these judges rode about the country on white asses to do justice (see upon x. 4).

Walk by the way,] All the merchants who now travelled safely about their business, which they durst not do before this deliverance (ver. 6); for which, therefore, they were bound to praise the Lord.

Ver. 11. *They that are delivered from the noise of archers in the places of drawing water,*] Together with the princes, judges, and merchants, she would have the shepherds praise the Lord every time they came to water their flocks; remembering how they were disturbed formerly by the archers, that lurked in woods or thickets, and shot whole quivers of arrows at them and at their cattle, which now they brought safely to the springs of water.

There shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord,] Who had taken a just vengeance on their oppressors, and most graciously delivered them from their tyranny; for *righteousness* frequently signifies the great goodness of God.

utter a song: arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam.

13 Then he made him that remaineth have dominion over the nobles among the people: the LORD made me have dominion over the mighty.

14 Out of Ephraim was there a root of them against Amalek; after thee, Benjamin, among thy people; out of Machir came down governors, and out of Zebulun they that handle the pen of the writer.

15 And the princes of Issachar were with De-

Toward the inhabitants of his villages] She would have the meanest peasants (as we speak) bear them company in the praises of God; for now they lived as quietly in their open villages, as if they had been in the strongest cities.

Then shall the people of the Lord go down to the gates.] She sums up all in these words; that the whole country was bound to praise the Lord, who had given the law its free course; every man having liberty to go down safely to the gate of his own city, where judgment was administered.

Ver. 12. *Awake, awake, Deborah: awake, awake, utter a song.*] Having called upon all others to praise the Lord, she now excites herself, with the most earnest and zealous affection (expressed by the repetition of the same thing four times), to celebrate his wonderful works, by composing a song in his praise.

Arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive,] She calls upon Barak to go in triumph, carrying (as the manner was in ancient times) his principal captives and spoils along with him unto the house of God: for one cannot think she meant merely a secular pompous show; since the Romans themselves in their triumphs marched to the capitol, and there offered sacrifice to Jupiter. Some ask, what captives he had to lead, when the whole army of Sisera was cut off (iv. 16)! To which the answer is easy, That when Barak, after he had routed their army, pursued his victory as far as Harosheth, he brought several persons, and perhaps of the best quality, captive with him, out of that country.

Ver. 13. *Then he made him that remaineth have dominion over the nobles*] Or, "then he shall make him that remaineth," &c., that is, when Barak triumphed, that small remnant of Israel (as the best of the Jews interpret "him that remaineth") who were not utterly dispirited by the oppression of Jabin, but had some courage left in them, triumphed together with him over the nobles of Canaan.

The Lord made me have dominion over the mighty.] She, who was but a weak woman, triumphed also over the most powerful enemies.

Ver. 14. *Out of Ephraim was there a root of them against Amalek;*] Now she makes a catalogue of those who any way assisted in this war, as Homer doth of those people who equipped ships for the war against Troy: and I find no sense of these words so plain as this, that the Amalekites coming to assist Sisera, as they had done the Moabites (iii. 13), a small party of the Ephraimites (called here a *root*) opposed their passage, and hindered them from joining their forces with the Canaanites. Peter Martyr by a *root* understands a great captain among them, as in Isa. xi. 10, the word is thought to be used. But a most learned friend of mine (Dr. Alix) admonishes me, that Amalek doth not only signify the people descended from Amalek, but a mountain in the tribe of Ephraim, mentioned xii. 15. And, if we understand it so in this place, it makes this clear sense far easier and more natural

borah; even Issachar, and also Barak: he was sent on foot into the valley. For the divisions of Reuben *there were* great thoughts of heart.

16 Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds, to hear the bleatings of the flocks? For the divisions of Reuben *there were* great searchings of heart.

than the other, "out of Ephraim was their beginning" (so the word *root* may be interpreted), "about Amalek." That is, the Ephraimites, who came to the assistance of Barak, began their listing of men near to this mountain. And so the participle *beth* (I observed upon Josh. x. 10), signifies as well *near* or *about*, as *in* or *against*.

After these, Benjamin, among thy people;] Following the example of the tribe of Benjamin; who seem to have all of them engaged in this quarrel, with whom a few of the Ephraimites joined.

Out of Machir] An eminent family in Manasseh; which is put here for all that tribe on the other side Jordan, where Machir was settled (Numb. xxxii. 36; Josh. xiii. 31). Which made their zeal the more remarkable, in coming so far to the aid of their brethren; when they heard they were engaged in this enterprise.

Came down governors,] Some of the principal persons of that country; who, no doubt, had their followers, that accompanied them in this expedition.

Out of Zebulun they that handle the pen of the writer.] They were nearer to Mount Tabor than any of the forenamed; but are therefore highly commended, that though they were better skilled in books than in arms, yet offered their service to Barak on this occasion: for *scribes* in Scripture signify men of letters, that studied the law, and expounded it.

Ver. 15. *The princes of Issachar]* Came and offered their service, when they heard that Barak, by her order, had summoned their neighbours Zebulun and Naphtali to come to him (iv. 10).

Even Issachar,] And the people of that tribe followed the example of their princes.

Also Barak:] The Hebrew *chen* (translated here *and also*) signifies *as, or like unto*; that is, they were as forward as Barak to march into the field, though they had no summons.

He was sent on foot into the valley.] That is, when he was sent down from Mount Tabor, by the order of Deborah (iv. 14), to fall upon Sisera in the valley; whither he went on foot, against his chariots and horsemen; or, he went with his footmen (as the LXX. translate it), and engaged that vast number of chariots, which were of the greatest use in the valley.

For the divisions of Reuben there were great thoughts of heart.] But the Reubenites were so divided in their counsels, that they stayed at home (as if they were separated from their brethren in their affections, as they were in their situation, beyond Jordan), which begat many sad thoughts in the hearts of the rest of the Israelites; who could not understand the reason of it.

Ver. 16. *Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds, to hear the bleatings of the flocks?]* It was a shameful and an unaccountable thing, that they should wholly mind their private business (which was feeding cattle, Numb. xxxii. 1), and neglect the public good.

For the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart.] And therefore she could not sufficiently bewail it; which she doth, by repeating what a great trouble it was to all their brethren; who were not able to discover the reason, and give any account of their being no more concerned than their beasts, for their common religion and liberties.

17 Gilead abode beyond Jordan: and why did Dan remain in ships? Asher continued on the sea shore, and abode in his breaches.

18 Zebulun and Naphtali were a people that jeoparded their lives unto the death in the high places of the field.

19 The kings came and fought, then fought

Ver. 17. *Gilead abode beyond Jordan:]* She complains also of the Gileadites, who were men of valour; and notwithstanding sat still, and would not step over Jordan to help their brethren. Under the name of Gilead, are comprehended the Gadites, who had half of Gilead (Josh. xiii.), as the other half was given to the children of Machir. Who did come to the aid of their brethren; at least their governors engaged with them (ver. 14). Which hath moved some to read these words interrogatively, *Did Gilead abide beyond Jordan?* as if she still upbraided the Reubenites; who had not this to allege for themselves, that they were far off, beyond Jordan; for so were the Gileadites (that is, those descended from Machir) who they suppose comprehended the rest: and yet the best and most worthy of them came to join with their brethren, in the common cause of the nation.

Why did Dan remain in ships?] She reproves this tribe, which was near the sea (the famous port of Joppa belonging to it), that they minded nothing but their merchandise; while their brethren hazarded their lives in the field.

Asher continued on the sea shore.] This tribe also bordered upon the Mediterranean; Tyre and Sidon being part of their portion. Which they did not possess; yet, no doubt, they held several other lesser places upon that sea: from which they would not stir in this common danger.

Abode in his breaches.] Or, *in his creeks*, as it is in the margin; and as the LXX. take it, who expound the Hebrew word *miphratsim* (*fractures*) by *αεξυδους, outlets, or small havens*; where vessels lay, to go out to sea. Some take the words to signify, that they were busy in repairing the breaches made in their walled towns, by length of time, or other ways.

Ver. 18. *Zebulun and Naphtali—jeoparded their lives]* They were the only people (which was much for their honour) who unanimously despised life, in comparison with the liberty of their country and religion. For the Hebrew word *charaph* doth not signify merely to expose one's self to danger; but to expose one's self to reproach, as we observe in the margin of our Bibles: and here denotes that they made *no account* of their lives, &c.

In the high places] They went down from Mount Tabor (where they were drawn up in a large plain, as I observed on iv. 6), with a resolution to conquer or die.

It is observable, that in this narration, there is not a word said of Judah, or Simeon, or Gad (unless comprehended under Gilead, as I said before); and that as Reuben, Dan, and Asher are taxed for their cowardly carelessness in this case, so Ephraim, Benjamin, part of Manasseh, and Issachar did afford some assistance; but nothing comparable to what Zebulun and Naphtali did; who, as one man, engaged to hazard their lives and fortunes (as we now speak) for the regaining of their liberty; which was the more highly commendable, because they were but a handful of men, when they first engaged, in comparison with the vast army they undertook to assault.

Ver. 19. *The kings came and fought,]* When the Israelites conquered Canaan, Hazor had several kingdoms subject to it, or depending on it (Josh. xi. 10).

the kings of Canaan in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo; they took no gain of money.

20 They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera.

21 The river of Kishon swept them away, that ancient river, the river Kishon. O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength.

And now, it is likely, there were divers kings, who were, at least, Jabin's confederates; and came to join their forces with his, to reduce the Israelites to his obedience.

Then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo;] These were two cities belonging to the Manassites, but in the tribe of Issachar (Josh. xvii. 11); between which, as Rasi understands it, the army of Sisera lay; reaching from Taanach to Megiddo, by which the river Kishon ran.

They took no gain of money.] The simple sense seems to be, that they were kings of such bravery, as fought not for money, but for glory and dominion; so Rasi and Rabag among the Jews understand it. They fought not for pay, but came *gratis* (as we speak) to the assistance of Jabin. But the Vulgar takes it otherwise; They got nothing but blows, no spoil or prey at all, as they expected. And Kimchi still more differently (which the words will bear), They came so enraged against the Israelites, that they would have spared no man's life, though he offered great sums of money for his redemption; because they thirsted only after his blood.

Ver. 20. *They fought from heaven;*] But on the other side, God fought for the Israelites, by sending thunder, and lightning; and hailstones from heaven upon the Canaanites (as he did in the days of Joshua); and, perhaps, as P. Martyr conjectures, raising a great dust, which a stormy wind blew so violently into their eyes, that they could not see. As Livy saith it fell out to the Romans, in the great battle at Cannæ.

The stars in their courses fought against Sisera.] Some take these words literally, and render the words not "in their courses," but "in their exaltations," i. e. with all their power and strongest influences: whence the saying of Rasi, on this place, "The head, or beginning of the stars is in heaven; but the feet, or the end of them, is upon the earth." That is, hither they send their influences. But others think these words signify, that all this was done by the ministry of angels, who are here called *stars* (as in the book of Job, xxxvii. 7), because he is speaking of heaven; from whence they came to raise this terrible tempest, and by other means which we are ignorant of, to trouble the host of Jabin, as they did that of Pharaoh in the Red Sea: and this they did in such rank and order, as is observed in that heavenly host.

It may be also thought, that, this fight lasting till night, the stars may be said to fight against Sisera, because they shone brightly to give light to the Israelites to pursue their victory.

Ver. 21. *The river of Kishon swept them away,*] It so swelled at this time, that, though otherwise it was very shallow, many of them were drowned in it; being carried away with a rapid stream; for so the word *jerapham* signifies, which we translate "swept them away." It is nowhere else found; but frequent among the Arabic authors, among whom it is commonly used in this sense: as Bochart shows, lib. i. Canaan, cap. 16, and 42. It is likely there was a great flood, which was made by that sudden violent rain, which fell in the forenamed tempest.

That ancient river,] It is an elegancy used by orators themselves (as we find in Cicero) to repeat the same words, when there is great occasion. And here she

22 Then were the horsehoofs broken by the means of the pransings, the pransings of their mighty ones.

23 Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

makes an addition to the same word; by calling Kishon that *ancient river*; because of some other great exploit performed there in ancient time; the memory of which is now lost. But *Kedumim* some take to be a proper name, and another name of the same river Kishon.

O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength.] This is an elegant apostrophe (or turning of her speech) to herself; whose happiness she applauds, in beholding the most powerful enemies quite vanquished, by her commission which she gave from God, and by her prayers to him: for none can doubt that she implored help from heaven, while Barak fought with Sisera.

Ver. 22. *Then were the horsehoofs broken*] They could not save themselves by flight, their horse-hoofs being broken in stony places, when they ran away as fast as they were able.

By the means of the pransings,] The more haste they made the worse speed (as the common saying is), for they running full gallop (so the Jews interpret the Hebrew word *dahar* [pransings] to signify the *swiftest course*), they trod the harder on the ground, and were in the more danger to break their hoofs.

The pransings] The Hebrews wanting a superlative degree in their language, are wont to double a word (as Peter Martyr here observes); and therefore *pransings, pransings*, he thinks, are not here an ornament of speech, but signify the most vehement motion, when a horse is in his full speed.

Of their mighty ones.] Of their best and strongest horses; for the word *abbirim*, in Hebrew, as Bochart observes, signifies not only strong bulls, but horses also (see Hierozoic. par. i. lib. ii. cap. 6).

Ver. 23. *Curse ye Meroz,*] Most interpreters, both Jewish and Christian, understand by Meroz a city not far from the place where the fight was. Which seems to be proved by the following words, where he speaks of the *inhabitants thereof*. But R. Sol. Jarchi thinks Meroz signifies a potent person in those parts, who being able to give great assistance to Barak, and living near Mount Tabor, refused to do any thing. And this is the opinion of the Talmudists (whom Jarchi is wont to follow), as Mr. Selden shows out of the Gemara Babylon. lib. i. De Synedr. cap. 6, p. 123, &c., where they fancy that this great man was excommunicated by Deborah, with all his adherents; and hence they fetch the ground and original of the excommunication in use among them: which is an idle conceit; there being no such thing as excommunication practised among them, till they had quite lost their civil government, and it was in the hands of the heathen.

Said the angel of the Lord,] She would not have it thought that this curse proceeded from her anger, but from the authority of God, who, by his angel, which spake to her, denounced it against Meroz. And who should this angel be, but the Captain of the Lord's host, mentioned Josh. v. 14 (see there).

Curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof;] They that take Meroz for a person, by *inhabitants* understand those that dwelt near him, and were his dependants or associates; which is very forced.

Because they came not to the help of the Lord,] The battle was the Lord's, as the Scripture elsewhere speaks, and therefore they that refused to engage in it, refused to maintain his cause: and the people of

24 Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be, blessed shall she be above women in the tent.

25 He asked water, and she gave him milk; she brought forth butter in a lordly dish.

26 She put her hand to the nail, and her right hand to the workmen's hammer; and with the hammer she smote Sisera, she smote off his head, when she had pierced and stricken through his temples.

this place are so heavily cursed, when all others that came not in to help their brethren are only discommended, because they lived so near, that they might easily have joined their forces with them, whereas some others lived a great way off, which might something excuse them.

Against the mighty.] According to this translation of the last word, she means their most powerful enemies; but the Hebrew may as well be translated "with the mighty;" that is, with other valiant men who freely offered their service in this enterprise. This aggravated their guilt, that when they had such noble examples of zeal from others, who were less able to help, they would afford no assistance.

Ver. 24. *Blessed above women shall Jael—be.*] On the other side, she desires Jael may be ever praised; or rather foretells she shall always continue famous, and her husband too, in future generations.

Blessed shall she be above women in the tent.] This is thought to be a wishing, or promising her all happiness in her domestic affairs. But P. Martyr thinks it may be interpreted, "Blessed shall she be for what she did in her tent." Which was no less glorious, than what others did in the field.

Ver. 25. *He asked water, and she gave him milk.*] Her prudence is first commended, in treating him with great respect, that he might entertain no suspicion of danger.

She brought forth butter] Milk from which the cream (of which butter is made) was not separated.

In a lordly dish.] The Hebrew word *sephel* (which we translate *dish*) is nowhere else found, but in the story of Gideon in the next chapter, v. 38, where we translate it a *bowl*. From whence Bochart rightly concludes, it signifies a large and wide vessel (par. i. Hieroz. lib. ii. cap. 49), which explains the word *lordly* or *princely*; which doth not signify that she had any gold or silver vessel in her tent (which was not agreeable to their manner of living), but that she brought him milk in the best vessel she had, and that very capacious: for out of such great men were wont to drink, as Pet. Martyr observes out of Cicero against M. Antony.

Ver. 26. *She put her hand to the nail.*] Next her courage and fortitude is celebrated: and by *hand* is to be understood her left, wherewith she held the nail, as with her right hand the hammer.

Her right hand to the workman's hammer.] A lively description how she went about this work: just as if she had been fastening her tent.

She smote Sisera.] The Hebrew word *halam*, which we translate *smote*, signifies such a blow as makes a contusion.

She smote off his head.] The work *machak*, which is commonly translated *cut off*, cannot have that signification here; because there is not the least indication in this story of her cutting off his head from the body, but only of striking it through, as here it must be understood.

When she had pierced and stricken through his temples.] Here are two words more, *machalz* and *chalaph*,

27 At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down: at her feet he bowed, he fell: where he bowed, there he fell down dead.

28 The mother of Sisera looked out at a window, and cried through the lattice, Why is his chariot so long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariots?

29 Her wise ladies answered her, yea, she returned answer to herself,

30 Have they not sped? have they not divided

signifying *penetrating* and boring quite through. And the place is specified where his head is perforated, which was in his temples, the softest part of it, which gave the easiest entrance to the nail.

Ver. 27. *At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down.*] In the Hebrew, *between her feet*, &c., which some of the Talmudists have abused to a lewd sense; justly censured by Kimchi; who observes, that this is according to the style of the Hebrew language, which reduplicates words, that they may more strongly affirm what is said; and these words, *he bowed, he fell, signify* (he thinks) such a fall that he never rose up again. But taking all these expressions together [*he bowed, he fell, he lay down*], they seem to me to import, that, at the first stroke, he started and lifted up his body; but being very much stunned, he soon lay down again.

At her feet he bowed.] Then I suppose she repeated her stroke, which perfectly disabled him to move.

There he fell down dead.] And at the third stroke, it is likely, she fastened his head to the ground. But this repetition doth not certainly argue that she gave so many blows (though it may pass for a probable conjecture); for it is an usual elegancy in such compositions, wherein she intended to set out this fact of Jael's with the highest encomiums. Some may fancy, indeed, that it deserved reprehension, rather than commendation, upon many accounts; being a breach of the laws of hospitality, and of the peace which was between her family and Jabin, &c. But this fact is not to be measured by the common rules which are to govern us, it being an extraordinary, heroic, and Divine work, unto which she was excited by God; whose people Jabin oppressed with a cruel servitude, from which God ordered Barak to be their deliverer; who, having defeated all his forces in a miraculous manner, Jael understood there was a Divine hand in this victory, and was moved by the same spirit which stirred up Deborah and Barak, to help, by this act, to complete their shameful overthrow. For nothing could be more dishonourable, than for a great captain to fall thus by the hand of a woman.

Ver. 28. *The mother of Sisera looked out at a window.*] Was in earnest longings and expectations to see him return victorious.

Cried through the lattice.] Either fear of some miscarriage, or impatient desire, made her cry out with a lamentable voice; as the word *jabab* in the Hebrew signifies.

Why is his chariot so long in coming?] Having such numerous forces, they promised themselves an easy and speedy victory over a handful of the Israelites; and therefore wondered what retarded his coming back, with all his chariots, in triumph.

Ver. 29. *Her wise ladies answered her.*] The Vulgar takes the Hebrew words to signify, "one of the wisest of his wives" (who was not so apt to despair as his mother) replied to her. For it is well observed by Terence, in his *Adelphi* (as Pet. Martyr here notes), *Multo satius est, ea evenire nobis quæ de absentibus suspiciantur uxores, quam ea quæ parentes*, "It is

the prey; to every man a damsel or two; to Sisera a prey of divers colours, a prey of divers colours of needlework, of divers colours of needlework on both sides, meet for the necks of them that take the spoil?

much better that those things should happen to their absent husbands, which their wives suspect, than those which their parents fear." But I see no reason to depart from our translation, which is the same with the LXX. *αι σοφαι αρχουσαι*, "the prudent noble women that attended her," &c.

Yea, she returned answer to herself,] Upon better consideration, her hopes exceeded her fears.

Ver. 30. *Have they not sped?*] She did not think it possible that they should miscarry.

Have they not divided the prey?] She was willing to be confident they had got the victory; and therefore imputed their stay to the time that must needs be taken up in making an equal division of the spoil. For those days were not like to ours, wherein every man keeps to himself what he can lay his hands upon; but after the battle, they were obliged to bring all that they had gotten to the general of the army; who considered every man's quality and desert, and accordingly distributed the prey among them.

To every man a damsel or two;] Young virgins are by all historians and poets reckoned as a principal part of the soldier's prey. And she puts here an unusual word for a damsel, which is *racham*; for it properly signifies a womb, and seems here to be spoken by way of contempt, as if they were good for nothing but to serve their filthy appetites.

To Sisera a prey of divers colours,] These were the richest part of the spoil, being highly esteemed by all people, as Pliny observes, lib. viii. cap. 48, where he mentions a great variety of them, both in his own and in ancient time: for he takes notice, that Homer mentions *pietas vestas*, as he calls them, *painted garments*, which shined with flowers and trees in beautiful colours; which the Phrygians afterward wrought with needles; and Attalus invented the interweaving gold in them; but for divers-coloured garments, Babylon was above all places famous; from whence they had the name of *Babylonish garments*, which were much

31 So let all thine enemies perish, O LORD: but let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might. And the land had rest forty years.

valued even in those early times, as appears by the story of Achan, Josh. vii. 21, and they were of such account in aftertimes, that every one was not permitted to wear them but only the greater sort of persons (as Pet. Martyr observes out of the Roman laws), which may be the reason that here they are appropriated to Sisera as his part of the spoil.

Meet for the necks of them that take the spoil?] That is, of the chief commanders, to whom the spoil, as I said, was brought to be divided. In the Hebrew the words are, "for the necks of the spoil;" which Kimchi expounds, "the head of the prey." As if she had said, These are to be put in the head of the prey; and therefore fit to be given only to the general of the army.

Ver. 31. *So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord:*] From hence she takes occasion to convert her speech to God, beseeching him, that all his enemies may be thus disappointed of their vain hopes.

Be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might.] Increase in power and force, as the sun doth from the time of its rising till it comes to its meridian height.

The land had rest forty years.] These forty years are to be computed from the time of Ehud, as our great primate thinks, who thus translates these words, "The land rested in the fortieth year," after the former rest which was restored to it by Ehud (see him ad A. M. 2719). But it is far more reasonable to compute them from the conquest of Jabin by the northern tribes; after which, the whole country lived in peace for the space of forty years, till the Midianites, as it follows, sorely oppressed them.

I conclude this chapter as Conradus Pellicanus doth; "Let some Homer or Virgil go now, and compare his poetry, if he be able, with the song of this woman. And if there be any one that excels in eloquence and learning, and hath more leisure than I, celebrate the praises and learning of this panegyric more copiously."

CHAPTER VI.

1 The Israelites for their sin are oppressed by Midian. 8 A prophet rebuketh them. 11 An angel sendeth Gideon for their deliverance. 17 Gideon's present is consumed with fire. 24 Gideon destroyeth Baal's altar, and offereth a sacrifice upon the altar Jehovah-shalom. 28 Joash defendeth his son, and calleth him Jerubbaal. 33 Gideon's army. 36 Gideon's signs.

1 AND the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years.

CHAP. VI.

Ver. 1. *Israel did evil*] After the death of Deborah and Barak (who kept them. I suppose, in the true religion), they relapsed to idolatry.

The Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years.] Because it is not said, that "the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel" (as in ch. ii. 14, iii. 8, &c.), nor that he sold them into the hand of Midian (which is the expression iv. 2, and other places), Pet. Martyr thinks they were not altogether so bad as they had been formerly; and therefore God was pleased to shorten the tyranny of the Midianites over

2 And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel: and because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them the dens which

them, who, being their old enemies, as they came through the wilderness, and having been, in a manner, utterly destroyed by the Israelites (Numb. xxxi.), were very much disposed to take a sharp revenge: for that those Midianites who were neighbours to Moab are here meant, is evident from their situation, which was beyond Jordan (vii. 24, 25, viii. 4), and by the people that joined with them, who were the "children of the east" (ver. 3), whereas the other Midianites, where Jethro lived, were in the south near the Red Sea. Some fancy, indeed, that the Midianites, neighbours to Moab, being cut off by Moses, there was no such nation. But it must be considered

are in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds.

3 And so it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, even they came up against them ;

4 And they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass.

5 For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers for multitude ; for both they and their camels were with-

that some of them saved themselves by flight into other countries, and, after the Israelites were settled in Canaan, returned again ; and, in near two hundred years' time, may well be thought to have re-peopled their country, especially by the help of other people, who came, it is likely, and planted among them ; and being seated in the same country, are all called Midianites.

Ver. 2. *The hand of Midian prevailed against Israel :*] They brought the Israelites in subjection to them, and were the fourth nation that oppressed them, after the Mesopotamians, Moabites, and Canaanites.

Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains, &c.] They betook themselves to these places for safety ; for, I suppose, they did not now make them, but made them their retreat. And by the first word *minharotâ*, is meant those hollow places in the rocks upon the mountains, where men might hide themselves, and make them their habitation ; there being cracks and holes in them here and there, to let in light, as the Hebrew word signifies. And the second word *naharoth* denotes such caves as were in the fields, made either by nature, or by art and labour ; which being dark, were fit only to hide their goods and provision in them. And the third word *mitzaroth* signifies such fortresses, as secured themselves, and families, and cattle, and all they could carry thither. But this shows their condition was very lamentable, in that they were driven from their houses in the villages, and cities too ; at least the richest of them durst not trust themselves there, but fled to strong holds for safety.

Ver. 3. *When Israel had sown,*] They did not disturb them in seed-time, but let them be quiet till they had ploughed and sowed their land.

That the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east,] This shows, that some of the same people joined with the Midianites, that did formerly with the Moabites, when they oppressed Israel (iii. 13). For by the "children of the east," are meant some of the people of Arabia, as Procopius notes, who observes Josephus to be of the same mind : for Arabia lay east of Egypt, where the Israelites learned to speak in this manner.

Even they came up against them :] Entered the land of Israel with such armies as might destroy the fruits of the earth ; as it follows in the next verse.

Ver. 4. *They encamped against them,*] The Vulgar translates it "They pitched their tents among them ;" which signifies them to have been an Arabian people, or such as lived after their manner.

Destroyed the increase of the earth,] Having formed a camp, they sent out parties from thence well armed to destroy all the corn, and the rest of the fruits of the earth.

Till thou come unto Gaza,] That is, they made an universal devastation from one end of the country to the other ; for they came from the east, and destroyed

out number : and they entered into the land to destroy it.

6 And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites ; and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord.

7 ¶ And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord because of the Midianites,

8 That the Lord sent a prophet unto the children of Israel, which said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage ;

all till they came to the western coast, where Gaza was.

Left no sustenance for Israel,] Whom they intended to famish.

Neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass,] Their camels and other cattle, which they brought along with them, having eaten up all ; for they were so numerous, as we are told in the following verse, that they overspread the whole country.

Ver. 5. *For they came up with their cattle*] Not merely an army of men, but of cattle of all sorts, came on purpose to make this destruction.

Their tents,] With their whole families, that they might be able to consume the more.

They came as grasshoppers] Or, as locusts (as the word *arba* is commonly translated), which have their very name from the vast numbers wherein they were wont to come, and were most devouring creatures.

For both they and their camels were without number :] No country more abounded with camels than Midian (as I observed before out of Bochart's Hierozelicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 2) ; and they are only peculiarly mentioned, because the Midianites were more famous for them than for horses or other beasts.

They entered into the land to destroy it,] Their very design was to depopulate the country by this means.

Israel was greatly impoverished] For the fruits of their land being thus destroyed, their money was drained from them to purchase corn from other countries.

Israel cried unto the Lord,] Who never failed to help them, when they truly turned to him.

Ver. 7.] Though the poverty which pinched them was that which moved them to cry unto God for relief, yet he was so gracious as to send one to make them sensible of their sin.

Ver. 8. *The Lord sent a prophet*] Whom the Jews fancy to have been Phinehas, which is not probable, men not commonly then living to the age of two hundred years, which he must be of, and more, if he were the prophet now sent to them. It is far more likely, that God still continued other prophets among them, beside the high-priest, to put them in mind of their duty, and to call them to repentance when they forsook him. And it appears by the foregoing story, that there was a woman who had the spirit of prophecy ; which shows that, at least, upon special occasions, he raised up such persons among them.

Which said unto them,] At some great festival, it is likely, when they were all assembled.

Thus saith the Lord God of Israel,] This is the style in which the prophets commonly spake.

I brought you up from Egypt,] All the prophets put them in mind of this, as the greatest obligation upon them, to be entirely devoted to God's service. See Exod. xix. 4—6, where God himself tells them for what purpose he had delivered them from that bondage. And see Josh. xxiv. 5, 6.

9 And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppressed you, and drave them out from before you, and gave you their land;

10 And I said unto you, I am the LORD your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice.

11 ¶ And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abi-ezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites.

Ver. 9. *I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians.*] Who, when they pursued them to bring them back into slavery, were all drowned in the Red Sea.

Of all that oppressed you.] That endeavoured to oppress them; such as the Amalekites, Sihon and Og, who opposed their passage to Canaan.

Drave them out from before you, and gave you their land.] By the hand of Joshua, who settled them in the land which God promised to them. All this is said to put them in mind how faithfully God had performed his covenant with them, and to upbraid them with their own infidelity.

Ver. 10. *I am the Lord your God.*] See Exod. xx. 1; Deut. v. 6, vi. 4.

Fear not the gods of the Amorites.] Do not worship them, nor imagine they can do you any harm (Deut. vii. 12—14; Josh. xxiv. 14, 15).

Ye have not obeyed my voice.] Which was the cause of all the evil that had befallen them, and would still continue, if they did not now hearken unto him, as they desired him to hear their cry. This, no doubt, the prophet pressed upon them, in more words than are here set down, these being only the heads of his speech.

Ver. 11. *There came an angel of the Lord.*] The Israelites laid the application of the prophet's speech to their heart (it is to be supposed), and began to reform their ways, which moved him to send an angel to appoint them a deliverer; for he is called "an angel of the Lord," both here and ver. 12, 20—22.

And sat under an oak.] In a grove of trees (as Arius Montanus understands it), where there was one great well-spread oak, in which there was a seat.

Ophrah.] The city where Gideon was born and lived (viii. 27).

That pertaineth unto Joash the Abi-ezrite.] This is added to show what Ophrah he means; for there was another in the tribe of Benjamin (Josh. xviii. 23), whereas the family of Abi-ezer belonged to the tribe of Manasseh (Josh. xvii. 2).

His son Gideon threshed wheat.] The Hebrew *chabat*, in this place, signifies to *thresh* out with a stick or rock, as Kimchi here observes. And so the LXX. $\rho\alpha\beta\delta\acute{\iota}\omega\upsilon\sigma$. But the common way of thrashing corn out of the ear was by treading it with oxen, which they called *dash*, 1 Chron. xxi. 20. This Gideon did not use, partly for privacy, but chiefly because he had but a little to beat out.

By the winepress.] Where none would suspect his thrashing of corn.

To hide it from the Midianites.] Who watched narrowly all the thrashing-floors of the Israelites, who might have bought sheaves of their neighbours, or, perhaps, sown and reaped a little corn, in some private fenced places, where the cattle of the Midianites did not come to eat it up.

Ver. 12. *The angel—appeared unto him.*] Gideon, I suppose, turning his face that way, beheld him sitting under the oak.

12 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour.

13 And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.

14 And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel

The Lord is with thee.] He did not take him to be one of the Midianites by his posture, and manner of appearance, and was made more certain of it by this salutation. Wherein he doth not pray God to be with him, but declares him to be with him (as appears by Gideon's answer), that is, to assist him to be the deliverance of his people. The Targum here translates it, "The Word of the Lord is thy help." Whereby it appears, the ancient Jews did not look upon this angel merely as a heavenly messenger sent from God but as the Lord himself, as he is called, ver. 14, 16, 23—25, 27. Which is confirmed by the following verse, as the same Targum translates it.

Thou mighty man of valour.] He was naturally courageous, but made more so by a Divine inspiration, and yet did not disdain to mind husbandry, as the greatest persons did in ancient time. Inasmuch that Pliny saith, The earth brought forth its fruits more happily and abundantly, cum imperatorum clarissimum manibus tractaretur, "when it was cultivated by the hands of the most famous commanders," for they had more skill and industry in their management, than the ordinary people.

Ver. 13. *Oh my Lord.*] The Hebrew word *bi* (which we translate Oh, or I beseech thee) may literally be translated, *with me*; by way of interrogation: as much as to say, "How can that be?" It appears by the word *Adonai* (Lord) which is used to all great men, that he did not yet think him to be an angel, but some person of extraordinary quality, who wished well to the Israelites.

If the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? &c.] He thought their present condition sufficiently showed that their whole nation was forsaken by God; who had thrown them into that slavery, out of which he delivered their fathers, and did not appear, by any miraculous works, to be present among them as he was in Egypt, but left them to be devoured by the Midianites.

Here the Targum makes Gideon's answer to have been this, "Is the Shechinah of the Lord our help?" Whence then hath all this happened unto us?" Which paraphrase shows that they took the Word of the Lord to be the same with the Shechinah of the Lord, who had most gloriously appeared for their help (see ver. 16, and Josh. xiv. 12).

Ver. 14. *The Lord looked upon him.*] This shows it was not a mere angel, but the same Jehovah, who appeared to Joshua (v. 13, 14), in the likeness of an angel, and now cast a gracious aspect upon him: for to have respect unto a man, or unto his sacrifice, is graciously to accept him, and to be favourable to him; as the Lord now declared he was, by his very countenance, which had great kindness in it.

Go in this thy might.] This seems to intimate that Gideon was immediately inspired with a great courage, by that gracious aspect of the Lord upon him.

Thou shalt save Israel.] See those wonders recorded, which appeared in the deliverance of their

from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?

15 And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, where-with shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.

16 And the Lord said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.

17 And he said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me.

18 Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and set it before thee. And he said, I will tarry until thou come again.

fathers out of Egypt, of which Gideon said there was no token (ver. 13).

Have not I sent thee?] Is not this a sufficient authority, that thou hast a commission from God? great care is taken throughout all this book, to show that the judges all acted by a Divine warrant.

Ver. 15. *Oh my Lord.*] Still he took him to be only some extraordinary man.

Wherewith shall I save Israel?] He doth not reject the commission, but modestly declines it (as Theodoret observes), considering his own meanness, in comparison with many others.

Behold, my family is poor.] And consequently of little power to raise forces, to oppose so potent an enemy: the word we translate *my family*, is in Hebrew *my thousand*; for the Israelites were distributed, by Jethro's advice, into hundreds and thousands; and the thousand to which Gideon belonged, was the meanest of all the rest in that tribe. The Jews will have it, that Gideon was the *chiliarch*, or chief commander of this thousand; others say, his father Joash, who it appears by the story, was a considerable person; but it is uncertain whether he had such a government.

And I am the least in my father's house.] This shows that Gideon had no such command as the Jews imagine.

Ver. 16. *Surely I will be with thee.*] Do not consider thy poverty, but the power of God, which shall accompany thee: here the Targum thus paraphrases, "My Word shall be thy help;" who was the same that appeared to Joshua, with a sword in his hand.

Thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.] Defeat them as easily, as if he had but one man to deal withal.

Ver. 17. *If now I have found grace in thy sight.*] Am so highly favoured as to have this honour.

Then shew me a sign.] He doth not so much make a doubt, as desire to be confirmed in his belief.

That thou talkest with me.] That thou hast brought this commission from God, and that I shall be able to destroy the Midianites. He said this (as Conr. Pellicanus thinks) not because his faith wanted confirmation, but that he might make others believe, who would require a sign before they joined with him.

Ver. 18. *Depart not thence—until I come unto thee.*] Stay here till I go home, and return.

Bring forth my present.] So we rightly interpret the Hebrew word *mincha*; which, though it signify a *meat-offering* (as we observe in the margin), yet there was nothing of a sacrifice intended here, nor was Gideon a priest, or this a place of sacrifice.

Set it before thee.] He intended to entertain him, by making a feast for him.

19 ¶ And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour: the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought it out unto him under the oak, and presented it.

20 And the angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock, and pour out the broth. And he did so.

21 ¶ Then the angel of the Lord put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the Lord departed out of his sight.

22 And when Gideon perceived that he was

I will tarry until thou come again.] It was a great thing he was to undertake, and so God graciously condescended to give him all manner of satisfaction about it.

Ver. 19. *Gideon went in and made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes.*] For expedition's sake he made such cakes, they being soonest prepared: for it is a mere fancy of the Jews that this was done about the pass-over in the days of unleavened bread.

Brought it out unto him under the oak.] Set it before him on a table, and desired he would be pleased to eat; in which he followed the example of Abraham and Lot, and seems to have entertained him nobly, according to the way of feasting in those days; for a whole kid (part of which was boiled, and the other part, perhaps, otherwise prepared), and so many cakes, as an ephah of flour would make, was enough for several guests; and therefore so much set before one man, was to show his great respect to him.

Ver. 20. *Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes.*] He did not taste of them, intending to turn them into a sacrifice unto God.

Lay them upon this rock.] Which was near the grove of oaks, in the higher part of the city of Ophrah, as Bertram conjectures, in his book *De Repub. Judaica*, cap. 15.

Pour out the broth.] As Elijah, in aftertimes, bade them pour water upon his sacrifice.

He did so.] He obeyed him; though, it is likely, he thought it strange he should command him thus to dispose of the good cheer he had prepared for him.

Ver. 21. *The angel of the Lord put forth the end of the staff.*] For he appeared, I suppose, in the form of a traveller, who were wont to walk with a staff in their hand.

Touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock.] He did not smite the rock with his staff (by which stroke the fire might have been thought to be stirred up), but only gently touched the flesh and the cakes with it.

Consumed the flesh.] Together with the broth, that was poured on them; which was as great a miracle (if not greater) as if fire had come down from heaven, as in the sacrifices which Moses, and Elijah, and others, offered; by which the faith of Gideon was mightily strengthened, that the miracles done in ancient times (which he inquired after, ver. 12), were not ceased, and that God would be as good as his word to him, for this was a token of God's acceptance of him.

The angel of the Lord departed.] Went up into heaven, as the Chaldee paraphrase interprets it.

Ver. 22. *When Gideon perceived that he was an angel.*

an angel of the LORD, Gideon said, Alas, O Lord God; for because I have seen an angel of the LORD face to face.

23 And the LORD said unto him, Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die.

24 Then Gideon built an altar there unto the LORD, and called it Jehovah-shalom: unto this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

25 ¶ And it came to pass the same night, that

He was convinced, by this wonder, that he was not a mere prophet that appeared to him.

Alas, O Lord God! for because I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face.] He speaks as a man in a fright, and cuts off part of his words; for his meaning was, "I shall die:" such was the opinion of good men in those days, that if they saw apparently an inhabitant of the other world, he came to call them away from this; as appears more fully in the story of Manoah and his wife, in the thirteenth chapter of this book: and this opinion was very ancient, as may be gathered from the words of Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 30, and they were confirmed in it, perhaps, by the words of God to Moses, Exod. xxxiii. 20.

Ver. 23. *The Lord said unto him.*] Though the angel disappeared, and nothing was to be seen, yet the Lord, who appeared in that form to him, made him know he was still present with him, by speaking the following words in an audible voice.

Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die.] He bids him fear no harm, but quite contrary, expect all manner of good (which is comprehended in the word *peace*), and that in this world, where he should still continue, to work that deliverance which he promised by him: from such places as this the ancient Christians rightly gathered, that the Son of God appeared, upon some great occasions, in old time; which is not incredible, but a matter of easy belief, if we be persuaded that he did really appear in our flesh, which he took of the Virgin Mary, and dwelt among us for a long time, and then ascended in it to heaven, where he lives for ever; for why should we think it strange, if for a short time, he appeared some time in human shape, as a prelude to what he intended in the fulness of time? *Fuit sane id majus quod nobis præstitit, &c.*, (as Peter Martyr speaks), "It was indeed a greater thing which he did for us at last:" but he that did the greater, may well be granted to have done the less, and there is no reason to doubt of it.

Ver. 24. *Gideon built an altar there*] Not for sacrifice (which had been directly contrary to the law of God), but as a monument of that heavenly vision, and of the mercy promised to him, in that place where he built the altar; viz., where the angel stood and touched the flesh and unleavened cakes, and consumed them; such an altar the Reubenites made, Josh. xxii. 10, &c.

Jehovah-shalom.] That is, "the Lord here pronounced peace to me" (ver. 23), or (as we understand it in the margin), "the Lord grant peace:" which he had the greatest reason to expect, when God had declared it, at that very time when he looked for death.

It is yet in Ophrah] It was remaining when Samuel wrote this book.

Ver. 25. *The same night,*] After the angel's appearance.

The Lord said unto him,] In a dream, it is most likely, because it was in the night.

Take thy father's young bullock.] In the Hebrew words are two, *par, shor*, signifying a bullock full

the LORD said unto him, Take thy father's young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that is by it:

26 And build an altar unto the LORD thy God upon the top of this rock, in the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down.

grown; which his father, it is probable, had fattened up for a sacrifice to Baal.

Even the second bullock] Our translation supposes there was but one bullock, which he was ordered to take (because we read in the next verse, that this alone was sacrificed); but in the Hebrew, and the LXX. and the Vulgar (and our margin also), the words are, *and the second bullock*: which was next to the first in age.

Of seven years old,] Which was calved, as Arius Montanus observes, when their oppression under the Midianites began; and was now ordered to be sacrificed, in token that it should end with this bullock's death.

Throw down the altar of Baal] Which was in his ground, and built, perhaps, at his charge; but was for public use, as appears from ver. 28.

Cut down the grove that is by it.] Or rather, *upon it*; for so the Hebrew word *alau* signifies; and so the LXX. translate it, *ἐν αὐτῷ*, upon the altar before mentioned. And therefore by *asherah*, which we translate *grove*, must be meant the image in the grove which stood upon the altar. And so the word is used in other places (1 Kings xxiii. 6). Which Mr. Selden probably conjectures was the image of Ashtaroth, or Astarte; for she was worshipped together with Baal, ii. 13, where they are said to have worshipped Baal and Ashtaroth (for there was more than one Astarte), which is the same with iii. 7, where it is said they worshipped Baalim and the groves (see Syntag. ii. De Diis Syris, cap. 2). There could be no hope of deliverance till religion was reformed: with which therefore God orders him to begin.

Ver. 26. *Build an altar—upon the top of this rock.*] Where the angel appeared to him; from whence Bertram thinks the Israelites learnt to sacrifice in high places; if it were not rather a custom derived from the gentiles.

On the top of this rock there was a fortress, as I take it; which, it is likely, had been built to secure them from the Midianites. For the word for *rock* is not the ordinary one, viz. *tzor*, or *sela*, but *mahoz*; which signifies a strong hold.

In the ordered place.] Which St. Jerome took to be the place where the flesh and unleavened cakes were laid in order upon the rock (ver. 20); but it may signify, as we translate it in the margin, *in an orderly manner*.

Take the second bullock, and offer a burnt-sacrifice] If there were two bullocks which he took, it is hard to say what became of the first. Arius Montanus supposes it was offered for himself, and for his family; but this *second* is only mentioned, because it was the sacrifice that was offered for the whole nation, to implore God's mercy to them; for sacrifices were a kind of prayer and supplication. Gideon was no priest, but by God's special order was required to do this: which otherwise would have been a presumptuous sin.

With the wood of the grove] This was also an extraordinary command, whereby things employed to idolatry were converted to a sacred use: otherwise, God

27 Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the Lord had said unto him: and so it was, because he feared his father's household, and the men of the city, that he could not do it by day, that he did it by night.

28 ¶ And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, behold, the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove was cut down that *was* by it, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar that *was* built.

29 And they said one to another, Who hath done this thing? And when they enquired and asked, they said, Gideon the son of Joash hath done this thing.

had ordered them all to be utterly destroyed (Deut. vii. 5, xii. 3).

Ver. 27. *Gideon took ten men of his servants.*] In whom he could confide; and this number was as many as was necessary to make a congregation for public worship; and was sufficient also to execute what God had commanded.

Did as the Lord had said] Broke down the altar of Baal, cut down the grove, and built an altar unto the Lord, and offered the burnt-sacrifice.

He feared his father's household,—that he could not do it by day.] Without endangering a tumult, which might have ended in a fray.

He did it by night.] When he was likely to meet with no opposition. In this he gave an early proof of his faith in God, for it was a bold undertaking: but prudence is not excluded in the execution of the Divine commands: yet the greater speed men make, the more acceptable it is; and some think his zeal moved him to do this the very same night wherein God appeared to him.

Ver. 28. *The men of the city arose early*] And came to worship Baal, before they went about their business.

The altar of Baal was cast down.] They were very much surprised to see such an alteration.

The second bullock was offered] Which they knew was designed for a sacrifice to Baal.

Upon the altar that was built.] Not upon the altar of Baal which was thrown down, but on a new one which was built in another place; upon which the flesh of the second bullock was still flaming, being not quite consumed, when they came thither.

Ver. 29. *Who hath done this thing?*] Their superstition made them very solicitous to find out the author of this impiety, as they accounted it.

When they enquired and asked.] Here are two words in the Hebrew, importing that they made a diligent inquisition; examining many persons what they knew of it.

Gideon—hath done this thing.] Who gave this information, we are not told; nor how the discovery was made: perhaps some had seen him that morning stand by the sacrifice; which it is likely he would not forsake, as long as he durst attend it. Or some of his servants might let fall such words as gave suspicion: or, the altar and image standing in Joash's ground, and his bullock being offered, they thought that none, without the knowledge of his family, could come to attempt it: and, besides, it is probable that Gideon was known to be no zealous servant of Baal; and when all were so very much concerned for the demolishing of his altar, he expressing no concern at all, they confidently charged him with the fact.

Ver. 30.] It seems they were all zealous idolaters:

30 Then the men of the city said unto Joash, Bring out thy son, that he may die: because he hath cast down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the grove that *was* by it.

31 And Joash said unto all that stood against him, Will ye plead for Baal? will ye save him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilst it is yet morning: if he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar.

32 Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, saying, Let Baal plead against him, because he hath thrown down his altar.

33 ¶ Then all the Midianites and the Ama-

and thought him worthy of death who dishonoured those who were accounted gods.

Ver. 31. *Joash said unto all that stood against him.*] That is, against his son; demanding to have him produced and punished.

Will ye plead for Baal?] i. e. Will you take upon you to avenge his quarrel, and to be his patrons? Doth it belong to you to be his defenders and deliverers? It seems to have been a popular tumult, which he endeavours to repress; by representing to them, that such crimes were not to be punished by them, but by the magistrates of the city; and that they would bring themselves in danger of what they intended to do to Gideon, if they did not desist; as it follows in the next words.

He that will plead for him, let him be put to death] That is, Let me tell you, he that thus moves sedition in this cause, by my consent, should be put to death himself. And, it is likely, Joash was a magistrate in the city; who terrified them by declaring what his opinion would be, if they came to be tried for this riot.

Whilst it is yet morning.] That is, immediately. For it was early in the morning (ver. 28), when they came in this manner to Joash.

If he be a god, let him plead for himself.] If the magistrates neglected to punish the pretended crime of Baal, he tells them, in case he were a real god, would take care to do himself right, and therefore they need not be so much concerned about it: and so some understand the latter part of this verse, "He deserves to die presently, who is an adversary to Baal: but let the execution be done then by Baal himself. For if he be a god, he will take care of his own honour; and you need not trouble yourselves about it." It is likely Joash had been convinced by his son, that God had given him a commission to deliver his people; and to begin it with this reformation; which made him appear thus boldly in his son's cause; because he knew it was the cause of God.

Ver. 32. *On that day he called him Jerubbaal.*] In 2 Sam. xi. 21, he is called *Jerubbesheth*; for so some called Baal, in contempt, by the name of *Besheth*, that is, *shame and confusion*; which well expresses the nature of such idols.

Let Baal plead against him, because he hath thrown down his altar.] This is the reason why he gave him this name; which is as much as to say, "the adversary of Baal;" or, "him whom Baal hath a quarrel withal;" upon the account of the affront put upon him, in throwing down his altar. The Phœnicians called him *Jerombalus*, as appears by *Sanchoiathon*, whom *Eusebius* often quotes, as he is translated by *Philo-Byblius* into Greek: and *Porphyry* saith, he received certain commentaries from *Jerombalus*, the priest of the god *Jevo*. Which can be nothing but the books of *Moses*, which contain the laws delivered

lekites and the children of the east were gathered together, and went over, and pitched in the valley of Jezreel.

34 But the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet; and Abi-ezer was gathered after him.

35 And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh; who also was gathered after him: and he sent messengers unto Asher, and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali; and they came up to meet them.

36 ¶ And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said,

by Jehovah; as Huetius justly observes in his Demonstr. Evang. propos. iv. cap. 2, for the remains which we have of his writings plainly taste of the doctrine of Moses.

Ver. 33. *The Midianites, &c., were gathered together,*] As they were wont to do every year, to waste the country (ver. 3—5).

And went over] The river Jordan.

Pitched in the valley of Jezreel.] Which alarmed Gideon, and gave him occasion to execute his commission; it being not far from Ophrah; for Jezreel in the tribe of Judah is not here meant (mentioned Josh. xv. 36), but Jezreel in the tribe of Manasseh, or Issachar, which is frequently spoken of in the book of the Kings, being one of the royal seats of the kings of Israel; where there was a noble valley running from the east to the west, mentioned Josh. xvii. 16; Hosea i. 5.

Ver. 34. *But the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon,*] Or (as the words are in the Hebrew, and as the LXX. translate it), “clothed Gideon:” which is a phrase St. Paul uses to signify a man is replenished with that wherewith he is said to be clothed; or that he is fully possessed of it. So was Gideon with courage, and all other qualities necessary in a great commander.

He blew a trumpet; and Abi-ezer was gathered after him.] Came and offered their service to fight under his banner. This was a wonderful change, if the city of Ophrah, who were lately so incensed against him that they would have killed him for destroying their idol, now not only submitted to him, but were ready to join with him against all his enemies: but though this be not incredible, that they were converted from the idolatrous worship of Baal, when they saw no hurt befall Gideon for throwing down his altars, &c., yet this may be meant only of the rest of the Abi-ezrites, and especially those of his own kindred and family.

Ver. 35. *Who also was gathered after him:*] That is, the rest of his tribe; whose hearts God moved to resort unto him.

Asher, and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali;] After his own tribe was come in, he invited these three who bordered upon the tribe of Manasseh northward to come to his assistance: but he did not send unto the tribe of Ephraim, who were neighbours to the Manassites on the south; which afterward begat a quarrel, as we read, ch. viii.

They came up to meet them.] One of the copies of the LXX. refers this to Gideon, that he went up to meet those of the three tribes before mentioned; but others refer it to them who came up to meet Gideon; and so the Hebrew words seem to import. But which way soever we take it, they all joined their forces together; and from hence Sir J. Marsham infers, that the oppression fell only on this part of the country; though the whole story represents all the Israelites as

37 Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor; and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said.

38 And it was so: for he rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water.

39 And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon

in a miserable condition, and as submitting to his government after he had delivered them.

Ver. 36. *Gideon said unto God,*] In a prayer which I suppose he made unto him.

If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand,] He did not doubt of God's intentions, who had promised to be with him: for in pursuit of his commands he had done one great thing already, in throwing down Baal's altar; and had also blown a trumpet and listed soldiers; and had likewise seen wonderful effects of God's power, in consuming the flesh and the cakes that were laid upon the rock, by fire coming out of it: therefore he desired only a confirmation of his faith; and that, perhaps, for the sake of those who were to go with him, who might possibly be timorous: he might desire by some sign to know whether at this time he would make him victorious over the Midianites, or he was to wait for some other opportunity.

Ver. 37. *I will put a fleece of wool in the floor;*] Where they were wont to thrash corn; which was done in the open air, not in barns, as we do now.

If the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside,] He supposed that the dew which distilled from heaven was a Divine gift (as the Scripture often testifies, particularly Gen. xxviii. 28), which he desires might be so governed by God, that though it commonly fall everywhere, it might now, by his extraordinary providence, water only his fleece.

Ver. 38.] When there was not a drop upon the earth round about it. The word *sephel*, which here we translate *bowl*, was used in the foregoing chapter, ver. 25, which see.

Ver. 39. *Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once:*] Though God did not chide him for his former desire, nor charge him with any distrust of his power and will to do what he promised, yet Gideon was afraid lest he should be very angry at his renewing the same request, because it looked like a diffidence in God's word. But if we consider that it was for the farther and fuller satisfaction of those that were to go with him, it may be excused; and as he promises that he will ask no more signs, so we do not find the Lord took it ill of him that he asked this.

Let me prove—with the fleece:] This is a bad word when it denotes men's infidelity, that no sign will be given them; but a good one when it signifies an humble desire to have such a sign granted them, as here it doth.

Let it now be dry only upon the fleece, &c.] Upon these words Rabbag hath this observation, “The former miracle was not sufficient for his conviction, because it is in the very nature of wool to draw moisture to it; and therefore he desires this second miracle, which is contrary to the first.”

Ver. 40. *God did so that night:*] For some dew drops in the morning, other in the night. And here

the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew.

40 And God did so that night: for it was

God was pleased, not in the morning, but in that very night when he asked this sign, to sprinkle all the floor with dew, and let none fall upon the fleece. So ready (saith Bochartus) is God to hear our prayers, which his benefits do not so much follow as go before them, or immediately accompany them.

It was dry upon the fleece only.] Not upon all the country of Israel, but upon all the floor, or the land thereabout. By these quite contrary signs his faith was fully confirmed; and perhaps there was some need of it, when he saw the number of his followers reduced to a small handful of three hundred men (vii. 10). There are those who think he chose a fleece of wool for that purpose, not only because it

dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground.

was ready at hand, but the better to express how the earth was shorn by the Midianites, as the sheep had been by him; and then he begged the dew (a sign of the Divine favour) might fall upon the fleece, it was to represent the kindness of God to him; and when he begged it might fall upon the whole ground, it represented his favour to all the people: and, lastly, that these two miracles, opposite one to the other, do notably set forth the state of that nation, who were moistened with the dew of heaven (the knowledge of God) when the rest of the world were dry; and now are dry, when the rest of the earth are filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

CHAPTER VII.

1 Gideon's army of two and thirty thousand is brought to three hundred. 9 He is encouraged by the dream and interpretation of the barley cake. 16 His stratagem of trumpets and lamps in pitchers. 24 The Ephraimites take Oreb and Zeeb.

I THEN Jerubbaal, who is Gideon, and all the people that were with him, rose up early, and pitched beside the well of Harod: so that the host of the Midianites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.

2 And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel

vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me.

3 Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand.

CHAP. VII.

Ver. 1. *Rose up early.*] The very next morning, I suppose, after the last miracle.

Well of Harod.] It is but conjecture where this well was; viz. not far from Mount Gilboa.

By the hill of Moreh.] The Vulgar takes the word Moreh to signify high; and then this high hill can be no other than the forenamed Gilboa. Here Pellicanus observes, that prudence and diligent forecast is to be used, even when we are under the Divine conduct; for he thinks Gideon acted like a skilful commander, when he quartered his army so as to have the enemy on the north of him, rather than the east or the south.

In the valley.] Of Jezreel, as was said before, vi. 33, which had Hermon on the north, and Gilboa on the south of it.

Ver. 2. *The people that are with thee are too many for me*] They were but thirty-two thousand, against an innumerable army of the enemies (ver. 3, 12), which was a vast disproportion; and yet God would not use the service of such a company, lest it should obscure his glory; as it follows in the next words.

Lest Israel vaunt themselves against me.] He knew their humour, and foresaw they might be so vain as to ascribe their victory to their own power and prowess, and not to him who intended to show to all the world it was his miraculous work.

Ver. 3. *Proclaim in the ears of the people.*] According to the command of Moses, Deut. xx. 8.

Fearful and afraid.] The word which we translate afraid, is in the Hebrew *harod*: from whence some have conjectured the well where they pitched (ver. 1) was called by the name of *Harod*, because here a great fear came upon most of Gideon's army.

Let him return and depart early] As soon as he

can: or, as a great many understand it, "make what haste he can to his home;" it being a metaphor, they think, from the flying of a bird.

From mount Gilead.] Not that mountain which is so often mentioned in Scripture; for that was on the other side of Jordan, and in the most eastern part of their country (as appears from the story of Jacob, when he returned from Padan-Aram), but another mountain on this west side of Jordan, in the tribe of Manasseh: the name of whose grandson Gilead (from whom all the tribe descended) was given, it is probable, in memory of him, to some mountain in this country; which was called Mount Gilead, just as another mountain in the tribe of Ephraim was called Mount Ephraim. This seems to be a far more rational account of these words, than theirs who translate them *towards Mount Gilead*, or *about it*: or devise some other suchlike explication of the particle *min* (which we rightly translate *from*), as may consist with their opinion, that the mount on the other side Jordan is here intended. Gataker hath collected many interpretations of this kind in his *Cinrus*, lib. ii. cap. 18.

There returned of the people twenty and two thousand.] As God thought there were too many, so they thought there were too few, to fight with such a host as came against them: and therefore, though they were at the first forward to list themselves under Gideon, yet, when they saw no greater number come in, as they expected, their hearts failed them; for they trusted not in God, but in their own strength.

There remained ten thousand.] Who had more courage, and were resolved to venture their lives in the cause. Ralbag thinks the greater number that went away were men of bad lives, whose consciences made them afraid; and that those who remained were better men, which made them valiant and undaunted.

4 And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go.

5 So he brought down the people unto the water: and the LORD said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink.

6 And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three

And they were just the same number that went down with Barak from Mount Tabor, in their last deliverance (iv. 10).

Ver. 4. *The people are yet too many;*] The more valiant they were, the more they might be apt to ascribe to themselves.

Bring them down unto the water.] Which, it is likely, ran from the well or fountain of Harod, and made a brook.

I will try them for thee there.] Give thee a proof who are fit for the service. The Hebrew word *tzaraph* signifies to scour, purge, and purify; as fullers do cloth from its filthiness, or as refiners do gold and silver from their dross. So God intended to purge Gideon's army from all such persons as he judged unmeet for the undertaking.

That of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee;] He intended by such a voice as now spake unto him, to declare who should go with him, and who should not.

Ver. 5. *So he brought down the people*] Where it was proper to purge them.

Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue.] They were thirsty, we may well suppose, by the heat of the weather, and by their march, which made them greedily betake themselves to the water: where he bid Gideon observe the different postures which they used in quenching of their thirst. The LXX. here translate it *πάς ὁς ἀνέλκει τῆς γλώσσης αὐτοῦ*, "Whosoever licketh up the water with his tongue." Which is the very word the great philosopher uses in his History of Animals, lib. viii. cap. 6, where he saith, those creatures whose teeth are continued close together sup up water as horses and oxen do; but such as he calls *καρχαρόδοντα*, "that have teeth like a saw," do *λάττειν*, which is of the same signification with our English word *lap*, and the French *laper*, as Bochart observes.

Ver. 6.] Some ascribe it to the sloth and laziness of these three hundred men, that they would not stoop down to drink as the rest did; others to their timorousness, and the great fear they were in of being suddenly surprised by their enemies, which is the opinion of Josephus and Theodoret; both which great authors think, that God chose these three hundred men on purpose, because they were poor-spirited, that the victory might be acknowledged to be entirely owing to himself: and Grotius is of this mind, who thinks they lapped just as the dogs do of the river Nile, as they run, for fear of the crocodiles (see Sixtini Amama's Antibarbarus, lib. iii. p. 385). But it is evident that all the fearful persons were dismissed before; and it is not likely that courageous men were lazy; therefore I take it, as others do (particularly Procopius Gazæus, to be a token of their temperance, and of the nobleness of their spirit, which

hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water.

7 And the LORD said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the other people go every man unto his place.

8 So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets: and he sent all the rest of Israel every man unto his tent, and retained those three hundred men: and the host of Midian was beneath him in the valley.

9 ¶ And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Arise, get thee down unto the host; for I have delivered it into thine hand.

made them so desirous to engage the enemy that they would not stay to drink; but, though they were very thirsty, contended themselves to moisten their mouth with a little water; whereas the rest indulged themselves so far, as to drink their belly full. And it is the opinion of Rablag, among the Jews, that their lapping standing was a sign of their alacrity and fortitude. R. Solomon and Kimchi also think, that the rest had been worshippers of Baal, and, by bowing their knees to drink, were discovered, which is a far-fetched conceit.

Ver. 7. *By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you,*] It was sufficient to let all the world see God saved them and not men, that he employed only three hundred persons in this service, yet it was necessary these three hundred should be men of extraordinary faith and courage (such as Gideon had) to embolden them to this enterprise.

Let all the other people go] He had sent away above two-thirds of his army before, and now of that third part he keeps only the thirtieth.

Ver. 8. *The people took victuals*] They that returned home left so much provision as would serve to maintain three hundred men for some time.

Their trumpets;] If we suppose every thousand men to have ten trumpeters belonging to them, it was easy to furnish three hundred men with every one a trumpet, which we read (ver. 16) they had, that they might, when they sounded, make a noise, as if they were a greater number than really they were. It is hard to say, how Josephus came to say, that they carried in their hand *κρούς κέρας*, "a ram's horn," which they used *ἀντὶ σαβιγγος*, "instead of a trumpet" (lib. v. Antiq. cap. 8), for rams' horns are not hollow: and the LXX. only call them *κερατίνας*, not saying of what they were made. It may be supposed, indeed, that rams' horns were made hollow for this use, as the Jews make them at this day.

He sent all the rest—unto his tent.] Who, it is probable, did not go so far, but that they were ready to join with those who pursued the Midianites after their defeat (ver. 23, 24).

Retained those three hundred] Kept no more with him than this number whom God had chosen to accomplish his promise.

Midian was beneath him in the valley.] It seems his small handful of men lay encamped upon a hill, where the Midianites thought it not safe to assault them, not knowing what number they were, nor how entrenched, and therefore they lay still in the valley of Jezreel.

Ver. 9. *The same night,*] After he had reduced his forces to this small number.

Arise, get thee down unto the host;] Who lay in the valley below him.

I have delivered it into thine hand.] There, he

10 But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host :

11 And thou shalt hear what they say ; and afterward shall thine hands be strengthened to go down unto the host. Then went he down with Phurah his servant unto the outside of the armed men that were in the host.

12 And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude ; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the sea side for multitude.

13 And when Gideon was come, behold, there was a man that told a dream unto his fellow,

means, he should understand, and be fully satisfied by what he should hear, that his victory over them was as sure as if he had already obtained it.

Ver. 10. *If thou fear to go down.*] As he had some reason, having now such a slender company with him.

Go thou with Phurah thy servant down.] Every man is more afraid alone, than when he hath a trusty companion with him ; yet it was not fit to carry more than one, whose fidelity was known to him ; for secret designs are not to be committed to many.

Ver. 11. *Thou shalt hear what they say.*] Hear the discourse that some one of them would have with another.

Afterward shall thine hand be strengthened to go down.] Whereby he should be encouraged to attack that great army, with so small a number as he had remaining with him. This shows how exceeding acceptable his faith and obedience was to God, in sending away as many of his army as he bade him dismiss ; for now he gives him a further confirmation of his faith without asking.

Then went he down with Phurah.] Faith had quite expelled all his fear.

Unto the outside of the armed men.] To the out-guards, as we now speak, who seem to have consisted of fifty men, as the LXX. think the Hebrew word *chamushim* signifies ; for they translate it τὸν πεντηκοντα.

Ver. 12. *All the children of the east.*] Who joined with them in this invasion.

Lay along in the valley.] Of Jezreel before mentioned, into which Gideon now went down.

Like grasshoppers for multitude.] See vi. 5.

Their camels were without number.] Both Midian and Amalek, and the countries about them, abounded with camels, which were serviceable to them in their wars, as well as in carrying burdens (see Bochart, in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 2). And in them they placed their principal riches, as he observes out of Leo Africanus, who saith, that when the Arabians would express the great wealth of their prince, they do not say, he hath so many thousand pounds of gold or silver, but so many thousand camels.

As the sand by the seaside.] So the Hebrews are wont to express a vastly great number. The certain knowledge of their number, it is likely, never came to the knowledge of the Israelites ; but we read of a hundred and twenty thousand men that were slain, and fifteen thousand that escaped, with their two princes, viii. 10. And how many were taken captive, is not recorded.

Ver. 13. *There was a man that told a dream unto his fellow.*] Which troubled his thoughts, I suppose, when he was awake, as the dream of Pharaoh, and his butler, and baker, and of Nebuchadnezzar, in aftertimes, disturbed them.

Lo, a cake of barley bread.] Or, as the Vulgar translates it, "A loaf baked in the ashes," which was the meanest of all other bread, and hastily prepared.

and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along.

14 And his fellow answered and said, This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel : for into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host.

15 ¶ And it was so, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped, and returned into the host of Israel, and said, Arise ; for the Lord hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian.

16 And he divided the three hundred men

Tumbled.] Came tumbling down like a bowl from the mountain.

Into the host of Midian.] Through all the guards, into the very middle of the army, which was a sign that Gideon should break through all opposition.

Came unto a tent.] The principal tent, which was pitched for their kings, or their general, in the midst of the host.

Smote it that it fell.] This seemed strange to the man, that so small a thing as a cake, or a loaf of bread, should throw down a tent, which was not shaken by a strong wind.

Overturned it that the tent lay along.] It not only fell, but was so shattered that it could not be reared up again ; which was a lively emblem of the utter overthrow of the Midianites, and their numerous host, by Gideon, and his small company, as his fellow-soldier interpreted it.

Ver. 14. *His fellow answered.*] It appears by the example before mentioned, that God sometimes sent dreams into the minds of pagan people, who were much concerned to find an interpreter of them : but here, by a signal providence, one of his comrades was inspired to tell the meaning immediately.

This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon.] The barley-cake was a fit emblem of Gideon and his soldiers, who were a small number, as a cake is made of a little flour kneaded together ; and was mean also, and contemptible, in comparison with the Midianites, as a barley-cake is in comparison with wheat bread ; but the man could not have understood this, unless God had suggested it to him, for the confirmation of Gideon's faith and resolution.

A man of Israel.] i. e. A great commander ; for so the Hebrews truly interpret the word *ish*, who (as L'Empereur observes out of R. Schamaja) called the governor, or chief commander of those who guarded the temple *ish har habeth*, "the man of the mountain of the temple" (Cod. Middoth, cap. 1).

Into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host.] All their confederates. Nothing is more vain than our common dreams, yet God hath sometimes admonished men that way of future things, as many of the heathen themselves acknowledge (and those the wisest of them, such as Hippocrates). But that a common soldier should give such an exact interpretation of another soldier's dream, and that against themselves, and their own nation, is very extraordinary.

Ver. 15. *When Gideon heard the telling of the dream.*] He understood the Midianitish language, it is likely, having been long a subject to that nation ; or, perhaps, it did not differ much from the Hebrew.

That he worshipped.] Gave humble thanks to God for his goodness, in giving him new encouragement to proceed in his undertaking.

Returned into the host of Israel.] So he calls it (though it scarce deserved that name), because God

into three companies, and he put a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers.

17 And he said unto them, Look on me, and do likewise: and, behold, when I come to the outside of the camp, it shall be *that*, as I do, so shall ye do.

18 When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that *are* with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, *The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon.*

19 ¶ So Gideon, and the hundred men that were with him, came unto the outside of the

intended to do the same by this small number, as if they had been a great host.

Arise; for the Lord hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian.] He bids them make no doubt nor delay, for God had given fresh assurance of success.

Ver. 16. *He divided the three hundred men into three companies.*] Under three commanders-in-chief, as the Hebrew *rashim* imports, which signifies heads.

He put a trumpet in every man's hand,] That they might make a sound of a great army.

With empty pitchers,] Earthen pitchers, which had no water in them; wherein they had their lamps till they should think fit to light them.

Lamps within the pitchers.] Or, rather, torches; for, no doubt, they were made of pitch, or wax, and resin, and suchlike things as would burn long, and not be blown out by the wind, as lamps made of oil only are apt to be.

Ver. 17. *Look on me, and do likewise.*] Follow my example.

When I come to the outside of the camp,] Where he began the assault.

As I do, so shall ye do.] I suppose he told them what he would do, viz. after they heard him blow the trumpet (as it follows in the next verse), they should do the same, and then break their pitchers and light their torches, &c.

Ver. 18. *When I blow with a trumpet*] It is likely he commanded one of the three troops with whom he began the attack, as the next verse imports.

Then blow ye the trumpets also on every side] By this it appears that they did not fall upon them all in one place, but some on one part of their camp, some on another, that they might strike the greater terror into them, and put them into confusion.

The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon.] The word *sword* is not here in the Hebrew, where these words run thus, "for the Lord, and for Gideon:" but there being mention of the *sword*, ver. 20, it moved our translators to add it here also: and it is not to be thought contrary to the design of God (who would have the victory ascribed to himself, ver. 2), that Gideon here joins his own name with God's when they went to fight; for, as he puts God in the first place, and names himself only as his minister, so it is likely he had directions from God for it, who knew the name of Gideon, of whose extraordinary courage, no doubt, the Midianites had heard, would be very formidable to them.

Ver. 19. *So Gideon, and the hundred men that were with him,*] The Vulgar took a hundred to be put for the whole host of Gideon, and therefore saith, "The three hundred men that were with him:" but the LXX. expressly follow the Hebrew; and it is most probable that he led only a hundred men himself, the rest being commanded by some other valiant captains.

Came unto the outside of the camp] It is not said on what quarter; but it is probable on the east part of

camp in the beginning of the middle watch; and they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that were in their hands.

20 And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the lamps in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow *withal*: and they cried, *The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon.*

21 And they stood every man in his place round about the camp: and all the host ran, and cried, and fled.

22 And the three hundred blew the trumpets,

their camp as the second troop set upon them on the north-east part, and the third on the south-east: for this way they knew they would bend their flight when they were routed, and endeavoured to escape; their own country, and the fords of Jordan, lying on the east: and if they ran westward, there were Israelites enough to pursue them, and cut them off.

In the beginning of the middle watch;] That is, a little after midnight: for there were three watches among the Hebrews and the rest of the eastern nations, as Bechart observes out of Kimchi, R. Solomon, and others; the night being divided into three parts: and when the first third part was ended, they that had watched went to sleep, and another company succeeded them, till the morning watch. The Romans afterward divided the night into four parts, from whence we read, in the gospel, of the fourth watch.

They blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that were in their hands.] Though Gideon placed his hope in God alone, yet he did not neglect such prudent stratagems as are used in war, but made an appearance of a greater number of men than he had with him: for, hearing three hundred trumpets sound, the Midianites could not but apprehend a great army was come to assault them: the breaking of the pitchers also made a clattering noise, and the torches then, on a sudden, flaring in their eyes, was very amazing, especially when they heard them shout, "for the Lord, and for Gideon:" he chose also to make his attack at midnight, when they were in a dead sleep, and expected no disturbance.

Ver. 20. *The three companies*] The former words were concerning Gideon and his men, who began the attack; whose example the rest of the three companies followed, as he required, ver. 17, 18.

Held the lamps in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right] So they made no use of their swords, in the first onset; both hands being full of something else.

The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon.] But this stratagem had been of no efficacy, if God had not struck such a terror into them, when they heard these words, as quite confounded them: and yet these words do not import, as I said before, that the victory was divided between the Lord and Gideon; for it is most likely (as Pet. Martyr observes) that God suggested even this stratagem to Gideon, and made it successful.

Ver. 21. *They stood every man in his place*] Not one of the three hundred men stirred a foot from his place, but stood there without striking a stroke; as if they had been only torchbearers, to give light to their army, to see their way to the camp, and to do execution.

All the host ran, and cried, and fled.] They did not stand in their ranks to repel the Israelites; but brake up their camp (as the Hebrew word *jaratz* may be translated), and cried out with a lamentable voice, fleeing as fast as they could to their own country.

and the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host: and the host fled to Beth-shittah in Zererath, and to the border of Abel-meholah, unto Tabbath.

23 And the men of Israel gathered themselves together out of Naphtali, and out of Asher, and out of all Manasseh, and pursued after the Midianites.

24 ¶ And Gideon sent messengers throughout all mount Ephraim, saying, Come down

against the Midianites, and take before them the waters unto Beth-barah and Jordan. Then all the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and took the waters unto Beth-barah and Jordan.

25 And they took two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb; and they slew Oreb upon the rock Oreb, and Zeeb they slew at the winepress of Zeeb, and pursued Midian, and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side Jordan.

Ver. 22. *The three hundred blew the trumpets.*] That is, continued to blow them without ceasing.

The Lord set every man's sword against his fellow.] Being suddenly awaked out of their sleep in the middle of the night, and hearing such a noise, as if a vast multitude were falling upon them, they were in such disorder (which was increased by the clattering of the pitchers, and the blaze of the torches), that they could not distinguish their friends from their enemies, but killed one another; every man falling upon him that was next to him, whom he fancied to be one of Gideon's army. Thus the Philistines were defeated by Jonathan (1 Sam. xiv. 16, 20), and the Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites, in the days of Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. xx. 22, 23).

The host fled to Beth-shittah in Zererath, and to the border of Abel-meholah, unto Tabbath.] We find none of these places mentioned elsewhere in Scripture, but only Abel-meholah, in 1 Kings iv. 12, xix. 16, which being in the tribe of Manasseh, not far from the river Jordan, may support a conjecture, that the rest of the places were in the way thither.

Ver. 23. *The men of Israel gathered themselves together out of Naphtali, and out of Asher.*] He had sent to these tribes at the first raising of his army, and also to Zebulun, who, being neighbours, came to join him (vi. 25).

Out of all Manasseh.] Who were the forwardest in this enterprise, being his own tribe.

Pursued after the Midianites.] Though they had been lately disbanded by God's order, yet it is likely they lay ready, if there should be occasion, to help to complete the victory.

Ver. 24. *Gideon sent messengers throughout all mount Ephraim.*] He was desirous that others should have some share with him, in finishing this work; though he alone, with some few began it, and were exposed to all the danger. Would to God (saith P. Martyr on this occasion) that we were of this spirit in the church of Christ, that when any noble work is begun, we would call in all to help to perfect it: but, alas! such are our sins, we oft-times do all we are able to hinder one another.

Come down against the Midianites.] He invites them to come to his assistance against the common enemy; which his small handful of men were not

sufficient to destroy, though they had entirely routed them.

Take before them the waters.] He would have them make such haste, as to possess themselves of the fords, before the Midianites could get to them.

Unto Beth-barah and Jordan.] It is very probable, that Beth-barah is the same place with Beth-abara in St. John's gospel (i. 28), being the place where the Israelites passed over Jordan, when they first entered Canaan: and then by Jordan must be meant all the fords upon this river, from Beth-barah to the lake of Genesaret.

Took the waters unto Beth-barah and Jordan.] Posted themselves all along the river, from the lake before mentioned unto Beth-barah.

Ver. 25. *They took the two princes of the Midianites.*] Two great commanders, as the word *sarim* signifies, which we translate *princes*.

Oreb and Zeeb.] From hence some gather that the Midianitish language did not much differ from the Hebrew: in which *Oreb* signifies a *crow*, and *Zeeb* a *wolf*; from which creatures, and such like, it seems very anciently great men thought fit to take the names of their families: as the Romans did afterward (among whom we read of the Corvini, and Gracchi, and Aquilini, &c.) either as emens, or as monuments of their undaunted courage and dexterity in military achievements.

They slew Oreb upon the rock Oreb.] It is likely that there he was taken hidden in some hole, and from his slaughter there the rock had its name in future times.

Zeeb they slew at the winepress of Zeeb.] Where he also, in like manner, being taken and slain, gave name to this place.

Pursued Midian.] Did not content themselves with this, but pursued them to the other side of Jordan; whither some of them had escaped, before they would obey Gideon's summons.

Brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon.] As the manner was in aftertimes, when they would gratify a great conqueror with a welcome spectacle: for thus Pompey's head was offered to Cæsar, and Cicero's to Mark Antony.

On the other side Jordan.] Over which we read (viii. 4) Gideon passed, in the pursuit of the enemy.

CHAPTER VIII.

1 Gideon pacifieth the Ephraimites. 4 Succoth and Penuel refuse to relieve Gideon's army. 10 Zebah and Zalmunna are taken. 13 Succoth and Penuel are destroyed. 18 Gideon revengeth his brethren's death on Zebah and Zalmunna. 23 He refuseth government. 24 His ephod cause of idolatry. 28 Midian subdued. 29 Gideon's children, and death. 33 The Israelites' idolatry and ingratitude.

1 AND the men of Ephraim said unto him, Why hast thou served us thus, that thou calledst

us not, when thou wentest to fight with the Midianites? And they did chide with him sharply.

CHAP. VIII.

Ver. 1. *The men of Ephraim said.*] When they presented the heads of the two princes unto him.

Why hast thou served us thus.] They thought themselves slighted by their brethren of the tribe of Manasseh; which they took the more heinously, bec

2 And he said unto them, What have I done now in comparison of you? *Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abi-ezer?*

3 God hath delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb: and what was I able to do in comparison of you? Then their anger was abated toward him, when he had said that.

4 ¶ And Gideon came to Jordan, and passed over, he, and the three hundred men that were with him, faint, yet pursuing them.

5 And he said unto the men of Succoth, Give, I pray you, loaves of bread unto the people that follow me; for they be faint, and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian.

they looked upon themselves to be every way superior to them, by the blessing of Jacob.

That thou calledst us not,] As he had done other meaner tribes (vi. 35), who were not so able to assist him as themselves.

They did chide with him sharply.] Spake very angry words, as if they would have come to blows.

Ver. 2. *What have I done now in comparison of you?*] Proud men love to be praised; and therefore he magnifies their service as far surpassing his own.

Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abi-ezer?] A common proverb, I suppose, in those days, whereby they were wont to commend the smallest action of one, as superior to the greatest of another: and here it is most fitly applied; for it is as if he had said, These scattered parties that you have gleaned and picked up (as we now speak) at the fords of Jordan, are far more than those which I and my whole host (as it is called, vii. 15) have destroyed.

Ver. 3. *God hath delivered—the princes of Midian, &c.*] Which he was content they should think more considerable than all the common men that he had vanquished.

What was I able to do in comparison of you?] To yield unto others the glory which they affect, wonderfully appeases their highest displeasure.

Then their anger was abated toward him,] According to that of Solomon, Prov. xv. 1. This is an argument of the singular modesty and prudence of Gideon, and no less conspicuous in him than his courage; which is a mixture that rarely meets together, but is absolutely necessary to make a truly great man; who never appears so great, as when he treats insolent men with humility, and angry men with meekness.

Ver. 4. *Gideon came to Jordan, and passed over,*] Or rather, *had passed over;* for he was gone over Jordan before Oreb and Zeeb were taken; but it is not related till now, that what concerned the Ephraimites might be told altogether without interruption.

He and the three hundred men] Not one of which was lost.

Faint, yet pursuing them,] Tired with a long march, and eager pursuit; which notwithstanding they continued, being more solicitous for the public safety than their own.

Ver. 5. *Succoth,*] A city in the tribe of Gad, mentioned in Gen. xxxiii. 17, and other places.

Give—loaves of bread unto the people that follow me;] A small request considering their great merits.

For they be faint, and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna,] He gives two reasons for his request; because his men were faint with a whole night's labour for the public safety, and he had not

6 ¶ And the princes of Succoth said, *Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we should give bread unto thine army?*

7 And Gideon said, Therefore when the Lord hath delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into mine hand, then I will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers.

8 ¶ And he went up thence to Penuel, and spake unto them likewise: and the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered him.

9 And he spake also unto the men of Penuel, saying, When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower.

10 ¶ Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Kar-

made his victory so complete as he hoped to do, if his men were refreshed and enabled to pursue the enemy.

Kings of Midian.] It is no wonder we read of more kings than one in this country, there being five in Moses's time (Numb. xxxi. 8), and more than five times five in Canaan, which was divided into many petty kingdoms: and therefore, if we take Oreb and Zeeb also to have been kings, there is no improbability in it.

Ver. 6. *The princes of Succoth*] The rulers and governors of the city, who had the chief authority among them; as Oreb and Zeeb had in the army of Midian, for it is the very same word in the Hebrew.

Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand,] They bid him first take those kings captives, and bring them thither with their hands bound behind them, before he made any demands of them. It is a bitter sort of taunt or derision, arising from irreligion; which made them think there was nothing of God in this victory, and that he would not be able to perfect it.

Ver. 7. *When the Lord hath delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into mine hand,*] As he was confident he would.

Then I will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers.] This city was near to a wilderness, in which there were plenty of thorns and briers; with which he threatens to thrash their flesh, as the word is in the Hebrew: which some think signifies, that laying briers and thorns on their naked bodies, he intended to bring the cart-wheel over them (as the manner was of thrashing out their corn) to fasten them deep in their flesh, and then crush them to death: such a kind of punishment David inflicted on the Ammonites (2 Sam. xii. ult.)

Ver. 8. *He went up from thence*] He would not stay to avenge this repulse at present, but sacrificed his private resentments to the public service, and therefore went on after the enemy.

To Penuel,] Another city in the tribe of Gad, not far from Succoth; unto both which Jacob gave their name (Gen. xxxii. 30, xxxiii. 17).

Spake unto them likewise;] Desired some provision of them, for the same reason.

The men of Penuel] i. e. The principal persons of the city.

Answered him as the men of Succoth had] It is very likely they were idolaters; and therefore hated Gideon, who began to reform religion: and, trusting to the strength of their tower, despised the small forces he had with him.

Ver. 9. *When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower.*] In which they confided; and per-

kor, and their hosts with them, about fifteen thousand men, all that were left of all the hosts of the children of the east: for there fell an hundred and twenty thousand men that drew sword.

11 ¶ And Gideon went up by the way of that that dwelt in tents on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah, and smote the host: for the host was secure.

12 And when Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued after them, and took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and discomfited all the host.

13 ¶ And Gideon the son of Joash returned from battle before the sun was up.

14 And caught a young man of the men of

Succoth, and enquired of him: and he described unto him the princes of Succoth, and the elders thereof, *even* threescore and seventeen men.

15 And he came unto the men of Succoth, and said, Behold Zebah and Zalmunna, with whom ye did upbraid me, saying, *Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we should give bread unto thy men that are weary?*

16 And he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he taught the men of Succoth.

17 And he beat down the tower of Penuel, and slew the men of the city.

18 ¶ Then said he unto Zebah and Zalmunna, What manner of men were they whom

haps pointed to it, when they gave him their rude answer.

Ver. 10. *Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karhor,*] We read of this place nowhere else; and therefore it is but a conjecture that it was in the confines of the tribe of Gad. St. Jerome saith, there was a castle in his time called Carcaria, about a day's journey from the city Petra; and Eusebius saith the same.

All their hosts with them.] That is, all the troops or regiments, as we now speak, that fled with them.

About fifteen thousand men,] This moved those of Succoth and Penuel to mock at Gideon; that he should think with three hundred men, and they fatigued (as we now speak), to vanquish fifteen thousand, and that he should make demands to them, as if he had his enemies already in his power.

There fell an hundred and twenty thousand men] Besides all the people that attended their baggage.

Ver. 11. *Gideon went up by the way of them that dwell in tents*] He fetched a compass, by the country of the Arabians called Scenitæ, because they dwell in tents: and so he came upon the back of Zebah and Zalmunna; where they suspected no danger.

East of Nobah and Jogbehah,] Two cities, the last of which is expressly said to be in the tribe of Gad, Numb. xxxii. 35, and the former in the tribe of Manasseh, on the borders of Gad, as may be gathered from this place.

And smote the host:] He fell upon them, it is very probable, in the night, as he had done upon their main army at the first: and they having fled as fast as they could, the day, and part of the night before, were gone to take their rest; supposing they had been out of all danger of disturbance, now they were got so far from the place of battle.

Ver. 12. *When Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued after them,*] We read of no refreshment that he and his men had all this time; but either they met with some by the way, or God miraculously supported them.

And took the two kings of Midian,] Having routed their army, the two kings could make little resistance.

Ver. 13.] The Hebrew words *milmahaleh hachares* are so variously translated by very learned men, that it hath made it uncertain whether he returned after sun-rise, or a little before it set (as Kimchi among the Jews, and Mercer among Christians understand it), or, as our translation, *before sun-rise*; so the Vulgar, with Junius, and Tremellius, and others. And then it shows, both that Gideon had smote the army in the night, and that he made such haste to return, that he came to Succoth before they were aware, by break of day.

Ver. 14. *Caught a young man of the men of Succoth,*

and enquired of him:] Surprised him in the field, and examined him who were the principal men of the city.

He described unto him the princes of Succoth, and the elders thereof,] He wrote down (as the Hebrew word for *describe* signifies) the names, and perhaps, the dwellings of the great men of the city, and of the judges; who were the persons who derided him, and whom alone he intended to punish; not all the people, who were not in the guilt.

Ver. 15. *He came unto the men of Succoth,*] Got into the city very early; and called those men before him; who had put the late affront upon him.

Behold Zebah and Zalmunna, with whom ye did upbraid me,] He kept these two kings alive, on purpose that the princes of Succoth might see the Lord had delivered them into his hand; and made their jeers turn to their own shame.

Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, &c.] He repeats their own words to them (ver. 6), that he might reproach them with their inhuman usage of him; when he was in distress, and had done such wonders for their preservation.

Ver. 16. *He took the elders of the city,*] Under this name of elders, all their great men are comprehended.

Thorns of the wilderness and briers,] Which he had ready at hand.

With them he taught the men of Succoth.] He thrashed or tare them (as he threatened, ver. 7, and as some copies here have it), and by this severe correction taught them better manners, and more wisdom. It is not said that he tormented them till they expired (as some think he did, see ver. 7), for then it would be as plainly said, as it is in the next verse of the men of Penuel.

Ver. 17.] It is not said the princes and elders, and therefore this looks as if the whole city had been guilty of the affront put upon him, and consequently punished by him. But the *men of the city* in this story, hath signified only the principal persons in it, as I interpreted, ver. 8 (see ver. 15, 16), and therefore it is probable no other men are here meant, who fled into the tower, perhaps, for safety (knowing their own guilt, and the danger they were in of suffering for it), and were there slain.

Ver. 18. *What manner of men were they whom ye slew at Tabor?*] Where Gideon brought them before him to be judged, is uncertain: and when it was that they slew some Israelites at Tabor, we can but guess. It is probable he brought them out to receive their sentence after he came home: and that some who hid themselves in dens and caves, which were in the mountains (vi. 2), being found out, were slain by the Midianites. And Gideon's brethren being missing, he

ye slew at Tabor? And they answered, As thou art, so were they; each one resembled the children of a king.

19 And he said, They were my brethren, even the sons of my mother: as the Lord liveth, if ye had saved them alive, I would not slay you.

20 And he said unto Jether his firstborn, Up, and slay them. But the youth drew not his sword: for he feared, because he was yet a youth.

21 Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, Rise thou, and fall upon us: for as the man is, so is his strength. And Gideon arose, and slew Zebah and Zalmunna, and took away the ornaments that were on their camels' necks.

desired to find out, whether they were the persons whom they slew.

As thou art, so were they;] They were very like him, and perhaps resembled him in their countenance; as brethren frequently do one another.

Each one resembled the children of a king.] By this it appears, that Gideon was of a goodly presence; carrying greatness and majesty in his aspect: and that kings took care in those days to match only with graceful persons; by whom they might hope to have children like to themselves.

Ver. 19. My brethren, even the sons of my mother:] Though, perhaps, not by the same father.

If ye had saved them alive.] As generous men are wont to do comely and graceful persons: who look like men of quality, as we now speak.

I would not slay you.] For not being of the race of Canaan, he was not bound by the law to cut them off.

Ver. 20. Up, and slay them.] It was not unusual for great persons to do execution upon offenders in ancient times; no more than it became them to sentence them to death: and therefore they had not, as now, such as the Romans called *carifices*, public executioners: but Saul bade such as waited on him kill the priests; and Doeg, one of his great officers, did it (1 Sam. xvii. 17, 18). And Samuel himself is said to have hewed Agag to pieces in Gilgal; and Benaiah, the general of the army, to have fallen upon Joab at the horns of the altar. Accordingly Gideon would have had his son do this execution, that he might be early animated against the enemies of Israel; as Hannibal is reported, when he was a boy, to have been incensed against the Romans.

But the youth drew not his sword:] They were men, it is likely, of great stature, and of a fierce and stern countenance, who (as appears by the story) feared not death; which made the youth afraid even to look upon them.

Ver. 21. Rise thou, and fall upon us:] They thought it more honourable to die by the hand of Gideon, who was a man of as great strength as dignity; and would sooner despatch them than a stripling could do.

Gideon arose, and slew Zebah and Zalmunna, and took away the ornaments that were on their camels' necks.] As well as all the ornaments which they wore themselves. The word *saharonim* is found nowhere but here, and ver. 26, and in Isa. iii. 18, where we translate it "round tires like the moon." So our margin also in this place, "ornaments like the moon;" following the LXX. who translate it *σπίλοις*, "little moons." So ancient was this custom of wearing ornaments of this figure, which was spread afterward over many nations. Huetius thinks it came originally from the Phœnicians, who were the worshippers of Astarte,

22 ¶ Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also: for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian.

23 And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the Lord shall rule over you.

24 ¶ And Gideon said unto them, I would desire a request of you, that ye would give me every man the earrings of his prey. (For they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.)

25 And they answered, We will willingly give them. And they spread a garment, and did cast therein every man the earrings of his prey.

i. e. the moon; and went from them to the Arabians, who were very anciently devoted to the moon, who propagated it to the Turks; and the Brachmans also are wont to adorn their heads in the same figure; as he observes in his *Demonstr. Evangel. propos. iv. p. 197.*

Ver. 22. Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son] They would have made his dominion over them hereditary.

For thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian.] They pretended to make this offer out of gratitude to him; but, in truth, they were disposed now (as their posterity were afterward) to throw off the Divine government; being desirous to set a king over themselves, like the rest of the nations round about them. And now they thought was a fit opportunity; when such an extraordinary judge was raised up, as had done wonders beyond all his predecessors; and might, they thought, be ambitious enough to establish the supreme authority in his family.

Ver. 23. I will not rule over you,] He absolutely rejected their offer; because he looked upon God as their king, who appointed what deputy he pleased to rule them: and therefore he accounted this to be an attempt to alter the government of God without asking his consent.

The Lord shall rule over you.] As he hath done hitherto. This shows that these two could not consist together; a successive dominion of kings and such governors as they now had by the Divine appointment. Such a one was Gideon, raised up by God when they needed a deliverer; and therefore he durst not accept of the authority they offered him, because it was a thing sacred, and proper only to the Divine Majesty to order who should govern: whence it is that the judgment which was administered among that people was called "God's judgment," Deut. i. 17, and Solomon is said to sit upon "the throne of the Lord," 1 Chron. xxix. 23, and the kingdom of his posterity is called "the kingdom of the Lord," 2 Chron. xiii. 8, because, before kings were settled in Israel, the Lord was their king; from whom the government was derived to the house of David by a special act of God.

Ver. 24. I would desire a request of you,] Which he thought, after such a great offer from them, they would not deny him.

That ye would give me every man the earrings of his prey.] He doth not ask all the ear-rings they had got; but from every man one, or as many as he pleased.

For they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.] The Chaldee paraphrast well expresses it, "because they were Arabians," who are called "the children of the east" (vi. 3), and generally wore such ornaments, as I observed upon Exod. xxxii. 2. Ishmaelites, also, and Midianites, were so near

26 And the weight of the golden earrings that he requested was a thousand and seven hundred *shekels* of gold; beside ornaments, and collars, and purple raiment that *was* on the kings of Midian, and beside the chains that *were* about their camels' necks.

27 And Gideon made an ephod thereof, and put it in his city, *even* in Ophrah: and all Israel went thither a whoring after it: which thing became a snare unto Gideon, and to his house.

neighbours, and so mixed together, that the Scripture speaks of them as one people (see upon Gen. xxxvii. 28).

Ver. 25.] They made no difficulty to grant his request; but, as we speak, no sooner said than done.

Ver. 26. *The weight—was a thousand and seven hundred shekels of gold;*] It is easy to compute what this makes of our money, by considering the value of a shekel, and the proportion that silver holds to gold. Of which see the very learned treatise of the Bishop of Peterborough, concerning Scripture Weights and Measures, ch. 4.

Beside ornaments,] Of which see above, ver. 21.

And collars,] The Hebrew word *hanitiphoth* is thought to signify "little pots of precious ointments." For *neteph* signifies a *drop*, or a *tear*; the most precious of which is balsam. Among the spoils of Darius (as Arius Montanus observes) historians mention boxes of ointments set with precious stones, and curiously wrought with elegant art.

Purple raiment that was on the kings of Midian,] Who were distinguished from other men, as kings are now, by robes peculiar to them.

Beside the chains that were about their camels' necks,] All these, I take it, fell to Gideon's share, by the custom of war, without asking. For it was the ancient manner, as Grotius observes, to give the commander-in-chief the best of the spoils they had taken.

Ver. 27. *Gideon made an ephod thereof,]* He would not have them think that he requested the ear-rings for his own private gain; but to employ them religiously in the service of God, by making a monument of his victory, as obtained solely by the miraculous mercy of God, for the restoring of his true religion among them. It is commonly said, that so much gold could not be laid out upon an *ephod*; and therefore some take this for a short expression, to signify the breastplate, with the *urim* and *thummim*; that he (being now supreme governor) might consult God at his own house, in such difficulties as might occur; and they think it probable that he made also a private tabernacle with cherubims: for how else could he employ such a quantity of gold? An *ephod* being only fine linen embroidered with it, &c., which would not cost much) see Exod. xxviii. 6). Theodoret and St. Austin seem to incline to this opinion; for which I refer the reader to our Dr. Spencer, in his most learned work *De Leg. et Rit. Hebr.* p. 881. But I do not see how Gideon can be excused from apostasy from God, if he set up an oracle in his own house; nor was there any need of it, Shiloh being not far from him, in the tribe of Ephraim, which adjoined to this of Manasseh. Therefore I take this *ephod* to have been only a monument of his victory, and of God's great mercy, which conquerors were wont to erect: but he would not follow the common custom in erecting a pillar, and hanging up trophies, or any thing of that nature; but chose to make an *ephod*, as a token that he ascribed his victory only to God, and triumphed in nothing, but only in the restoration of the true religion by his means. As for the gold that was laid out upon it, the reader may observe, that it is said "he made an ephod

28 ¶ Thus was Midian subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted up their heads no more. And the country was in quietness forty years in the days of Gideon.

29 ¶ And Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and dwelt in his own house.

30 And Gideon had threescore and ten sons of his body begotten: for he had many wives.

31 And his concubine that *was* in Shechem,

thereof;" that is, out of his offering; but not that it was all spent in this.

Put it in his city, even in Ophrah,] This is to be well noted; because I think it shows that Gideon did not make this that he might have resort to God thereby on all occasions at home; for he went and dwelt at another place (ver. 29). It was kept here therefore as a monument of God's appearing to him, and of the sacrifice the angel here offered, and of all the wonders that followed, by the power of God who dwelt in the sanctuary. There are those who think, that because God bade Gideon build an altar, and offer his father's second bullock in Ophrah (vi. 26), he thence concluded, he might take upon him to have priestly garments made, and the high-priest came to minister at Ophrah upon extraordinary occasions. But he understood religion better than to make such conclusions, unless he had received a Divine command for this, as he did for the building of an altar.

All Israel went thither a whoring after it:] This, I suppose, was after his death, when the people began to return to idolatry; and had this fancy, among others, that God would answer them here, where this ephod was, as well as at his tabernacle in Shiloh, where he dwelt.

Which thing became a snare unto Gideon, and to his house,] Occasioned the ruin of him and of his family. For though they perished after his death, yet he may be said to have suffered with them, because his name and memory, which is preserved in men's posterity, was in a manner extinct in Israel.

Ver. 28. *They lifted up their heads no more,]* To oppress the Israelites; or, perhaps, to disturb any of their neighbours.

The country was in quietness forty years in the days of Gideon,] The country was in quiet in the fortieth year after the former rest restored to it by Deborah and Barak, as our primate Usher understands it, in his *Annals* ad A. M. 2759, and in his *Chronologia Sacra*, par. i. cap. 13, where, in more words, he thus interprets it: "In the fortieth year after the rest restored by Deborah and Barak, the land began to rest again in the days of Gideon, after he had subdued the Midianites, who had oppressed them seven years." But the plainest account is, that after seven years' oppression by the Midianites, the country was in peace forty years in the days of Gideon, who was their deliverer; and died, as we read ver. 32, in a good old age.

Ver. 29.] Having refused to be a king, and dismissed his army, he went from Ophrah (as I understand it), and lived not so publicly as he had done, but in a private house of his own in the country.

Ver. 30. *Of his body begotten,]* These last words are added to show, that they were none of them adopted sons.

He had many wives,] According to the manner of those times. And this is said to lessen the wonder of having so many children; many women bringing two or three at a birth, and one woman having had above twenty children by one man.

Ver. 31. *His concubine,]* The difference between a

she also bare him a son, whose name he called Abimelech.

32 ¶ And Gideon the son of Joash died in a good old age, and was buried in the sepulchre of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abi-ezrites.

33 And it came to pass, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again, and went a whoring after Baalim, and made Baal-berith their god.

wife and a concubine hath been often noted. Their wives administered the affairs of the family, the concubines meddled not with them; but, as the word signifies, were only admitted to their beds: and their children did not inherit, though they were married to them; for they were not harlots, but a secondary sort of wives.

That was in Shechem,] A famous city in the tribe of Ephraim, adjoining to that of Manasseh; where, going frequently to judge the people, he took a wife of this sort, who lived constantly with her father in this city, and not in Gideon's family.

She also bare him a son,] Beside the seventy before mentioned, as Josephus understands it.

Whose name he called Abimelech.] His name is here set down when nothing is said of the names of the rest, because the following story depends upon it. And perhaps his mother gave him this name (signifying "my father a king") out of pride and arrogance, that she might be looked upon as the wife of one who was thought to deserve a kingdom, though he did not accept it: which afterward, it is likely, inflamed the mind of this son to affect the royal dignity.

Ver. 32. *Gideon—died in a good old age,*] This is a phrase often used in Scripture, to signify that such persons lived long and in great prosperity and happiness.

Was buried in the sepulchre of Joash his father,] Which was accounted a great blessing in those days.

Ver. 33. *As soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again,*] He preserved them, it seems, in the true religion while he lived; but they had no great affection to it, it appears, by their revolting from it as soon as he was dead.

Went a whoring after Baalim,] This seems to have been a general name of all the gods which they worshipped, particularly of demons, which were all

34 And the children of Israel remembered the LORD their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side:

35 Neither shewed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, *namely*, Gideon, according to all the goodness which he had shewed unto Israel.

called Baalim from the first demon, or deified king in the world, Belus or Baal, as Mr. Mede thinks, book iii. p. 777.

Made Baal-berith their God.] They worshipped a new god, which was not known to them before, nor ever mentioned, but here and in the next chapter: who was reputed, as some think, the god that punished those who broke their covenants and contracts; or, as others, was so called because his servants covenanted to maintain his worship and service. But Bochartus, by a more probable conjecture, interprets it Baal of Berith, i. e. of Berytus. That Baal which was worshipped in that famous city which had its name from Beroe, the daughter of Venus and Adonis, who was there worshipped, as Nonnus tells us. This he takes to be the Baal here mentioned; for Baal is of the feminine gender as well as of the masculine, as appears from St. Paul, Rom. xi. 4, and many places of the LXX. which Bochartus mentions, lib. ii. Canaan, cap. 17.

Ver. 34.] Out of the hand of the king of Mesopotamia, and then of the Moabites, and after that of the Canaanites, and now lately of the Midianites and the children of the east.

Ver. 35. *Neither shewed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, namely, Gideon,*] No wonder they were so ungrateful to his family when they were so forgetful of God; the fear of whom is the foundation of all virtue.

According to all the goodness which he had shewed unto Israel,] In hazarding his life freely, and working for them a glorious deliverance; and in leaving them in their liberty, by refusing the despotic power which they offered to put into his hands; and in governing them so prudently many years, that he left them in peace, and in the possession of God's true religion, when he died.

CHAPTER IX.

1 Abimelech by conspiracy with the Shechemites, and murder of his brethren, is made king. 7 Jotham by a parable rebuketh them, and foretelleth their ruin. 22 Gaal conspireth with the Shechemites against him. 30 Zebul revealeth it. 34 Abimelech overcometh them, and soweth the city with salt. 46 He burneth the hold of the god Berith. 50 At Thebez he is slain by a piece of a millstone. 56 Jotham's curse is fulfilled.

1 AND Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem unto his mother's brethren, and communed with them, and with all the family of the house of his mother's father, saying,

2 Speak, I pray you, in the ears of all the men of Shechem, Whether is better for you, either that all the sons of Jerubbaal, which are threescore and ten persons, reign over you, or that one

CHAP. IX.

Ver. 1. *Abimelech—went*] From his father's house, where it is likely he was educated.

Shechem] The place of his nativity.

his mother's brethren,] Though the word has many times a large signification, yet it is here to understand it properly, of his mother's side; for his other near kindred the words following.

Communed with them, and with all the family] Discoursed with them, and with all the rest of his cousins, and his near kinsmen, descended from his grandfather.

Ver. 2. *Speak—in the ears of all the men of Shechem,*] By the men of this city are to be understood, the chief persons of authority in it, as in the foregoing chapter the men of Succoth signify the princes and the elders of that place.

Whether is better for you, either that all the sons of

reign over you? remember also that I am your bone and your flesh.

3 And his mother's brethren spake of him in the ears of all the men of Shechem all these words; and their hearts inclined to follow Abimelech; for they said, He is our brother.

4 And they gave him threescore and ten pieces of silver out of the house of Baal-berith,

Jerubbaal,—reign over you, or that one] He wickedly supposed that the sons of Jerubbaal were ambitious of the kingdom which their father refused, and therefore prays them to consider what horrible divisions and confusion it would make, if so many were permitted to pretend to the government; and how much better it would be to choose one of them from among the rest; pointing then (in the next words) to himself. He uses the argument of Homer, mentioned by Aristotle, οὐχ' ἀγαθὸν πολλοκρατίαν, &c. It is better to be subject to the rule of one man than of many.

I am your bone and your flesh.] Since there must be a king, he represents himself as the most desirable to them of all other single persons, he being of the same tribe, and their fellow-citizen.

Ver. 3. His mother's brethren spake of him in the ears of all the men of Shechem] They were ready enough to promote his design, hoping for preferment under him. But neither he nor they considered, that it did not belong to them to set a judge over the people, much less a king, which was to shake off the government of God.

Their hearts inclined to follow Abimelech; for they said, He is our brother.] This consideration of their interest in him, prevailed with them against the clearest reason. For if it had been in any person's power to appoint a king, but God alone, the men of Shechem had it not in them, but all the men of Israel ought to have been consulted.

Ver. 4. They gave him threescore and ten pieces of silver out of the house of Baal-berith,] Out of the public treasury, which was in this temple. It is uncertain what is meant by "pieces of silver;" but, in all probability, more than shekels; for they would have been but a small present to make a man a prince. Therefore the Vulgar translates it so many pound weight of silver, which learned men approve of, particularly Stanislaus Grepsius, in his book De Siclo et Talento. For seventy shekels were too little for his occasions; and so many talents too much for them to give. And thus Josephus interprets Gen. xxxvii. 28, where it is said, Joseph was sold to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver; that is, for so many pound weight of it.

Wherewith Abimelech hired vain and light persons,] The Hebrew word *rekin*, which we translate *vain*, signifies *empty*; that is poor and needy persons: and the other word, *pohazim*, idle, vagabond fellows, that could settle to no business, but wandered about the country; who being commonly men of loose lives, were fittest for his purpose. Therefore Kimchi understands by them "light-headed persons" (as we speak), who have no settled principles, but are disposed to do any thing, though never so wicked. Such Zephaniah saith the prophets in his time were (iii. 4), "light and treacherous."

Which followed him.] As a constant guard to him.

Ver. 5. He went unto his father's house at Ophrah,] With this wicked crew to attend him; who, I suppose, beset the house, that none might escape out of it. I supposed that he had a house in the country, viii. 29, for I could not see with what propriety he could be said to go and dwell in his house at Ophrah,

wherewith Abimelech hired vain and light persons, which followed him.

5 And he went unto his father's house at Ophrah, and slew his brethren the sons of Jerubbaal, being threescore and ten persons, upon one stone; notwithstanding yet Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left; for he hid himself.

in which he had always lived. But this was the house of the family, where all his children lived.

Slew his brethren the sons of Jerubbaal,] All of them except Jotham. Thus Romulus slew his brother Remus, as Tully observes (lib. iii. De Officiis), specie quadum utilitatis, "under the specious pretence of the public good;" that the kingdom would be governed more happily by one, than by two persons.

Upon one stone:] Some understand this, as if he intended to make them a great victim to Baal; for a stone was sometimes used for an altar, 1 Sam. vi. 14, 15. And so they take this to have been done in revenge of the sacrifice of the bullock prepared for Baal upon the rock (vi. 25, 26), which crime of Gideon, as these idolaters accounted it, they designed to expiate by the sacrifice of all his sons that they could lay hold on. For that the men of Shechem joined in this impious slaughter, is manifest from ver. 18 and 24 of this chapter.

Yet Jotham—was left; for he hid himself.] Either he had some notice of their intention, and saved himself by flight, or when they came to seize them, got into some secret place in the house, where they could not find him; or, by some that pitied his youth, he was preserved from falling into their hands. So the LXX. and the Vulgar translate it, "He was hid."

Ver. 6. And all the men of Shechem gathered together, and all the house of Millo,] None seem to have understood these words better than Corn. Bertram, in his little book De Republ. cap. 9, where by *col-baale Shechem* he understands all the principal men or lords of that city; principes civitatis, "the princes of the city," by whom it was governed: and by *col-beth Millo*, all the citizens, who in a full assembly (for *Millo* signifies *fulness*) agreed upon what follows: and so we read in the next chapter (x. 18), that the "people and princes of Gilead" consulted together, who should fight for them; that is, all the citizens met together, with their elders (as these princes are called, xi. 5), to advise about this matter: for when the Canaanites, and other people ruled over the Israelites and oppressed them, they contented themselves with setting such a power over them, as should make them pay what tribute they imposed, and other taxes; but left them to their own government and laws, as appears from viii. 14, where we read of the *elders of Succoth* in the time of the Midianites.

And went,] To the place where they were wont to meet for public business.

Made Abimelech king,] Voted him their king, in full senate.

By the plain of the pillar that was in Shechem.] Or the oak (as St. Jerome commonly translates this word *eloh*), where Joshua set up a pillar as a token of the covenant between God and them, Josh. xxiv. 26. That is, in a very remarkable place, as the manner was to do such things: but here, I suppose, they proclaimed him king, after they had chosen him in the common hall of the city; and some think they intended hereby to declare, that they would not forsake the worship of God, to which they were engaged, but only join the worship of Baal with him: but see what I have noted of this pillar, Deut. xxvii. 13. And

6 And all the men of Shechem gathered together, and all the house of Millo, and went, and made Abimelech king, by the plain of the pillar that *was* in Shechem.

7 ¶ And when they told *it* to Jotham, he went and stood in the top of mount Gerizim, and lifted up his voice, and cried, and said unto them, Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you.

8 The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us.

9 But the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour

God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?

10 And the trees said to the fig tree, Come thou, and reign over us.

11 But the fig tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees?

12 Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou, and reign over us.

13 And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?

14 Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou, and reign over us.

after all it must be confessed, that the Hebrew word *mutzab* doth not certainly signify a pillar: for I cannot find it so used in any other place of Scripture: and therefore St. Jerome translates this passage thus, "By the oak which stood in Shechem," and the LXX. in βαλάνω τῆς στήσεως, which seems to signify as if it was the place where they had their stations, or solemn assemblies. See Mr. Mede's Discourse xviii.

Ver. 7. *When they told it to Jotham,*] Who had some friends among them, that took care to inform him of what passed: but it is an amazing thing, that in all Israel there should none be found to revenge the murder of this noble family: of which no account can be given, but that, with the sense of God and religion, they had lost all goodness and virtue (see viii. 34, 35).

He went] From the place where he lay hid.

Mount Gerizim,] Which overlooked the city of Shechem (see Deut. xxvii. 12, 13).

Lifted up his voice and cried,] This was not on the same day that Abimelech was inaugurated, but some time after; when he, it is probable, was absent, and all the people met (as Josephus saith) at a public festival, which was a fair opportunity for him to declare his mind to them.

Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you.] It is a form of adjuration, whereby he not only entreats, but obliges them to be as attentive to him, as they desired God would be to their requests.

Ver. 8. *The trees went forth on a time*] By this it appears, that such fictions as these, wherein the most serious truths are represented, were in use among the Jews (as they are still in the eastern countries) long before the time of Æsop, or any other author that we know of. And they made choice of them for two reasons; because men would suffer themselves to be reprehended this way, when they would not endure plain words; and they heard them also with delight and pleasure, and more easily remembered them than a rational discourse. So A. Gellius observes of Æsop's Fables, that they slid into the mind and affections of men cum audiendi quadam illecebra, with a certain enticement to hear them (lib. ii. cap. 29).

To anoint a king over them;] This was two hundred years (as Mr. Selden observes in his Titles of Honour) before the first kings of Israel (Saul and David) were anointed. Which shows the great antiquity of this custom; and that it was the same to anoint a person, and to declare him king.

And they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us.] By this they would easily apprehend he meant his father Gideon; to whom all the Israelites had offered the kingdom, when he was in a most flourishing condition, and had newly triumphed over their enemies.

Ver. 9. *The olive tree said*] In this reply he represents his refusal of the offer, and the reason of it.

Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they

honour God and man,] He makes the trees speak after the manner of men; who, when they are in a plentiful condition, and live at ease, are not willing to take upon themselves a great deal of care and trouble, especially when they think themselves to have honour enough already; as Gideon had, in being such a glorious conqueror over mighty enemies. God and man are said to be honoured by oil, because it was offered in sacrifice to God, and fed the lamps of his house; and priests were wont to be anointed with it among men (see Lev. ii. 1, 4; Numb. xv. 4, 6, &c.).

And go to be promoted over the trees?] This is a most lively representation of the duties of a good man; who, for the public good, denies his own quiet and tranquillity. For the Hebrew word we translate *promote* signifies (as is noted in the margin) action and agitation to and fro; showing how a man must bestir himself who executes the kingly office; and what solicitude and continual carefulness is the concomitant of authority, when it is duly administered.

Ver. 10.] He intends to represent the same mind to be in all Gideon's sons that was in their father: for as Gideon refused the kingdom himself, so he did for his posterity, saying, "I will not rule over you, neither shall my son, or my son's son (i. e. any of mine) rule over you" (viii. 23). Therefore Abimelech had most vilely slandered them in suggesting that they affected a regal power over the people.

Ver. 11.] No fruit is more luscious than a fig, which makes this an apt representation of the sweet content, or rather full pleasure, that may be enjoyed in a private life, which it would be folly to exchange for the troubles and cares which men meet withal in the managery of public affairs, if they be not drawn to it purely out of love to the public good.

Ver. 12.] All these are noble trees, setting forth the same thing, that better men than Abimelech had refused that of which he was ambitious.

Ver. 13.] The same thing is repeated for the fuller illustration of the thing intended, according to the manner of all such ways of speech: for A. Gellius, in the place before named, makes the birds among the corn, when it was to be reaped, say the same thing more than once to their dam before she bade them be gone. As for wine *cheering God and man*, it is a form of speech imitated by the heathen, particularly by Virgil, lib. ii. Georg. ver. 101, where speaking of noble vines, or wine, he saith, they were mensis et Diis accepta secundis. For wine, as the Hebrew doctors note, was not only used in their sacrifices, as it was also among the heathen: but Jarchi saith, Till the drink-offering was poured out, they did not begin the hymn that was then sung to God (see upon Numb. xv. 5).

Ver. 14. *Bramble,*] The meanest of all trees, good for nothing but to be burnt, aptly representing Abimelech, from whom they could receive no benefit,

15 And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon.

16 Now therefore, if ye have done truly and sincerely, in that ye have made Abimelech king, and if ye have dealt well with Jerubbaal and his house, and have done unto him according to the deserving of his hands;

17 (For my father fought for you, and adventured his life far, and delivered you out of the hand of Midian :

18 And ye are risen up against my father's house this day, and have slain his sons, three-score and ten persons, upon one stone, and have made Abimelech, the son of his maidser-

but much trouble and vexation from his ambitious cruelty.

Ver. 15. *If in truth ye anoint me king over you,*] This well sets forth Abimelech's distrust of the sincerity of the Shechemites; for which he had great reason, having no title to the kingdom but the great achievements of his father, and he the basest of all his sons.

Then come and put your trust in my shadow:] Be assured of my protection, if you live quietly under my government. This represents how ridiculous Abimelech was, in imagining that he should be able to maintain the authority of a king; for a bramble doth not spread itself so as to afford any shelter or shadow, it being a kind of a thorn, which the Hebrews call *atad*. From whence, as Avenarius observes, came the word *aphris*, among the Greeks, and in Dioscorides the word *ἀραδίμ*. And from hence he thinks was derived the word *οὐράω*, and *οὐράζω*, which signify to wound, as a thorn doth when it pricks.

If not, let fire come out of the bramble,] It is a wood that easily catches fire, as Forsterus observes out of Josephus, lib. v. Antiq. cap. 11.

Devour the cedars of Lebanon.] This represents the vengeance Abimelech would take of the greatest of them, if they proved unfaithful to him.

Ver. 16. *Now therefore,*] Here follows Jotham's application of this apologue, as the Greeks call it, unto his purpose.

If ye have done truly and sincerely,] If his preference was a righteous act.

If ye have dealt well with Jerubbaal and his house,] And if they had requited Gideon and his family according to his merits, which were exceedingly great.

Ver. 17. *For my father—adventured his life far,*] Put it in great hazard.

Delivered you out of the hand of Midian:] When they were sorely oppressed by them, and could not help themselves.

Ver. 18. *Ye are risen up against my father's house this day,*] This shows the men of Shechem consented to the murder, and assisted Abimelech in it.

Have slain his sons,] For they intended the slaughter of Jotham, as much as of the rest, if he could have been found.

And have made Abimelech, the son of his maidser-
vant,] For concubines were often put to the work of the house.

King over the men of Shechem,] Who could not pretend to make him king over all Israel: no, nor over the whole tribe of Ephraim, but only of their city and territory.

vant, king over the men of Shechem, because he is your brother;)

19 If ye then have dealt truly and sincerely with Jerubbaal and with his house this day, then rejoice ye in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you :

20 But if not, let fire come out from Abimelech, and devour the men of Shechem, and the house of Millo; and let fire come out from the men of Shechem, and from the house of Millo, and devour Abimelech.

21 And Jotham ran away, and fled, and went to Beer, and dwelt there, for fear of Abimelech his brother.

22 ¶ When Abimelech had reigned three years over Israel,

23 Then God sent an evil spirit between

Because he is your brother:] Without any title to it, but because he was a native of their city.

Ver. 19. *If ye then have dealt truly and sincerely*] Like honest and upright men.

Then rejoice ye in Abimelech,] He wished they may be happy in one another.

Ver. 20. *But if not, let fire come out from Abimelech, and devour the men of Shechem,*] This is not a prediction, but an execration or curse, as appears from the opposition to the foregoing wish, and from ver. 57, where it is called Jotham's curse. Which was not causeless, but like that of Joshua's (Josh. vi. 26), which was fulfilled, as this was. Not by fire, properly so called, breaking forth from Abimelech, but by his rage and furious revenge, which is fitly compared to fire, in allusion to what is said of the bramble (ver. 15).

And let fire come out from the men of Shechem,—and devour Abimelech.] He wishes they may mutually destroy each other, which came to pass by the righteous judgment of God, who hears the cries of the oppressed.

Ver. 21. *Jotham ran away, and fled,*] As he might easily do, I have shown upon Deut. xxvii. 13. The first word signifies, he made what haste he could away, as soon as he had done speaking; and the second, that he stopped not till he had got to a place of safety.

And went to Beer,] It is not certain where this place was, whether in the land of Israel, or out of it. It is probable that it was in the tribe of Judah, about eight miles from Eleutheropolis, as both Eusebius and Jerome affirm.

Ver. 22. *Over Israel,*] It is not said *over all Israel*, who, it cannot be thought, would submit to the ambitious tyranny of so cruel a man as Abimelech was. And if Beer was in the tribe of Judah, we may be sure they did not own him for their king; for then Jotham could not have dwelt in safety there. The meaning therefore is, that he called himself king of Israel, and reigned over a great part of them, who were so desirous of a king (it appears by their offer made to Gideon), that they were content with him rather than have none at all.

Ver. 23. *God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem:*] At the three years' end, I suppose, God ordered things so in his providence, that they grew jealous and distrustful one of another, and fell into dissensions and discords.

The men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech:] Conspired against him. So true is the observation of Grotius upon these words, that nothing is more unstable than the popular breath which is won

Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech:

24 That the cruelty *done to the threescore and ten sons of Jerubbaal might come*, and their blood be laid upon Abimelech their brother, which slew them; and upon the men of Shechem, which aided him in the killing of his brethren.

25 And the men of Shechem set liers in wait for him in the top of the mountains, and they robbed all that came along that way by them: and it was told Abimelech.

26 And Gaal the son of Ebed came with his

by evil arts, and that men hate the wickedness which hath done them service.

Ver. 24. *That the cruelty done to the threescore and ten sons of Jerubbaal might come.*] By this means God intended to punish Abimelech for the cruel murder of his brethren, whose blood cried for vengeance on him.

And upon the men of Shechem, which aided him] And to punish the men of Shechem, who enabled him to commit that wickedness, and helped him in it.

Ver. 25. *The men of Shechem set liers in wait for him in the top of the mountains.*] They were not yet broken out into open hostility against him; but there being a misunderstanding between them, Abimelech, I suppose, left the city in anger; but they thought he would return again, and thereupon set men to lie secretly on the top of the mountains over which he was to pass, to seize his person.

They robbed all that came along that way by them.] That the report coming to Abimelech's ears (as Arius Montanus understands it) how insecure his subjects were who passed that road, he might make the more speed, as good kings are bound to do, to clear the way from those thieves which infested it, and thereby give them an opportunity to seize him.

It was told Abimelech.] What robberies were committed, and, perhaps, that they lay in wait for him.

Ver. 26. *Gaal the son of Ebed.*] We have no means to know who this Gaal was, nor whence he came. R. Solomon thinks he was a gentile, and not one of the Jewish nation.

Came with his brethren.] He passed accidentally that way (as P. Martyr thinks) with his brethren and his attendants, about some business they had in that country: but the common opinion is, that he was a known enemy of Abimelech's, who hearing the men of Shechem were at defiance with him, came to offer them his service against him.

The men of Shechem put their confidence in him.] That is, put themselves under his protection.

Ver. 27. *They went out into the fields, and gathered their vineyards.*] Their first action under this new commander was to go out of their city into their vineyards, which were in the fields, and gather their grapes, and press them, which they durst not do before, though the vintage was ripe, for fear of Abimelech; who being told how things stood there, had raised forces I suppose against them, but durst not now disturb them in their business, they being defended by Gaal.

Made merry.] As they were wont to do in time of vintage, and now especially, when they were full of joy in hope to be rid of Abimelech's tyranny. The LXX. of the Vatican edition retain the Hebrew word, and translate it, they made ἑλευθέρημα, whereby some understand songs, or others dances: both are expressed by the Vulgar, and other copies of the LXX. have χοροί; for their merriment consisted very much in dances, with music and songs; which, as Max.

brethren, and went over to Shechem: and the men of Shechem put their confidence in him.

27 And they went out into the fields, and gathered their vineyards, and trode the grapes, and made merry, and went into the house of their god, and did eat and drink, and cursed Abimelech.

28 And Gaal the son of Ebed said, Who *is* Abimelech, and who *is* Shechem, that we should serve him? *is* not *he* the son of Jerubbaal? and Zebul his officer? serve the men of Hamor the father of Shechem: for why should we serve him?

29 And would to God this people were under

Tyrius observes, were among the Greeks first used, and in honour of Bacchus, when they pressed out their grapes, (see Dr. Spencer, lib. iii. dissert. i. cap. 9).

Went into the house of their god.] It is most likely into the temple of Baal-berith; there to offer their first-fruits, or such other sacrifices as were customary at that festival.

Did eat and drink.] Upon that part of the sacrifices which fell to the share of the people, who, perhaps, engaged in a covenant against Abimelech.

Cursed Abimelech.] Some think they only scoffed at him with taunts and reproaches, as men used to do in their cups: but the LXX. translate it κατηράσαντο, which signifies cursing, as we translate it; that is, they wished their god would confound him. And so we translate this word, Lev. xx. 9; Prov. xx. 20. A marvellous change, that they who lately gave him a great sum of money to advance him to the throne, should, in that very house from whence they took it, reproach him with imprecations of the Divine vengeance upon him.

Ver. 28. *Gaal—said.*] In the midst of this jollity, Gaal (being elevated, I suppose, with wine), burst forth into this insulting language.

Who is Abimelech.] That is, he is but the son of a maid-servant (ver. 18).

Who is Shechem.] Some think he means the city of Shechem is as noble as he is base: why, therefore, should they be subject to him? But it seems, by what follows, to be rather the same thing repeated, "Who, I say, is the Shechemite?"

That we should serve him?] Suffer him to rule over us, and use us as he pleases.

Is not he the son of Jerubbaal?] Who threw down the altar of that god whom you worship.

And Zebul his officer?] Hath he not set one of his servants over you to be your governor?

Serve the men of Hamor the father of Shechem.] If we must be servants, let us restore the dominion of the old lords of this city, and subject ourselves to those who are descended from the ancient stock of Hamor; who was the father, as it were, of the Shechemites.

For why should we serve him?] But what reason can be given for our subjection to this upstart; who is famed for nothing, but his ambition and cruelty to his own brethren? This shows pretty plainly that R. Solomon's opinion is true, that Gaal was a gentile; who would have been glad to see the authority of the Canaanites restored. For though he suggests it only as comparatively more desirable than Abimelech's rule over them, yet, it is likely, he thought they might as well receive their government, as they had done their religion.

Ver. 29. *Would to God this people were under my hand.*] He wishes they would make him their king, at least their commander-in-chief: which it seems

my hand! then would I remove Abimelech. And he said to Abimelech, Increase thine army, and come out.

30 ¶ And when Zebul the ruler of the city heard the words of Gaal the son of Ebed, his anger was kindled.

31 And he sent messengers unto Abimelech privily, saying, Behold, Gaal the son of Ebed and his brethren be come to Shechem; and, behold, they fortify the city against thee.

32 Now therefore up by night, thou and the people that *is* with thee, and lie in wait in the field:

33 And it shall be, *that* in the morning, as soon as the sun is up, thou shalt rise early, and set upon the city: and, behold, *when* he and the people that *is* with him come out against thee, then mayest thou do to them as thou shalt find occasion.

they had not yet resolved upon; some being still for Abimelech, and others not trusting to a stranger.

Then would I remove Abimelech.] That he should trouble them no more; but flee the country, as he was driven out of their city.

Increase thine army, and come out.] Some take this to be only a vapouring speech (as if Abimelech was present), when he knew he might boast and insult without danger, because he did not hear him; but it may as well be thought that he bid Abimelech's friends go and tell him what he said; that he wished him to reinforce his army, and come out (of the intrenchments wherein perhaps he was (and give him battle: for he pretended to scorn to set upon him by surprise, but desired to decide the quarrel in open field.

Ver. 30.] It is likely he had carried fair (as we speak) with Gaal hitherto; thinking it in vain to oppose a popular commotion till their fury was a little calmed; but he could not bear these insolent thronical words of Gaal, which perhaps were not spoken in his presence, but brought to him by some that heard them.

Ver. 31. *And he sent messengers unto Abimelech privily, saying.*] He had some wit in his anger, and did not openly declare his resentments; but gave secret intelligence to Abimelech how matters stood, with his advice how to proceed against Gaal.

Gaal—and his brethren be come to Shechem;] Where, no doubt, he informed him what entertainment he had found, and in what reviling terms he had spoken of him.

They fortify the city against thee.] This was no sign that Gaal desired, as he boasted, to meet Abimelech in a pitched battle: but that he rather provided for his own defence, in case he should be assaulted.

Ver. 32.] His advice is, that, for fear of discovery, he should march with all his forces in the night, towards Shechem; and lurk in the fields till morning light.

Ver. 33. *Rise early, and set upon the city:*] Surprise them, before they were better provided.

When he and the people—come out against thee.] As Gaal had boasted he would do.

Then mayest thou do to them as thou shalt find occasion.] He could give him no farther advice; but that then he should dispose his forces to the best advantage against him.

Ver. 34.] He divided his army into four battalions (as they now speak), and disposed them in four places, as the Vulgar understands it: perhaps on the east, west, north, and south sides of the city.

34 ¶ And Abimelech rose up, and all the people that *were* with him, by night, and they laid wait against Shechem in four companies.

35 And Gaal the son of Ebed went out, and stood in the entering of the gate of the city: and Abimelech rose up, and the people that *were* with him, from lying in wait.

36 And when Gaal saw the people, he said to Zebul, Behold, there come people down from the top of the mountains. And Zebul said unto him, Thou seest the shadow of the mountains as *if they were* men.

37 And Gaal spake again and said, See there come people down by the middle of the land, and another company come along by the plain of Meonenim.

38 Then said Zebul unto him, Where *is* now thy mouth, wherewith thou saidst, Who *is* Abimelech, that we should serve him? *is* not this

Ver. 35. *Gaal—went out.*] Of his house.

Stood in the entering of the gate] To see, it is likely, if his soldiers were upon their guard.

Abimelech rose up, and the people—from lying in wait.] Out of their lurking-places, where they had lain undiscovered all night.

Ver. 36. *When Gaal saw the people, he said to Zebul.*] Who, it seems, accompanied him, or, as governor of the city, was there to see every one do their duty.

There come people down from the top of the mountains.] Which were adjoining to the city, viz. Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal.

Thou seest the shadow of the mountains as if they were men.] It being early in the morning, the trees, and all things else, cast long shadows, which being moved by the breath of air which commonly accompanies the sun-rising, Zebul persuaded him he took for men marching down from the top of the mountains. Some think he spake this in mockery, that he was afraid of shadows; but delivered it in such a serious tone, that Gaal believed he spake in earnest; by which it is plain that Zebul notably dissembled his resentments, and behaved himself as if he was on Gaal's side; who was strangely infatuated, to trust one that was servant to Abimelech, and placed by him as governor of the city, whose pretences of friendship were reasonably to be suspected.

Ver. 37. *Gaal—said, See*] Observe attentively.

There come people down by the middle of the land.] Now it was visible they were men; for they were come down to the middle of the mountains.

Another company come along by the plain of Meonenim.] It is likely the other two companies of the four, into which his forces were divided, appeared in other places, the more to distract the thoughts of Gaal: and it is probable that Abimelech had seized the ambush which they had laid for him on the top of the mountains (ver. 25), that they could carry no tidings of his coming. We read of this place nowhere else and so I can give no account of it: but the Vulgar takes *elon* to signify not the plain, but an oak: and translates these words, "by the way which looks towards the oak;" which, in some copies of the LXX. are rendered "the oak of those that look towards, or, that regard times," as we have it in the margin of our Bibles; as if it were like the oak at Dodona, among the Greeks, where they made divinations.

Ver. 38. *Where is now thy mouth, wherewith thou*

the people that thou hast despised? go out, I pray now, and fight with them.

39 And Gaal went out before the men of Shechem, and fought with Abimelech.

40 And Abimelech chased him, and he fled before him, and many were overthrown and wounded, *even unto the entering of the gate.*

41 And Abimelech dwelt at Arumah: and Zebul thrust out Gaal and his brethren, that they should not dwell in Shechem.

42 And it came to pass on the morrow, that the people went out into the field; and they told Abimelech.

43 And he took the people, and divided them into three companies, and laid wait in the field,

saidst, Who is Abimelech,] Now Zebul pulls off his mask, and puts him in mind of the brags which he made (ver. 28).

Is not this the people that thou hast despised?] But now, he supposes, was afraid to encounter.

Go out,—and fight with them.] He upbraids him with cowardice, unless he now showed himself a man with his sword, as the other day with his tongue.

Ver. 39. *Gaal went out.]* It may seem strange that he did not first leave Zebul dead upon the spot behind him: but he was afraid of him, he having, as appeared afterward, a strong party in the city; and it was dangerous to have two enemies to deal withal, one without and another within.

Fought with Abimelech.] As unprovided as he was he would not decline the fight, and was followed by the principal persons in Shechem.

Ver. 40. *Abimelech chased him,]* Towards the city. *Many were overthrown and wounded,]* Some were killed, and others wounded.

Even unto the entering of the gate.] Where the rest, and Gaal himself, got into the city, and there secured themselves: so the Vulgar, for explication's sake, "He pursued him, and drove him into the city."

Ver. 41. *Abimelech dwelt at Arumah:]* It appears by the next verse this place was not far from Shechem, whither Abimelech thought fit to retreat, and there watch for an opportunity to be revenged of the Shechemites.

Zebul thrust out Gaal and his brethren,] Because they were not able to defend it against Abimelech. Zebul had the stronger party on his side, otherwise he could not have expelled him; but Gaal had so many adherents, that they durst not put him to death for his ill management, as no doubt they called it, in the late fight.

Ver. 42. *The people went out into the field;]* Finding that Abimelech was retreated, as not strong enough, they imagined, to assault their city, they went about their business into the field; which, at that time of the year, after the vintage, was to plough and sow their lands, and dress their vines and other trees: some will have it that they went out to fight Abimelech again, which is not probable.

They told Abimelech.] He wanted not some to carry him intelligence of it.

Ver. 43. *He took the people,]* His forces, which lay in and about Arumah.

Divided them into three companies,] One of which (the next verse informs us) he commanded himself, and committed the other two to the conduct of their commanders.

Laid wait in the field,] With that company which he commanded, whom he ordered to lie close, and not discover themselves.

Looked, and, behold, the people were come forth]

and looked, and, behold, the people *were* come forth out of the city; and he rose up against them, and smote them.

44 And Abimelech, and the company that was with him, rushed forward, and stood in the entering of the gate of the city: and the two other companies ran upon all the people that were in the fields, and slew them.

45 And Abimelech fought against the city all that day; and he took the city, and slew the people that was therein, and beat down the city, and sowed it with salt.

46 ¶ And when all the men of the tower of Shechem heard that, they entered into a hold of the house of the god Berith.

He set some to spy when the people were come out, and set about their business.

He rose up against them,] His men came, on a sudden, out of their ambush, and killed many of them.

Ver. 44. *And Abimelech, and the company—rushed forward, and stood in the entering of the gate.]* Made all the haste they could to get between them and home: and accordingly they posted themselves at the entering of the gate of the city; whereby they hindered those in the field from getting into it, and likewise those in the city from coming out to their relief: so that they were dispersed about the fields, where the other two companies picked them up, as it here follows.

The two other companies ran upon all the people that were in the fields, and slew them.] Which was a great disheartening, no doubt, to those in the city, to see so many of their fellow-citizens cut off.

Ver. 45. *Abimelech fought against the city all that day;]* Having destroyed so many of the citizens in the morning, he made his battery against the city itself, the rest of the day.

Took the city,] In the evening, I suppose, either by an assault, or by surrender.

Slew the people that was therein,] It is not said what became of Zebul, who, it is likely, went over to him, and directed him in his attack upon the city; leaving his own party, in whom he put no confidence, to perish with the rest.

And beat down the city,] Laid the houses and walls level with the ground.

Sowed it with salt.] Salt makes land barren, and therefore Rabbag refers this to the ground about it or in it, that was wont to be employed for sowing any sort of grain, or planting vineyards, &c.: for, as Pliny observes, "Omnia locus in quo reperitur sal, sterilis est et nihil gignit" (lib. xxxi. cap. 7), "All places in which salt is found are barren, and bring forth nothing." Therefore Abimelech endeavoured to make this city a perpetual desolation," (see Borchart. Hierozoicon, p. i. lib. iii. cap. 16). But unless the soil had been salt of itself, his sowing salt there would not have made it barren; but would have soon recovered its fruitfulness: therefore all he intended was to show his hatred of them by wishing their city might lie waste, and be a perpetual desolation.

Ver. 46. *When all the men of the tower of Shechem heard that,]* By these last words, it is plain this tower was not in the city, but at some distance from it: for otherwise, it would not have been said that they heard of the destruction of Shechem, but that they saw it with their eyes; yet it is likely, that this tower of Shechem was kept by a garrison of th Shechemites.

47 And it was told Abimelech, that all the men of the tower of Shechem were gathered together.

48 And Abimelech gat him up to mount Zalmon, he and all the people that were with him; and Abimelech took an ax in his hand, and cut down a bough from the trees, and took it, and laid it on his shoulder, and said unto the people that were with him, What ye have seen me do, make haste, and do as I have done.

49 And all the people likewise cut down every man his bough, and followed Abimelech, and put them to the hold, and set the hold on fire upon them; so that all the men of the tower of Shechem died also, about a thousand men and women.

50 ¶ Then went Abimelech to Thebez, and encamped against Thebez, and took it.

51 But there was a strong tower within the city, and thither fled all the men and women,

They entered into an hold of the house of the god Berith.] They durst not trust to the strength of the tower, but took sanctuary rather in a strong fortress of the temple of the god mentioned ver. 4, which was built, in all likelihood (according to the common custom of the world), upon one of the mountains hard by, and had near it this fortified stronghold; wherein they kept their treasure (ver. 4). It may be compared to the Roman capitol, and to the temple of Jerusalem, in aftertimes; which Josephus describes as an impregnable place.

Ver. 47. *Gathered together.]* In the forenamed fortress.

Ver. 48. *Mount Zalmon.]* Some think this to be the same mountain which the Psalmist mentions lxxiii. 15, and take it to have been near to Shechem, which had many mountains about it (ver. 36).

Abimelech—cut down a bough from the trees,] Which grew there in great abundance, for Zalmon seems to have had its name from the shadiness of the place.

What ye have seen me do, make haste, and do as I have done.] He, in some measure, imitates his father's speech to his three hundred men, before he went to fight, (vii. 17).

Ver. 49. *Set the hold on fire upon them;]* Which was done with such expedition (as he ordered in the foregoing verse), that they within had no time to provide against it.

About a thousand men and women.] Who perished in the fire and smoke, as the Vulgar here adds: but the Hebrew and LXX. say nothing of smoke, but only of fire: yet, it is highly probable, that many were choked by the smoke, which was very great and smothering, the wood being green: here the prediction, or rather imprecation of Jotham, ver. 20, was exactly fulfilled.

Ver. 50. *Then went Abimelech—and encamped against Thebez.]* This was a city, which, as Kimchi observes, had revolted from Abimelech; but it is uncertain whereabout it lay, though most think it in the territory near Shechem.

Ver. 51. *There was a strong tower within the city, and thither fled all the men and women.]* It was a place so large, that it could contain not only all the men of the city and their wives, but their servants also: who all betook themselves hither, as a place not easy to be taken, though the city could make little resistance.

Shut it to them,] Shut to the gate, and, I suppose, blocked it up so that it could not be opened.

Gat them up to the top of the tower.] Which was flat,

and all they of the city, and shut it to them, and gat them up to the top of the tower.

52 And Abimelech came unto the tower, and fought against it, and went hard unto the door of the tower to burn it with fire.

53 And a certain woman cast a piece of a millstone upon Abimelech's head, and all to brake his skull.

54 Then he called hastily to the young man his armourbearer, and said unto him, Draw thy sword, and slay me, that men say not of me, A woman slew him. And his young man thrust him through, and he died.

55 And when the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, they departed every man unto his place.

56 ¶ Thus God rendered the wickedness of Abimelech, which he did unto his father, in slaying his seventy brethren:

as their houses were, with battlements round about it: here the besieged thought fit to stand in great numbers, that they might do what they could to beat him off, if Abimelech attempted to burn them, as he had done others in a neighbouring tower.

Ver. 52. *Abimelech came unto the tower, and fought against it.]* His rage was insatiable; for, not content to have overthrown the Shechemites, and beat down their city, and burnt their stronghold, and taken Thebez, he beset their tower also; where, if he had not perished, none can tell how far his revenge would have proceeded.

Went hard unto the door of the tower to burn it] Being flushed with great success, he was so bold and hardy as himself to make this dangerous attempt.

Ver. 53. *A certain woman cast a piece of a millstone]* Which they had carried up among other stones and logs, and whatsoever they thought might offend the enemy; the Hebrew word *rechab* properly signifies the upper millstone, which moves (and, as it were, rides) upon the lower.

Upon Abimelech's head,] Being directed, no doubt, by a special providence of God, as the stone was out of the sling that killed Goliath, and the arrow wherewith Ahab was shot.

All to brake his skull.] Made such a fracture in it, that he concluded it to be mortal. Thus Plutarch relates that Pyrrhus, at the siege of Thebes, was killed by a woman, who threw a tile upon his head: but Abimelech's death by a stone is the more remarkable, because it carried some stamp of his sin upon it; for he slew all his brethren on one stone.

Ver. 54. *Then he called hastily]* Fearing he should immediately expire.

Draw thy sword and slay me, that men say not of me, A woman slew him.] Though he knew she had given him his death's wound, yet he would have posterity think otherwise; for he thought it dishonourable to die by the hand of a woman: a foolish piece of vain-glory, wherewith he concluded his life as he had led it; for she had given him a mortal blow.

His young man thrust him through,] Just when he imagined he was upon the point of conquering all opposition to him.

Ver. 55. *When the men of Israel]* That is, all that were in his army.

Departed every man unto his place.] Disbanded themselves, having none to head them.

Ver. 56.] Which was as much as in him lay, to root out the memory of his father, unless it survived

57 And all the evil of the men of Shechem did God render upon their heads: and upon

them came the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal.

in himself, who took a course to make his name infamous.

Ver. 57.] These two verses conclude this story with a Divine admonition, That no man should think that such things came to pass by chance, but God, the Judge of all, punished both Abimelech and the men of Shechem according to their deserts, and made them the instruments of each other's destruction: and it is

remarkable, that this punishment overtook them speedily, within less than four years after their crime was committed.

It was not the business of this holy writer to tell us what became of Jotham, no more than what became of Gaal and Zebul: but only to show, that "as men have done, so God requites them;" with which he ends this part of his history.

CHAPTER X.

1 *Tola judgeth Israel in Shamir.* 3 *Jair, whose thirty sons had thirty cities.* 6 *The Philistines and Ammonites oppress Israel.* 10 *In their misery God sendeth them to their false gods.* 15 *Upon their repentance he pitieth them.*

1 AND after Abimelech there arose to defend Israel Tola the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar; and he dwelt in Shamir in mount Ephraim.

2 And he judged Israel twenty and three years, and died, and was buried in Shamir.

3 ¶ And after him arose Jair, a Gileadite, and judged Israel twenty and two years.

4 And he had thirty sons that rode on thirty ass colts, and they had thirty cities, which are called Havoth-jair unto this day, which are in the land of Gilead.

CHAP. X.

Ver. 1. *After Abimelech*] Who was not a judge, much less appointed by God, but an usurper, who took upon him to alter the Divine government, and made himself a king.

There arose] It is not said that God stirred him up, as he did the foregoing judges; but it is so understood, because God would not have saved Israel by one that took upon him this high office without his order; and, therefore, as Peter Martyr well observes, in the conclusion of the foregoing chapter, that as, after many good judges God had given them, he suffered the cruel tyrant Abimelech to interpose himself, that their virtues might shine more illustriously by his wickedness; so, after he was gone, God was pleased to raise up to them good judges again, who learned moderation by the punishment of his vain ambition: and, in all likelihood, the dreadful end of Abimelech and his partakers, who made him king, affrighted the Israelites from presuming to make another, of their own heads.

To defend Israel] Or, *to save*, as it is in the margin: for this was the great office of a judge, to deliver the people from the oppression of their enemies: we do not find indeed from what enemies they were delivered by this judge; but they may be said to *save* and *deliver*, who preserve men's liberties from being invaded, as well as they that vindicate and restore them when they are lost: and therefore we well translate it, "To defend Israel." He may be thought also to have delivered them from those confusions and disorders they were in, by the disagreement between Abimelech and those that made him king: for both sides had many partakers, which made great divisions, and dangerous combinations among the people; but were all happily ended by the prudent management of this governor. Serrarius also adds, that he might be said to *save* or deliver them, because he restored the purity of their religion, by abolishing the worship of idols: for we read, that after the death of Gideon, "they went a whoring after Baalim, and made Baal-berith their god," (viii. 33), which they continued in the reign of Abimelech; but were now brought back to the worship of the true God, and remained in it, in the days of this and the following judges; other-

wise there would not have been occasion to say (ver. 7), that after the death of Jair, "the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord:" but how far this is true, will appear upon ver. 8.

Tola the son of Puah, the son of Dodo] So the Chaldee paraphrast understands the word *Dodo*, to be the proper name of his grandfather, as *Puah* was of his father: but there are those that by *Dodo* understand his uncle, viz. Abimelech forementioned: which seems to me unreasonable; for he was of another tribe, and his relation to such a man no good qualification, one would think, for this great trust.

A man of Issachar] A mean tribe; which did not hinder his advancement by God to the highest dignity: and by this expression, a *man of Issachar*, he seems to have been of no great family, in that tribe.

And he dwelt in Shamir] After he was made a judge he settled in this place for the convenience of the people; it being in the midst of the land.

Ver. 2. *He judged Israel twenty and three years, and died*] There are no memorable acts of his recorded; for the principal intention of the holy writer of this book, was to show what great calamities befell the Israelites when they forsook God's worship, and how graciously he delivered them, in a marvellous manner, when they returned to it: as I suppose they did, in the beginning of this man's government, and continued steadfast therein; so that they were not infested by their enemies.

Ver. 3. *Jair*] This is the first judge that was raised up from among those that lived beyond Jordan.

Ver. 4. *He had thirty sons that rode on thirty ass colts*] For the noblest persons rode on these beasts (see ver. 10), and that not only in Judea but in Arabia, and in other countries, even among the Romans, as Bochartus hath at large observed in his *Hieroicoicon*, p. 1, lib. ii. cap. 13. And it is highly probable, that this is here mentioned, because these persons were ordered by their father to ride circuit up and down the country, to minister justice according to the law; as Samuel did when he judged Israel, 1 Sam. vii. 16. For the courts of judicature appointed by the law (Deut. xvi. 18), were not yet settled; nor, in all likelihood, settled in every city, till the days of Jehosha-

5 And Jair died, and was buried in Camon.

6 ¶ And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and forsook the Lord, and served not him.

7 And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hands of the Philistines, and into the hands of the children of Ammon.

8 And that year they vexed and oppressed the children of Israel, eighteen years, all the children of Israel that were on the other side Jordan in the land of the Amorites, which is in Gilead.

phat, as Mr. Thorndike observes in his Rites of the Church, ch. 4, p. 226.

They had thirty cities,] Of which they were the governors, as the Vulgar understands it.

Which are called Havoth-jair unto this day,] This Jair, as our most learned primate of Ireland observes in his Annals (ad A. M. 3504), was of the posterity of that Jair who called the cities which he took in Argob by his own name Havoth-Jair, the towns or villages of Jair (Numb. xxxii. 41, Deut. iii. 14). After whose example, these thirty sons of this younger Jair (who, to distinguish him from the elder, seems to be called Bedan, 1 Sam. xii. 11, 1 Chron. vii. 17), called these cities which they possessed by the very same name.

Which are in the land of Gilead.] In the same country where the other cities anciently called by this name lay: from which, it is likely, they were distinguished by some such addition as this, *the new Havoth-jair.*

Ver. 5. Buried in Camon.] Which, it was probable, was the place where he dwelt while he judged Israel.

Ver. 6. Israel did evil again.] Or, as the forenamed primate thinks it must be interpreted, "had done evil again," &c., as was said viii. 33, and now is repeated, to show the cause why God delivered them up into the hands of their enemies: for he supposes this was before the death of Jair, as I shall note on ver. 8.

Served Baalim, and Ashtaroth,] As they had frequently done in former times, ii. 13, iii. 7, &c.

The gods of Syria,] They added to their former idolatries the worship of new gods; particularly those of Syria, which were, as Mr. Selden observes (in his Prolegomena to his book De Diis Syris), beside Bel, or Baal, and Astarte, Dagon, Moloch, and Thammuz.

The gods of Zidon,] Their supreme gods were Baal and Ashtaroth, as the same great man observes (in his ii. Syntagma De Diis Syris, cap. 2). But it is likely they had more, such as Asaroth, Asarim, and Asarah; being the very same with Ashtaroth.

The gods of Moab,] The principal of which was Chemosh (1 Kings xi. 7).

The gods of the children of Ammon,] The chief of which was Milcom, 1 Kings xi. 5, where Ashtaroth is mentioned as the goddess of the Zidonians.

The gods of the Philistines,] They had more, it seems, beside Dagon; whose names are not mentioned in Scripture.

Forsook the Lord, and served not him.] Their hearts were possessed with the love of so many gods, that they quite forgot the Lord, and did not worship him at all; though they were wont formerly only to worship other gods together with him. This was such a strange apostasy, that one cannot but inquire into the reason of it, and (besides what I have noted upon it. 12), one reason may possibly have been, that the solemn reading of the law to all the people, once in seven years, was neglected: for we do not read that it was publicly done from the time of Joshua to the reign of Jehoshaphat, which was above five hundred years: it doth not follow, indeed, that it was not done, because it is not recorded; but if we consider

how prone they were to return to idolatry, after the death of every judge, and how soon after the death of David (even in the reign of his son Solomon) it began to appear among them, it may incline one to think there was not sufficient care taken about this matter.

Ver. 7. Philistines, and—Ammon.] Two of those nations, whose gods they chose to serve.

Ver. 8. That year they vexed and oppressed the children of Israel:] That is, the Ammonites vexed them in the east (as we are told in the conclusion of the verse), while the Philistines vexed them in the west: for their idolatry being strangely increased, so was their punishment, by the invasion of their enemies on both sides, as the foregoing verse tells us; which is a preface to the following histories of their oppression by the Philistines and the Ammonites, both at the same time; but, to avoid confusion, he first relates the story of the Ammonites, who were last named in the foregoing verse.

Eighteen years,] Their invasion began in the same year, but they did not end at the same time, for the Ammonites domineered over them only eighteen years; but the Philistines forty (xiii. 1). I must not here omit the construction which our primate Usher makes of these words, which run thus in the Hebrew, and he translates in this manner, "They vexed and oppressed the children of Israel that year (viz.), the eighteenth year." For the oppression, he thinks, began the fifth year of Jair, and continued till the twenty-second, which was his last (see his Chronol. Sacra, p. 1, cap. 13). But this is said only to solve a difficulty, which is, that if we suppose this oppression to have begun after the death of Jair, and to have lasted eighteen years (as our translation imports), it will be impossible to make the years of the government of the Judges agree with what we read, 1 Kings vi. 1, that Solomon began to build the temple at Jerusalem, in the four hundred and eightieth year after they came out of Egypt: but there is a more easy way of accounting for this difficulty, by supposing that several of the judges were contemporaries, as will be apparent in this very history (see upon xi. 25), and if we do not take these words *eighteen years* to signify the continuance of the Ammonitish oppression, it is nowhere mentioned anywhere else; as the duration of all other oppressions is.

The land of the Amorites,] Which belonged to the Amorites, till Moses dispossessed them (Numb. xxi.), and gave the land to the two tribes of Reuben and Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh.

Which is in Gilead.] The principal part of which was Gilead; out of which Jair sprang, being of the tribe of Manasseh; who, like a good man, used all his endeavours to purge the Israelites from idolatry; as Tola, I suppose, had done before; but they being, after the death of Gideon, fallen from God, and continuing in their idolatry all the reign of Abimelech, our forenamed primate supposes these judges were not able to reform them; but they rather grew worse, as is related ver. 6. And therefore God permitted the Ammonites and Philistines to begin to afflict them, as was said before in the fifth year of Jair; but not so as

9 Moreover the children of Ammon passed over Jordan to fight also against Judah, and against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim; so that Israel was sore distressed.

10 ¶ And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, saying, We have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim.

11 And the LORD said unto the children of Israel, *Did not I deliver you* from the Egyptians, and from the Amorites, from the children of Ammon, and from the Philistines?

12 The Zidonians also, and the Amalekites, and the Maonites, did oppress you; and ye

to make them subject to their power; for Jair held the government eighteen years after they began their inroads, but then their vexations and oppressions grew intolerable, and they not only afflicted his own country Gilead, but endeavoured to make their brethren, on the other side Jordan, to feel the weight of their power, as it follows in the next verse. This is said very plausibly, but cannot be admitted without some violence to the natural sense of the beginning of the verse; and also to the course of this history, which doth not mention their departure from God, and these oppressions of their enemies, on both sides, till after the death of Jair.

Ver. 9. *Judah, &c.*] Who were the tribes that lay next to Jordan.

So that Israel was sore distressed.] For while the Ammonites afflicted those countries in the eastern part of Canaan, the Philistines made ravages in the countries of Zebulun, and Asher, and the rest of the tribes that lay on the western coast; for so the LXX. explain those words in the foregoing verse, "In that year ἐν τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ, in that same year," the Philistines in the west, and the Ammonites in the east, vexed and oppressed the children of Israel.

Ver. 10.] All the rest of the gods mentioned ver. 6, are comprehended under the name of Baalim: which were so many and various, that they had quite drawn their affection from their own God: as they now sorrowfully acknowledge.

Ver. 11. *The Lord said*] By some prophet I suppose.

Did not I deliver you] See Exod. xii.

From the Amorites,] Who would have hindered their passage to the land of Canaan (Numb. xxi.).

Ammon,] Who were confederate with the Moabites to oppress them (Judg. iii. 13).

Philistines?] In the days of Shamgar (iii. ult.).

Ver. 12. *The Zidonians also,*] We never read of any invasion they made upon the Israelites; but only in general, that God left them, among other people, unsubdued, to prove the children of Israel (iii. 3), who took their opportunities, in all likelihood, to afflict them.

The Amalekites,] Who joined both with the Moabites and the Midianites to oppress them (iii. 13, vi. 3).

The Maonites, did oppress you;] Maon is the name of a nation; the plural of which *Meunim*, occurs in many places, particularly in 2 Chron. xxvi. 6, 7, where they are called in Greek Μειναιοι, a people in Arabia, both in that which we call Felix, and in that called Deserta. Which latter was not far from the Moabites and the Ammonites; with whom interpreters are apt to confound the Meunites, as if, by a transposition of letters, they were the same with the Ammonites: which had misled us in our translation of those words, 2 Chron. xx. 1, "And with them from the Ammonites," which makes no sense; but if we read

cried to me, and I delivered you out of their hand.

13 Yet ye have forsaken me, and served other gods: wherefore I will deliver you no more.

14 Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation.

15 ¶ And the children of Israel said unto the LORD, We have sinned: do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee; deliver us only, we pray thee, this day.

16 And they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the LORD: and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel.

"with them from Meunim" (as it is in Greek ἰκ Μειναιοι), all runs clearly, and makes perfect sense: and thus we ought to translate that place, 1 Chron. iv. 41, where we take *Meunim* to signify dwellings, and render the words thus, "The habitations which were found there;" as if where there were tents (which are mentioned before) there were not habitations, which are the same; therefore *Meunim* is the name of a people (as the LXX. understood it) who dwelt in tents, being Arabians; who being neighbours (as I said) to the Moabites and Ammonites, joined with them in their invasion of the land of Israel, and helped to oppress them; but they are plainly distinguished from the Ammonites, in the first place mentioned, and 2 Chron. xxvi. 6—8.

I delivered you out of their hand.] When they were utterly unable to help themselves.

Ver. 13. *Yet ye have forsaken me,*] But all these deliverances proved ineffectual to keep them steadfast in the worship of God.

I will deliver you no more.] He threatens therefore to leave them under the power of their enemies which now sorely distressed them, as they justly deserved; but it was with an intention to awaken them to a more serious and hearty repentance, otherwise he resolved not to deliver them.

Ver. 14.] A bitter reflection both upon them and upon their gods, like to that in the song of Moses (Deut. xxxii. 37, 38).

Ver. 15. *We have sinned.*] In worshipping such gods as could not save them.

Do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee;] They submit to such punishment as he thought fit to inflict, confessing they deserved no favour; which shows their hearts were for the present very sensible of the folly wherewith they were reproached in the foregoing verse.

Deliver us only,—this day.] They acknowledged that they deserved the severest punishment, but beseech him to have so much pity on them, as not to punish them this way, by letting these cruel enemies insult over them any longer.

Ver. 16. *They put away the strange gods*] Gave open proof of their repentance by renouncing all idolatry.

And served the Lord:] And returned to the worship of the Lord, and of him alone, which is the most remarkable repentance and reformation that we read of hitherto in this history of the Judges; and it seems to have been so serious, that for a long time they did not relapse; for we read nothing of their idolatry in the time of those three judges that followed Jephthah.

His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel.] Nor do we read before of such an expression of the Divine compassion towards them. Every one knows the Divine nature is not capable of *grief*, properly so called; but the meaning is, he quite altered his

17 Then the children of Ammon were gathered together, and encamped in Gilead. And the children of Israel assembled themselves together, and encamped in Mizpeh.

former intentions, and in much mercy resolved upon their repentance to deliver them. So Maimonides observes, that the word *nephech*, which we translate *soul*, signifies *his will*, Jer. xv. 1, "Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, my soul could not be towards this people;" that is, it could not be his will to save them. And so here, "his soul was grieved;" that is, saith he, his will ceased from afflicting Israel any longer; for it was said before that God's providence had deserted them, and he refused to relieve them till they called upon him and seriously repented; and then their miseries being very great by the sore oppressions of their enemies, he took pity on them, and willed their cruel afflictions should not continue (see More Nevochim, par. i. cap. 41).

Ver. 17. *The children of Ammon were gathered together.*] In the Hebrew, "were cried together;" that is, a proclamation went out, requiring all their dispersed troops, which were ravaging the countries of Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim, to return back to their camp, on the other side of Jordan.

Encamped in Gilead.] Or, "against Gilead;" for both Arius Montanus and Peter Martyr think that they laid siege to Gilead, the chief city in those parts: by taking which, they hoped to be masters of all that country; and then, with greater forces, go over Jordan again, and conquer the other tribes before mentioned.

Encamped in Mizpeh.] There were two Mizpehs on the other side Jordan, one in the tribe of Gad, the other in the half tribe of Manasseh, as I observed upon Josh. xi. 3, the latter of which may be probably thought to be the place where they now assembled,

18 And the people and princes of Gilead said one to another, What man is he that will begin to fight against the children of Ammon? he shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.

Jephthah, who was afterward chosen their captain, being one of this tribe. How many of the Israelites here encamped, and whether any of those in the land of Canaan, or only those of the two tribes and a half, cannot now be known; but upon their repentance, they seem to have recovered their ancient courage, and to have taken a resolution to drive the Ammonites out of their country, inasmuch that thereupon the Ammonites seem to have left the siege, and to have made a retreat into their own land, either to recruit their army, and raise more forces, or for some other reason; for thither Jephthah sent messengers to them, after he was chosen general of the Israelites; and there he fought them, when they would not yield to his convincing arguments, that they unjustly invaded the Israelites, as appears in the following chapter.

Ver. 18. *The people and princes of Gilead*] Who were most nearly concerned in this matter, their country lying nearest to the Ammonites.

Said one to another.] Entered into a consultation, in a grand assembly of all the people, and their rulers (see ix. 6).

What man is he that will begin to fight] Will be our leader. It seems to me a probable conjecture of Peter Martyr, that they consulted God also about this matter, who directed them, perhaps, to go to Jephthah.

He shall be head over all—Gilead.] They resolved, whatsoever the mind of the rest of the tribes should be, that he should command all the Gadites and Manassites that inhabited the land of Gilead.

CHAPTER XI.

1 The covenant between Jephthah and the Gileadites, that he should be their head. 12 The treaty of peace between him and the Ammonites is in vain. 29 Jephthah's vow. 32 His conquest of the Ammonites. 31 He performeth his vow on his daughter.

1 Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valour, and he was the son of an harlot: and Gilead begat Jephthah.

2 And Gilead's wife bare him sons; and his

wife's sons grew up, and they thrust out Jephthah, and said unto him, Thou shalt not inherit in our father's house; for thou art the son of a strange woman.

CHAP. XI.

Ver. 1. *Now Jephthah*] A man of the same country with Jair, their last judge.

Was a mighty man of valour.] A warlike person, of great courage and conduct.

He was the son of an harlot.] Or, but he was, &c. Some, by the Hebrew word *zonah*, understand a concubine, but it never signifies so in Scripture; but, as we translate it, a *harlot*; and sometimes one that kept a public house; for such people were wont to make their bodies as common as their houses, to all comers (see Josh. ii. 1). But several of the Hebrew doctors think that this word may signify either one of another tribe, or a stranger, one of another nation: and so Josephus himself here understands it, that he was ξένος πρὸς τὴν μητέρα, "a stranger by his mother's side." And Saïdas Batriçides saith, his mother was an Ishmaelite, as Mr. Selden observes, lib. de Successionibus, cap. 3. Now such were called *νόσται* by the Greeks, as Grotius observes, who were born of a

wife that was not a citizen. But among the Jews, if such persons embraced the law, their children were not restrained, but capable to inherit among the rest of their brethren; and therefore Jephthah complains of his expulsion (ver. 7) looking upon himself as unjustly dealt withal, which could not have been said, had he been a bastard.

Gilead begat Jephthah.] One of the posterity of Gilead, the son of Manasseh, was his father, who was called after the name of his great ancestor.

Ver. 2. *Gilead's wife bare him sons.*] He took a wife also of the Jewish nation, who bare him several sons.

His wife's sons grew up, and they thrust out Jephthah.] When his father was dead; for till then the inheritance was not to be divided; and, if he had been alive, he would not have suffered them to be so injurious to Jephthah, who was the son of a wife whom he loved extremely, as Josephus relates, lib. v. Antiq. cap. 9.

Thou shalt not inherit in our father's house;] Have no share of his estate.

3 Then Jephthah fled from his brethren, and dwelt in the land of Tob: and there were gathered vain men to Jephthah, and went out with him.

4 ¶ And it came to pass in process of time, that the children of Ammon made war against Israel.

5 And it was so, that when the children of Ammon made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to fetch Jephthah out of the land of Tob:

6 And they said unto Jephthah, Come, and be our captain, that we may fight with the children of Ammon.

For thou art the son of a strange woman.] This explains the word *zonah*, to be the same with a *woman of another country*; for there is no reason to think, that by *another woman* (as the words are in the Hebrew) he means a woman of another tribe, as the Chaldee paraphrast, R. Bechai, and others, expound it (see Selden, in the place before named and Buxtorf, De Sponsal. et Divortiiis, p. 61).

Ver. 3. *Jephthah fled from his brethren.]* When they were so unkind as to drive him from his father's house, he did not think fit to stay in their country.

Land of Tob.] We read nowhere else of this country, which, it is likely, was not far from Gilead, upon the borders of the Ammonites, in the entrance of Arabia Deserta; or, perhaps, it is the same with the country called Ish-tob, 2 Sam. x. 6, 8, which was in Syria, and so near the Ammonites, that they hired forces from thence, as well as from other Syrians, to fight with king David. We find some footsteps of this land, it is very probable, in the second book of the Maccabees, ch. xii. 17, where we read of *Τοῦ Βητοῦ Ἰουδαίου*, i. e. "Jews who dwelt in the land of Tob."

Vain men] Or empty men; for the word *rekim* signifies poor and needy persons, men of no estates, such as resorted to David when he fled from Saul (1 Sam. xxii. 2). So I suppose it to be here understood (not that they were profligate persons), for the word *pochazim*, *light men*, is not here added, as it is in the story of those who followed Abimelech, ix. 4. Therefore Grotius doth not seem rightly to have represented Jephthah, when he saith, he was one of those who "ex prædonum ducibus justis duces facti sunt" (lib. iii. De Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 3, sect. 3). For these were not highwaymen, as we call them, that lived by prey; but only men of small or no fortune, who were glad of an occasion to join themselves to so gallant a man as Jephthah was. And so the word we translate *gathered*, imports that they listed themselves under him of their own accord, being invited to it by the great fame of his humanity and valour. But Grotius herein follows the Vulgar, who adds the word *latrocinantes*, without any authority, either from the Hebrew, Chaldee, or LXX.

Went out with him.] Made excursions upon the enemies of the Israelites thereabouts, and got what booty they could from them for their subsistence, just as David did when he was forced to flee into the land of the Philistines (1 Sam. xxvii. 8—11).

Ver. 4. *In process of time,]* In the Hebrew it is "after days," i. e. as primæ Usher understands it (in the place above named), after those years mentioned x. 8, viz., eighteen years, in the conclusion of which, when Jair was dead, the Ammonites took the following resolution; but there is no good ground, as I have shown there, for this interpretation;

7 And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, Did not ye hate me, and expel me out of my father's house? and why are ye come unto me now when ye are in distress?

8 And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah, Therefore we turn again to thee now, that thou mayest go with us, and fight against the children of Ammon, and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.

9 And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, If ye bring me home again to fight against the children of Ammon, and the Lord deliver them before me, shall I be your head?

10 And the elders of Gilead said unto Jeph-

therefore by *after days* I understand some time after their retreat into their own country, which I mentioned x. 17.

Ammon made war] They only came in parties before to rob and spoil them; but now, finding the Israelites began to take courage, and had formed a camp in Gilead (x. 17), they raised an army, intending to conquer them and possess themselves of their country.

Ver. 5. *Made war]* The Vulgar interprets it, "pressed hard upon them."

Elders of Gilead] Who are called princes, x. 18. *Went to fetch Jephthah]* Some of the principal persons of the country were sent in the name of all the inhabitants of Gilead, in an embassy to him, to invite him to return to them.

Ver. 6.] They did not pretend to make him their king (remembering, perhaps, what had befallen the men of Shechem and Abimelech), but only the leader of their army.

Ver. 7. *Did not ye hate me, and expel me]* This signifies, that his brethren ejected him by the assistance of the public authority (unless we suppose that they were of the number of elders that were sent to him); or the elders, who saw the wrong his brethren did him, connived at it, and did not interpose, according to their office, to do him right, whereby they made his expulsion their own act.

Why are ye come unto me now when ye are in distress?] As much as to say, What reason have you to expect that I should hearken to you, since I know it is only your distress which moves you to recall me?

Ver. 8. *Therefore we turn again to thee now,]* This may relate either to what immediately goes before, and then the sense is, We confess we are in distress, and therefore implore thy help (which, if thou wilt afford us, thou shalt command us all for ever); or to the beginning of the foregoing verse, and the meaning is, We are sensible of the injury that was done thee, and therefore are come to repair it, by inviting thee to be our head; for that is meant by their "turning again to him:" they had altered their mind, and not only revoked that unjust act, but offered him a recompense.

Be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.] Of the tribes on their side Jordan; for they could promise nothing for the tribes in the land of Canaan, some of which were oppressed now by the Philistines, as they were by the Ammonites.

Ver. 9.] He offers to be the general of their army, if, after he had vanquished their enemies, they would, in good earnest, make him their governor in chief, and not throw him off when they had no further need of him. In which agreement he supposed the consent and appointment of God, by whose aid alone he hoped to be victorious.

Ver. 10.] They solemnly call God to witness their sincerity, confirming what was agreed by an oath,

thah, The LORD be witness between us, if we do not so according to thy words.

11 Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and captain over them: and Jephthah uttered all his words before the LORD in Mizpeh.

12 ¶ And Jephthah sent messengers unto the king of the children of Ammon, saying, What hast thou to do with me, that thou art come against me to fight in my land?

13 And the king of the children of Ammon answered unto the messengers of Jephthah,

and wishing God to revenge it, if they did not perform what they promised.

Ver. 11. *Jephthah went*] Unto his own country.

The people made him head and captain] In a full assembly of the people, with the princes (ix. 6, x. 18), he was made general of their army; with an assurance he should be their head, after the war was successfully ended.

Jephthah uttered all his words before the Lord] The people had done their part, but Jephthah would undertake nothing, without God's approbation, before whom, in a solemn prayer, he laid all that he had said unto them; and it is likely that God answered him by some prophet, and authorized him to undertake the conduct and government of the people (see x. 11); for if he had done it without a Divine warrant, the Spirit of the Lord would not have come upon him, as we read it did, ver. 29.

In Mizpeh.] Where the children of Israel had gathered themselves together to oppose the Ammonites, x. 17, and where Jephthah chose to fix his habitation, after the conquest of them, ver. 31, of this chapter; for that Mizpeh, where all the tribes, we often read, met before the Lord, was on this side Jordan, not far from Jerusalem, either in the tribe of Judah, or of Benjamin. It is thought probable, by some learned men, that there was some *proseucha*, a "praying-place," or place of Divine worship, here at Mizpeh (see Josh. xxiv. 26), where Jephthah uttered his words; which otherwise, they think, could not be said to be done "before the Lord;" but this is not a sufficient ground for such an opinion; for the Divine presence (as Rasi here observes) was in that place where all the people assembled upon a public concern (see 1 Sam. xi. 15). Kimchi observes the same upon the twentieth chapter of this book, ver. 1, where his words are, "In every place, in which Israel, or a great part of it, is assembled, the Divine presence dwells" (see my notes there).

Ver. 12. *Jephthah sent messengers unto the king of Ammon.*] Now he plainly acts as a chief governor, in appointing an embassy to go from him to the king of the Ammonites; which power he would not have assumed, if it had not been given him by God.

What hast thou to do with me.] That is, what is the ground of thy quarrel? Or, for what reason is this invasion made?

That thou art come against me to fight in my land?] This is the language of the supreme governor of the country, unto whom all were subject, as their lord; and demonstrates him to have been a most pious prince, that would first debate matters fairly, before he came to blows, according to the sense of a number of great men in future times, mentioned by Grotius at large, lib. ii. De Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 23, sect. 7. Unto which he was not bound, having taken arms only in his own defence; yet, to prevent the effusion of blood, he argues the case with the king of the Ammonites, who ought rather, if he thought

Because Israel took away my land, when they came up out of Egypt, from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and unto Jordan: now therefore restore those lands again peaceably.

14 And Jephthah sent messengers again unto the king of the children of Ammon:

15 And said unto him, Thus saith Jephthah, Israel took not away the land of Moab, nor the land of the children of Ammon:

16 But when Israel came up from Egypt, and walked through the wilderness unto the Red sea, and came to Kadesh;

himself injured by the Israelites, to have sent, before he took arms, to require satisfaction.

Ver. 13. *Because Israel took away my land, when they came up out of Egypt.*] This is a mere colour and pretence, the land being none of theirs, when the Israelites conquered it, but the land of Sihon king of the Amorites: for, as to the country of the Ammonites, God expressly charged the Israelites not to meddle with it (Deut. i. 19), for he would give them none of it. It is true, this land which they now claimed had formerly belonged to the Moabites, but Sihon had made a conquest of it, and driven them out of it, as we read Numb. xxi. 26. The king of Ammon, therefore, could not call it *his land*, unless he was also king of Moab at this time, which is not improbable; whence it is, that in the following dispute between him and Jephthah there is a promiscuous mention of the Moabites, together with the Ammonites, as if they were but one people (ver. 15, 17, 18), and Chemosh, which was the god of the Moabites, is called (ver. 24) the god of the king of Ammon: unto which may be added, that the land which Sihon conquered did not entirely belong to the Moabites, but some of it to the children of Ammon, as is expressly said, Josh. xiii. 25, where we read, that to the Gadites was given "half of the land of the children of Ammon;" therefore some part of Sihon's kingdom (where the Gadites were settled) had formerly belonged to the Ammonites.

From Arnon even unto Jabbok, and unto Jordan.] These are the bounds of the country to which they laid a claim; the river Arnon on the south, and the brook Jabbok on the north (which we may call the length of the country), and Jordan on the west; unto which afterward is added the eastern bounds, when it is said, ver. 22, "from the wilderness unto Jordan;" which is the wilderness through which the Israelites entered into the territories of Sihon.

Restore those lands] Which belonged to the Moabites and Ammonites.

Again peaceably.] The messengers of Jephthah had declared that he desired not war, but peace; which the king of Ammon tells him, he must not expect, unless he resigned these countries to him.

Ver. 14. This is an argument of a very peaceable disposition, and a high commendation of a warlike spirit, that he was still desirous to end this controversy by reason, and not by the sword.

Ver. 15. *Thus saith Jephthah.*] This is his reply; which seems to be delivered as from a man in authority.

Israel took not away the land of Moab, nor the land of Ammon.] He denies the matter of fact upon which they grounded the war: for the Israelites found this country in the possession of Sihon.

Ver. 16. *When Israel came up from Egypt.*] He proves the truth of what he affirmed by a short history of what passed after they came out of Egypt; when the king of Ammon said (ver. 13), they took this land from him.

17 Then Israel sent messengers unto the king of Edom, saying, Let me, I pray thee, pass through thy land: but the king of Edom would not hearken *thereto*. And in like manner they sent unto the king of Moab: but he would not *consent*: and Israel abode in Kadesh.

18 Then they went along through the wilderness, and compassed the land of Edom, and the land of Moab, and came by the east side of the land of Moab, and pitched on the other side of Arnon, but came not within the border of Moab: for Arnon was the border of Moab.

19 And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites, the king of Heshbon; and Israel said unto him, Let us pass, we pray thee, through thy land into my place.

20 But Sihon trusted not Israel to pass

through his coast: but Sihon gathered all his people together, and pitched in Jahaz, and fought against Israel.

21 And the Lord God of Israel delivered Sihon and all his people into the hand of Israel, and they smote them: so Israel possessed all the land of the Amorites, the inhabitants of that country.

22 And they possessed all the coasts of the Amorites, from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and from the wilderness even unto Jordan.

23 So now the Lord God of Israel hath dispossessed the Amorites from before his people Israel, and shouldest thou possess it?

24 Wilt not thou possess that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess? So whomsoever the Lord our God shall drive out from before us, them will we possess.

Walked through the wilderness unto the Red sea, and came to Kadesh;] This is not to be understood of Kadesh-barnea, but of that Kadesh mentioned Numb. xx. 1, 14, which was in the borders of Edom; unto which they came directly from the Red Sea: nor of their coming to the Red Sea, in the first year after they passed through it, mentioned Numb. xxxiii. 10, but of their last coming to it, in that station they made at Ezion-geber (after many stations in other places), which was upon the shore of the Red Sea; from whence they immediately marched to this Kadesh (Numb. xxxiii. 35, 36).

Ver. 17. Then Israel sent messengers unto the king of Edom, saying,] This shows they were so far from invading any body's country, that they humbly begged leave to pass through Edom, engaging to do no violence, but to pay for everything they wanted (see Numb. xx. 14, &c.).

But the king of Edom would not hearken thereto,] Notwithstanding which, they were not provoked by their inhumanity to quarrel with them.

In like manner they sent unto the king of Moab:] We do not read of such a message sent to the Moabites: but when they came to Ezion-geber into the wilderness of Moab, we find a command of God to them not to distress the Moabites, nor to contend with them in battle: which intimates there was some occasion for it; which was their refusal to grant them a common civility.

Israel abode in Kadesh,] Put up with all these affronts, and abstained from all violence, continuing quiet in the place where they had pitched their tents.

Ver. 18. They went along through the wilderness,] When they were denied a passage the direct way, they chose rather to fetch a great compass, and travel many miles with great labour and toil (see Numb. xxi. 4), than give others the least disturbance.

By the east side of—Moab,] See Numb. xxi. 13.

For Arnon was the border of Moab,] This is a demonstration that they did no injury to the Moabites, into whose country they did not enter. For they went no farther than Arnon, which divided their country from the Ammonites.

Ver. 19. King of Heshbon,] Where his royal palace was (see Numb. xxi. 25, 26).

Let us pass—through thy land] Being denied passage through Edom and Moab, they sent a friendly message unto him, craving the favour of being permitted to go through his country into Canaan (Numb. xxi. 21, 22).

Ver. 20. But Sihon trusted not Israel to pass through] Was jealous he would seize on his country.

Sihon gathered all his people] He contented not himself to refuse (as his neighbours had done) to grant

a passage through his country, which they could not demand, but raised all his forces, and proudly marched to drive them away from his borders (Numb. xxi. 23, 24).

Ver. 21. The Lord God of Israel delivered Sihon—into the hand of Israel,] It was plainly an act of God to give the Israelites the victory: for they were unprepared for war, and tired with a long march about the land of Edom and Moab.

So Israel possessed all the land of the Amorites,] They did not dispossess the Moabites, but the Amorites, who then inhabited that country, which became the possession of the Israelites, by the right of a just war in their own defence.

Ver. 22,] This is a description of the length and breadth of the land from south to north, and from east to west (see above, ver. 13). None of which was then in the possession of the Moabites or Ammonites; who could not therefore charge the Israelites with taking any of their land from them.

Ver. 23. Dispossessed the Amorites from before his people] This is a new title to this land; which they not only took in a just war, but was also given them by God, who made them victorious, and then bestowed it upon them.

Shouldest thou possess it?] It was absurd to think that they should take the pains to conquer it, and God should give it to them, that they might put the Moabites again in the possession of it, with whom they had no alliance; but quite contrary, they had denied them the common right of mankind.

Ver. 24. Wilt not thou possess that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee] He doth not call Chemosh a god; but only argues from the opinion that they had of him, which all nations had of their gods, that they owed their conquests to them, to whom therefore they gave thanks for all their victories. Now he appeals to them, whether they would not keep what their god had given them, and look upon it as rightfully possessed by them.

Them will we possess,] By the very same title whereby the Moabites possessed the country wherein they now lived; from whence they drove out the ancient inhabitants (Deut. ii. 10, 11).

Ver. 25. Art thou any thing better than Balak—king of Moab?] This is a third argument, that when this conquest was newly made by the Israelites, the then king of Moab (as potent as the present) laid no claim to this country, nor demanded to have it restored to him; but only was afraid they should invade the land he still possessed.

Strive against Israel,] Dispute their title with them.

Fight against them,] Endeavour by force of arms

25 And now *art* thou any thing better than Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab? did he ever strive against Israel, or did he ever fight against them,

26 While Israel dwelt in Heshbon and her towns, and in Arcoer and her towns, and in all the cities that *be* along by the coasts of Arnon, three hundred years? why therefore did ye not recover *them* within that time?

27 Wherefore I have not sinned against thee, but thou doest me wrong to war against me: the LORD the Judge be judge this day between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon.

to recover this country, as not belonging to them, but to him.

Ver. 26. *Three hundred years?*] In the last place he pleads prescription, and that for *three hundred years*; in which long space of time none of the kings of Moab pretended a right to this country, much less contended it with them; which argument was irrefragable. For if such a long undisputed possession cannot make a right to a country, it is impossible there should be any end of wars between kings and princes. But all mankind look upon those wars as unjust which are made for recovery of countries wherein people have settled quietly for many ages; though perhaps in the first acquisition of them their title was not good. Therefore it is not necessary to examine whether Sihon had a just cause of war when he conquered this country, nor is it of importance with respect to this, to examine whether the Israelites had held this conquest just three hundred years; for if a few be wanting it is not material: but with respect to something else it is of great consequence, for the explaining of what we read, 1 Kings vi. 2, that Solomon began to build the temple in the four hundred and eightieth year after they came out of Egypt. Which space is divided by these words of Jephthah into two intervals: the first of which contained three hundred and forty years; for they had possessed this country three hundred years, and they came out of Egypt forty years before its conquest: during which time they had been slaves to the Mesopotamians, Moabites, Canaanites, and Midianites. Now, if the years wherein they were oppressed by these four nations, and the years of peace and quiet which they enjoyed, be put together, from the first year of Chushan-Rishathaim to the last year of Jair, they produce a little more than three hundred years; so that no time is left for Joshua's conquest of Canaan, and his life after it, and for the generation that outlived him. But, by supposing that some of these things fell out in the very same time (as for example, during the fourscore years' rest in the eastern parts of the land after Eglon's death, they were oppressed twenty years in the north by Jabin), this difficulty is removed, and all comes right, as Sir John Marsham hath demonstrated in his Canon Chronicus; where he shows, that from the death of Moses to this invasion of the Ammonites, there were three hundred years; allowing five and twenty years (as Josephus computes) for Joshua's government after they came into Canaan, and thirty-five years to the following generation that survived him (see Seculum xi. *Æra* Exodi; and concerning the other interval, see here, xii. 14).

Why therefore did ye not recover them?] This question could not be answered, that in so long a time they should hear nothing of their claim till now.

Ver. 27.] *Thou doest me wrong to war against me.*] Upon all these reasons he concludes, the Ammonites

28 Howbeit the king of the children of Ammon hearkened not unto the words of Jephthah which he sent him.

29 ¶ Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah, and he passed over Gilead, and Manasseh, and passed over Mizpeh of Gilead, and from Mizpeh of Gilead he passed over *unto* the children of Ammon.

30 And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands,

31 Then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon,

had no cause to make this war; but were injurious in it to the Israelites.

The Lord the Judge be judge this day] The meaning is, that if they were not moved by these reasons, but the controversy must be decided by arms, he committed his cause to God, the righteous judge of the whole world, who, he doubted not, would do him right. By *this day* he doth not mean that God would determine the right, by giving him the victory then, when he spake these words (for he was not yet ready to give them battle), but that God would judge of the justice of his present plea, and accordingly give sentence, when the matter came to be tried in a battle.

Ver. 28. *Hearkened not*] He would not yield to arguments, being obstinately resolved to fight it out.

Ver. 29. *The Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah,*] The people had chosen him for their leader, and promised to continue him their chief governor, as they had already made him; and now God publicly declares his approbation of their choice; and made him their judge, as he had done others before (iii. 10), by endowing him with an extraordinary measure of courage and wisdom, and all other qualities necessary to render him fit to be the ruler of his people.

Gilead, and Manasseh,] Went through the whole country of Reuben and Gad (which are comprehended in *Gilead*), and likewise the half tribe of Manasseh, and levied what men he could among them.

Mizpeh of Gilead,] Went to the extreme part of the country northward, where Mizpeh was, towards Mount Lebanon and Hermon.

Unto the children of Ammon,] He marched from thence, with such forces as he had gathered, towards the enemy's country.

Ver. 30. *If thou shalt without fail deliver—Ammon*] He did not make a doubt of it, but thought he might be more assured of victory, if he made a religious vow beforehand, of being very grateful to God for it. Which was the custom of the ancient Romans, as we find in Livy; who frequently tells us, that their generals were wont to vow to Jupiter, or Apollo, or others, part of the spoil they should take in war; or to build temples in their honour. And thus the Israelites, when king Arad came against them, as they were going towards Canaan (a little before the conquest of this country now in controversy), vowed to make his country a *cherem*, if God would deliver it into their hands (see Num. xxi. 2).

Ver. 31. *Whatsoever*] This comprehends all sorts of creatures, as the Hebrew doctors commonly observe.

Cometh forth] The Vulgar adds the word *first*, which must be understood; otherwise he would have been obliged to devote many things to the Lord, which might possibly come out of his house.

When I return in peace] Come back victorious.

I will offer it up for a burnt-offering.] If it was a thing fit to be offered: for if a dog or a swine should have happened to come out first to meet him, that

shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering.

32 ¶ So Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against them; and the Lord delivered them into his hands.

33 And he smote them from Aroer, even till thou come to Minnith, *even* twenty cities, and unto the plain of the vineyards, with a very great slaughter. Thus the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel.

34 ¶ And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances: and she *was his only child*; beside her he had neither son nor daughter.

was not lawful to be offered. But the great question is, Whether it was not as unlawful to offer his daughter, who seems to be comprehended in this vow? And it is said afterward (ver. 39), that he did unto her according to it. Josephus, and the Chaldee paraphrast, and several famous rabbins, think that he did offer her, being deceived by a mistake of the sense of that law, Lev. xxvii. 28. And though he might have been absolved from his vow by the high priest, yet they tell an idle story, that they stood so much upon a punctilio of their dignity, that he would neither go to Phinehas, nor Phinehas vouchsafe to wait upon him. Which is a tale not to be found in the Talmud, but in some lesser writer, as Mr. Selden observes, lib. iv. De Jure Nat. et Gent. cap. 11, where he shows, that the two Kimchis, father and son, with R. Levi ben Gerson, and others, interpret these words quite otherwise; and take the particle (which we translate *and*) to be a disjunctive; that is, as much as *or*. So Kimchi's words are, "It shall be consecrated to the Lord, if it be not fit for a burnt-offering; or it shall be offered for a burnt-offering, if it be fit for it." And so they think she was devoted to God, and separate from all secular affairs, that she might give herself continually to prayer and holy exercises. Which opinion hath several difficulties in it, as he there observes; and it must be confessed, the stream of interpreters runs the quite contrary way: for though they call this votum temerarium, as Tertullian doth, "a rash vow," or a "foolish, incautious vow," as Theodoret, St. Austin, and others; yet very great numbers (and indeed most of the ancient Christian writers) think that he did really offer her: though it cannot be denied, that there are great difficulties in this interpretation also; no such thing having ever been done in Israel: but such sacrifices declared abominable unto God: which it is a wonder he should not know, nor the people neither; who, one would have expected, should have hindered such a barbarous sacrifice. All that can be said in answer to this is, that they having been long accustomed to idolatrous worship, and he having lived out of his own country, and being a soldier, had forgotten their law, or retained but a very imperfect knowledge of it. But they that would see this matter largely discussed, may consult Ludovicus Capellus, who hath a long dissertation on purpose about it; and I shall say something more of it upon the latter end of this chapter.

Ver. 32. *So Jephthah passed over unto—Ammon to fight*] He was not far from them before (ver. 29), but now he drew his army up to them, and engaged them.

The Lord delivered them] And thereby declared the Ammonites to be in the wrong (ver. 27).

Ver. 33. *Aroer*,] Which was a city upon the banks of the river Arnon; or rather in the river, being encompassed with it.

35 And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me: for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back.

36 And she said unto him, My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as the Lord hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, *even* of the children of Ammon.

37 And she said unto her father, Let this thing be done for me: let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my fellows.

Minnith,] Another city up in the country.

Unto the plain] They chased them a great way, and destroyed their cities as they went along, till they came to the plain here mentioned. Or, as it is in the margin, unto Abel; a city, perhaps, which was very strong, called, Abel-Keramim, as the LXX. understand it.

Great slaughter,] Both in the field and in the cities. *The children of Ammon were subdued*] So that they infested their country no more.

Ver. 34. *Jephthah came—unto his house*,] From which he went forth when he began this expedition (ver. 29).

His daughter came out] She was the first person of his family whom he saw at his return, who came, accompanied with some of her neighbours, to welcome him home, and congratulate his victory with music and dancing. So the old manner had been, Exod. xv. 20, and continued afterward, 1 Sam. xviii. 6.

Beside her he had neither son, nor daughter,] In the Hebrew the words are, he had not *from himself* either son or daughter; intimating, perhaps, that though his wife had children by another husband, or he had adopted children, yet he had none descended from his own body but this only daughter, which made her the dearer to him.

Ver. 35. *He rent his clothes*,] As the manner was when any great calamity befel them (see Lev. x. 6).

Brought me very low,] Quite spoiled my triumph. *One of them that trouble me*,] Which was the more afflictive, because he expected from her the greatest comfort and pleasure.

I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back,] That is, made a vow which he could not retract. It is likely he told her what it was, though that be not here expressed, or by his deep sorrow at the first sight of her, she understood it was upon her account: but in this he was grossly mistaken, which way soever we interpret this vow; whether of separating her from company, or of offering her for a burnt-offering; for he was bound to neither, yea, he was bound not to offer her in sacrifice, which was a thing abominable. As for the other, there was no such power by their law granted to parents, to shut up their children, and separate them from all society with men, as Mr. Selden observes, there being not the least footstep of any such thing in the whole body of their Talmud, or in their lawyers.

Ver. 36.] A rare instance of religion, courage, obedience to her parents, and love to her country.

Ver. 37. *Let this thing be done for me*,] Grant me only one request; which was not inconsistent, she thought, with his vow; for he did not say he would execute it immediately.

Let me alone two months,] Leave me at liberty so long.

That I may go up and down upon the mountains,]

38 And he said, Go. And he sent her away for two months: and she went with her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains.

Which were fit places for her purpose, being solitary, and far from company.

And bewail my virginity.] For it was accounted a great infelicity in that nation to die without issue.

I and my fellows.] Other virgins, her companions. This some take for an argument, that she was not to be sacrificed; for then she would have bewailed her death, rather than her want of posterity. But this is no concluding argument; for she might possibly look upon it as an honour to be a sacrifice unto God.

Ver. 38.] They that think she knew she was to be offered, infer from hence, that she looked upon it as a greater calamity to die without issue, than merely to die.

Ver. 39. *She returned unto her father.*] Having had time to bring her mind unto a perfect resignation to her father; or rather, to confirm herself in the resolution she had at first, cheerfully to submit unto whatsoever he had vowed.

Who did with her according to his vow] That is, saith Kimchi, he made her a house, and brought her into it, and there left her secluded from the company of all men, and from all secular affairs. That is the meaning, he thinks, of the first part of his vow, "It shall surely be the Lord's." And so Rabbag, a little more fully, She was separated from the company of men; for if she had had a husband, she could not have served the Lord alone, but must have served her husband also, as all wives are bound to do. Selden indeed saith, that he doth not see what law gave him this power to keep her from marriage; there being nothing of it in all their books, as was said before. But there is something like it in 2 Sam. xx. 3, where David shut up his concubines, and made them live in widowhood till their death. And he might take the liberty to do this (though no law gave him such power) rather than take away the life of his daughter, which was against law; for it condemned such sacrifices. But the truth is, there was no necessity of doing either, if he had understood or considered the law; for he might have paid a price for her to the priest, which the law prescribed, when a son or daughter was consecrated to God (Lev. xxvii. 2, 3, &c.). Nay, they who consecrated themselves, might redeem themselves: and about this very case of Jephthah there was anciently a dispute between two famous doctors, Simeon ben Lakish and R. Johanan; the former of which maintained, that he ought to have paid the price or value of her according to the law; but the other maintained, he was not bound to do so much as that, because the vow was to offer a burnt-offering, in which his daughter could not be comprehended. For other animals only were capable of being offered in sacrifice. As for those words, Lev. xxvii. 28, 29, upon which Lud. Capellus hath founded his opinion that she might be sacrificed, Maimonides hath better restrained them to the sons and daughters of the Canaanites, devoted by God to destruction. But who can think that God would have the Hebrew children so devoted as those slaves were, upon whom a curse was denounced before they entered into Canaan? Beside, if Jephthah was bound to offer his daughter, who should be employed in that work? Should the priests? But their business was rather to persuade and deter him from what he had imprudently vowed. Should the magistrates? But they could not be ignorant that God had forbidden such sacrifices. Should Jephthah himself? But this would have argued him as void of common sense, as of natural affection. And who can think (as Theodoricus

39 And it came to pass at the end of two months, that she returned unto her father, who did with her according to his vow which he had

Hackspar goes on) that, since God allowed cities of refuge, whither a manslayer might flee and be safe, when he had unwittingly killed a man, the same privilege might not have been allowed to a son or a daughter, who was perfectly innocent (as this virgin was), viz., to save their lives by flight, or by paying a ransom?

The Jews are very doubtful in this matter; for some say Phinehas lost his priesthood, and it was translated to the family of Ithamar, because he did not absolve Jephthah from this vow: but others of the eastern writers say, he was forbid to release him by the spirit of prophecy; and Jephthah, when he was admonished by his friends to go and advise with him how to save his daughter, was forbid by an angel to go (see Selden, lib. i. De Succession. ad Pontificatum, cap. 2, fol. 117, &c.). But the Targum upon this verse blames Jephthah for not consulting Phinehas; for if he had, he would have redeemed her for a sum of money.

She knew no man.] This is looked upon, by those who think she was only consecrated to the Lord, as an argument of it; that after the performance of his vow, it is said, "she knew no man;" that is, as long as she lived, she continued a virgin.

And it was a custom in Israel.] They that think she was sacrificed, take these words as separate from those that follow, and interpret them, upon this a sanction was made, that none should hereafter, by the like error, offer human sacrifices. So the Targum (see Selden in the place before named). But there was no need of this statute; nor is it likely that the fable among the Greeks, concerning the sacrifice of Iphigenia by Agamemnon, was devised out of this sacred story, as Lud. Capellus conjectures; who fancies also this Jephthia, that is, the daughter of Jephthah (from whence might come Iphigenia), was not sacrificed upon the altar, but only slain; though the vow was, he would offer a burnt-offering. But we refer these words to what follows in the next verse.

Ver. 40. *Daughters of Israel*] They of that country. *Went yearly to lament*] Some interpret the Hebrew word *thannoth* to signify they went to discourse with her, or to comfort her; though the most ancient interpreters (as Bochartus observes, in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. i. cap. 9), translate it as we do, *σπρρεις*, as the LXX. have it, to "make lamentation." But quite contrary the learned Lud. De Dieu, different from the rest (except Sixtinus Amama, who hath the same notion), interprets it to praise her. Which signification he plainly derives out of the Arabic language; and besides, we ourselves in this very book (ver. 11) seem to follow it, by translating it *rehearse*. And thus that excellent man explains this whole matter:—"She was not slain; but, as appears sufficiently from the foregoing words, was devoted to perpetual virginity; in which she deserved greater commendation than her father. For he, as soon as he saw her come to meet him, repented of the vow he had rashly made, and tore his clothes, lamenting the miserable condition into which he had brought himself and her: but she most courageously comforted her father, and, congratulating his victory, desired him not to be troubled about her, for she was ready to submit to what he had vowed. Upon the account of which heroic virtue, whereby she obliged the whole country, they could do no less than celebrate her praise every year."

vowed: and she knew no man. And it was a custom in Israel,

40 *That* the daughters of Israel went yearly

[*Four days in a year.*] One day in every quarter of the year they went to celebrate her fame with verses composed in her praise, as Grotius supposes. But whether they went to the place where she was retired,

to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year.

and there sang them before her, or in some other public place; and whether while she lived, or after her death, is uncertain, as De Dieu observes.

CHAPTER XII.

1 *The Ephraimites, quarrelling with Jephthah, and discerned by Shibboleth, are slain by the Gileadites.* 7 *Jephthah dieth.* 8 *Ibzan, who had thirty sons and thirty daughters, 11 and Elon, 13 And Abdon, who had forty sons, and thirty nephews, judged Israel.*

1 AND the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and went northward, and said unto Jephthah, Wherefore passedst thou over to fight against the children of Ammon, and didst not call us to go with thee? we will burn thine house upon thee with fire.

2 And Jephthah said unto them, I and my people were at great strife with the children of Ammon; and when I called you, ye delivered me not out of their hands.

3 And when I saw that ye delivered me not,

I put my life in my hands, and passed over against the children of Ammon, and the LORD delivered them into my hand: wherefore then are ye come up unto me this day, to fight against me?

4 Then Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead, and fought with Ephraim: and the men of Gilead smote Ephraim, because they said, Ye Gileadites are fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites, and among the Manassites.

CHAP. XII.

Ver. 1. *Gathered themselves*] In the Hebrew, were called, by a public cry, or proclamation to arm themselves.

Went northward,] To the country of Manasseh, on the other side Jordan. For this sufficiently shows that Mizpeh was in that country, and in the northern part of it, towards Lebanon and Hermon, as I observed before, xi. 29. Pet. Martyr thinks they did not march orderly thither, being not gathered together (as far as appears) by the authority of the magistrate, but in a tumultuous manner, as seditious people are wont to do.

Said unto Jephthah,] By this, and by what follows, it appears they came to Mizpeh, where Jephthah dwelt.

Wherefore passedst thou over] They do not mean over Jordan, for there he was already; but from hence to the coast of the Ammonites (see xi. 30, 32).

Didst not call us to go] Their pride made them take it ill, that they had not a share in the glory of the late victory. Just as formerly they quarrelled with Gideon upon the like occasion (viii. 1), which shows they were a haughty tribe.

We will burn thine house upon thee] Their pride put them in such a strange rage, that they seem to threaten to burn him as well as his house.

Ver. 2. *I and my people were at great strife with—Ammon*] He answers their furious language with great mildness, and first tells them that he did not undertake this war till he was forced to it by the Ammonites, who sorely distressed them (x. 9.)

When I called you, ye delivered me not.] In the second place he denies their charge, and affirms the contrary, that he had begged their assistance, but they refused to give it them: yea (as the word we translate *called*, signifies), he had cried aloud to them with earnest importunities to help them in their distress.

Ver. 3. *That ye delivered me not,*] That there was no hope of your help to preserve us from ruin.

I put my life in my hands,] Exposed myself to the utmost hazard; for he had but a small part of the

people of Israel with him to fight with their powerful oppressors. This phrase seems peculiar to the Hebrews and the eastern writers; for among all the Greek and Roman writers, Isaac Casaubon saith he never met with it but once in Xenarchus; whom Athenæus alleges, introducing in one of his plays a man full of fear and trembling—*ἐν τῇ χειρὶ τῆν ψυχὴν ἔχοντα.*

And passed over] With such forces alone as he could get on his side Jordan (xi. 29, 30).

The Lord delivered them] God approved his undertaking by giving him a great victory.

Wherefore then are ye come up unto me] Who had defended and preserved them. For if the Ammonites had vanquished Jephthah, they would soon have passed over Jordan, and fallen upon the Ephraimites, as they had before attempted (x. 9.)

Ver. 4. *Jephthah gathered—all the men of Gilead,*] When he saw they were not pacified by this fair and peaceable apology, but still continued their menaces, he betook himself to arms, and raised as many men as he could to oppose them.

Smote Ephraim,] Put them to flight, and made a great slaughter of them.

Ye Gileadites are fugitives of Ephraim] That which provoked them to kill so many of them was their scoffing language (added to their threats), whereby they approached the men of Gilead (who were the chief managers of the late war, xi. 29), as if they were but the scum and dregs of the tribe of Ephraim; i. e. of those descended from Joseph, among whom they were the principal.

Among the Ephraimites, and—Manassites.] That is, that dwelt in the land of Canaan: who looked upon the Gileadites, and the rest of the Manassites, on the other side Jordan, and in the most northerly part of it, as the refuse of their nation. But it must be acknowledged, that the words in the Hebrew are capable of another sense, and may be thus translated: "Therefore (so the particle *ki* is often translated) they said, Fugitives of Ephraim are ye;" that is, having smote them, the Gileadites called the Ephraimites *run-aways*. And the truth is, thus they (not the

5 And the Gileadites took the passages of Jordan before the Ephraimites; and it was so, that when those Ephraimites which were escaped said, *Let me go over*; that the men of Gilead said unto him, *Art thou an Ephraimite?* If he said, *Nay*;

6 Then said they unto him, *Say now Shibboleth*: and he said *Sibboleth*: for he could not frame to pronounce it right. Then they took him, and slew him at the passages of Jordan: and there fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand.

Gileadites) are called in the next verse: and then the following words may be thus translated, "Gilead got between the Ephraimites and the Manassites." It is very probable, that the Manassites in Canaan joined with the Ephraimites in this presumptuous attempt upon the Gileadites; who being well acquainted with their own country, got between them and the river Jordan, to intercept their passage over it, as we read in the following verse.

Ver. 5. *The Gileadites took the passages of Jordan*] So that none could pass over at these fords, without their leave.

When those Ephraimites] They are the very same words in the Hebrew, which are used in the foregoing verse, *The fugitives of Ephraim*.

Men of Gilead] Who were set to guard the passages.

Art thou an Ephraimite?] They examined him what countryman he was; whether a Reubenite, Gadite, Manassite, on their side Jordan, or one of the Ephraimites on the other.

If he said, Nay;] For fear would make him deny it.

Ver. 6. *Say now Shibboleth*] To find the truth, they put him to this test; whether his pronunciation of some words was like that of the Gileadites: for people of the same nation, who speak the same language, differ very much in their pronunciation of it, in several parts of the country: as in Greece, all spake Greek; but the Ionians, Attics, Dorians, and Æolians, spake it very differently. And so they did among the Romans; for at Præneste, which was not far from Rome (as Pet. Martyr observes out of Plautus), instead of *Ciconia*, they said *Konia*. And so the Ephraimites said *shibboleth*, but could not pronounce *shibboleth*. There were many other words like this which they could not frame their mouths to speak, as the Gileadites did; but this was chosen, it is likely, because it was very fit for the purpose, *shibboleth* signifying not only an ear of corn, but also floods of water (Ps. lxxix. 2), so that the test they put them unto was this, to bid them say, *Let me pass over the water*.

He said Sibboleth.] If he was an Ephraimite, he presently discovered himself; for he could not pronounce the letter *shin*: which preceded, I suppose, from the long use and custom of that people to pronounce otherwise, so that they could not frame the organs of speech to pronounce as the Gileadites did: which we see at this day among all nations; who, in different provinces, very much differ in their speech, though they use the very same language.

Then they took him, and slew him] Otherwise they let him go; for they used this mark of distinction on purpose, lest they should kill any of another tribe.

There fell—forty and two thousand.] In the fight, and at the passages of Jordan, this number perished: which was a just punishment to take down their pride and insolence, in despising so great a man as Jephthah, and threatening to destroy his house, after

7 And Jephthah judged Israel six years. Then died Jephthah the Gileadite, and was buried in one of the cities of Gilead.

8 ¶ And after him Ibzan of Beth-lehem judged Israel.

9 And he had thirty sons, and thirty daughters, whom he sent abroad, and took in thirty daughters from abroad for his sons. And he judged Israel seven years.

10 Then died Ibzan, and was buried at Beth-lehem.

so glorious a victory, whereby he had saved all the people of Israel; and reproaching their brethren also, whom they invaded without any cause, and seem to have intended to drive them out of their country.

Ver. 7. *Jephthah judged Israel six years*.] After this humiliation of the Ephraimites, all the tribes, whom the Ammonites had oppressed (on the other side Jordan, perhaps, in the land of Canaan, as well as the Gileadites, and the rest on their side), submitted themselves unto him as their judge; and he continued six years in the government.

Was buried in one of the cities of Gilead.] The Jews have several foolish conceits concerning his death and burial; because it is said, "he was buried in the cities of Gilead," as the words are in the Hebrew: which they would have understood, as if he rotted (as a punishment for offering his daughter), and one piece of him, when he dropped off, was buried in one city, and another in the next city, &c.; when the plain meaning is expressed in our translation, that he was buried in one of the cities, that is, in Mizpeh, where he lived (see Gen. xix. 29). And so Eben Ezra and Ralbag interpret it: though the latter of these rabbins could not forbear to incline to one of the Talmudical fables; that he having no issue to propagate his name, ordered his body to be cut into several pieces, and buried in so many cities of Gilead; that every one might preserve his memory. Other fancies there are, in which men indulge themselves; and Peter Martyr hath thought fit to interpose his conjecture, that the word *Iram*, which we translate cities, may possibly be the proper name of a city in Gilead, wherein he was buried.

Ver. 8. *Ibzan of Beth-lehem judged Israel*.] It is not said upon what occasion he was made judge; for, perhaps, he was raised up by God immediately after Jephthah's death, only to preserve them in the true religion, which was in some measure restored. Some of the Jews fancy him to have been the same with Boaz, who married Ruth the Moabitess, but without any ground at all that I can find.

Ver. 9. *He had thirty sons, and thirty daughters*.] A numerous issue was accounted a great blessing in those days; and though we read of no memorable act that this judge did, yet this is set down to show that he was a person eminently favoured by God.

Whom he sent abroad.] The Vulgar refers this to his daughters, for whom he provided husbands, and sent his daughters to their houses, as the manner was (Gen. xxiv. 67, xxxi. 50).

Took in thirty daughters from abroad for his sons.] This completed the blessing of God in the gift of so many children; who all lived to the state of men and women, and were all disposed by him in marriage, for that was in the power of parents (see Gen. xxiv.).

He judged Israel.] Not all the Israelites, but those that Jephthah had judged; and none disputed his authority, but he ruled over them thus long.

Ver. 10. *Beth-lehem*.] There were two Beth-lehems, one in the tribe of Zebulun, and the other in the

11 ¶ And after him Elon, a Zebulonite, judged Israel; and he judged Israel ten years.

12 And Elon the Zebulonite died, and was buried in Aijalon in the country of Zebulun.

13 ¶ And after him Abdon the son of Hillel, a Pirathonite, judged Israel.

tribe of Judah; the latter of which, it is generally thought, is here meant, where he was born and buried.

Ver. 11.] It is observed by many, that Eusebius, in his *Chronicon*, passes by this judge, because he saith the LXX. do not mention him, though the Hebrew text doth: but, as all our present copies of the LXX. now mention him; so did those whom a very ancient writer used, viz. Theophilus Antioch. lib. i. ad Autolicum; and, which is more to be wondered at, those copies also which Eusebius himself followed in his tenth book, the *Præpar. Evang.* cap. 14, as our primate Usher hath observed in his *Chronologia Sacra*, par. 1, cap. ult.

Ver. 12.] These last words were added to distinguish this Aijalon here mentioned from another in the tribe of Dan (i. 35).

Ver. 13.] The place where he was born shows that he was of the tribe of Ephraim, whom God at last honoured with a judge of their own country, after their pride had been humbled by Jephthah: for Pirathon is expressly said, ver. 15, to be in the land of Ephraim.

Ver. 14. *Thirty nephews.*] This is, grandsons.

That rode on threescore and ten ass colts.] See ver. 10. This is said, to show that God blessed him not only with numerous posterity, but let them all grow up to be men (see x. 4).

He judged Israel eight years.] The intention of this book is chiefly to show how God punished them for their sins, and delivered them upon their repentance:

14 And he had forty sons and thirty nephews, that rode on threescore and ten ass colts: and he judged Israel eight years.

15 And Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite died, and was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the mount of the Amalekites.

but nothing remarkable of this kind falling out in the time of these three last mentioned judges, he omits to relate their other acts, which was beside his purpose.

Here it may be fit to note, that the other interval of the two mentioned upon xi. 26, consisting of a hundred and forty years (which, added to three hundred and forty, in the foregoing interval, make up the four hundred and eighty years mentioned 1 Kings vi. 2), it is evident that the latter part of them, viz. eighty-four years, was made up by the reigns of Saul and David, who each reigned forty years (2 Sam. v. 4, Acts xiii. 21), and the first four years of Solomon: therefore the remaining fifty-six years are made up of part of the eighteen years wherein the Ammonites oppressed Israel after the death of Jair, and the years wherein these last named four persons and Samuel judged Israel.

Ver. 15. *Mount of the Amalekites.*] Some think this mount retained the name of *Mount Amalek* (as the words are in the Hebrew) from ancient times; the Amalekites having possessed it heretofore, when the Canaanites were the inhabitants of this country; but it may as well be thought (since all that is said is but conjecture) that it was so called from some famous overthrow, which the children of Ephraim gave the Amalekites in this place; for in the time of the judges they more than once joined with others against the Israelites (see iii. 13, vi. 3, but especially see what I have noted upon v. 14).

CHAPTER XIII.

1 *Israel is in the hand of the Philistines.* 2 *An angel appeareth to Manoah's wife.* 3 *The angel appeareth to Manoah.* 15 *Manoah's sacrifice, whereby the angel is discovered.* 24 *Samson is born.*

1 And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years.

2 ¶ And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren, and bare not.

CHAP. XIII.

Ver. 1. *Israel did evil again*] As he complained before, x. 6, when he began to speak of what befel them thereupon.

Delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years.] This is the sixth oppression, and the longest that they ever lay under: which is thought, by a great man I have often mentioned, to have ended seven months after the death of Eli, when the ark was brought back out of the land of the Philistines; and, by the same reason, it began so many months after he entered upon the government, after the death of Abdon (see Usherii *Annales*, ad A. M. 2848, and his *Chronologia Sacra*, p. 1, cap. 12, 13.) But I think Sir John Marsham hath since that more rightly judged, that this oppression by the Philistines is not different from that mentioned x. 7, 8, but one and the same; they vexing and oppressing the Israelites in the west, when the Ammonites oppressed them in the east: for though the oppression of the Philistines lasted longer, yet it began at the very same time with

the other; which made their distress the greater; and therefore that preface (x. 7) belongs not only to what immediately there follows, concerning the Ammonites and Jephthah, but to what is here related concerning the Philistines and Samson: which the holy writer could not speak of both together without confusion; and therefore first relates the issue of the war with the Ammonites, and then relates the other part of the history concerning the Philistines, which he here begins: and by this synchronism all difficulties may be solved, and the years, which seem redundant, brought within their true compass (see his *Canon Chronicus*, sect. 11, p. 293).

Ver. 2. *Man of Zorah.*] See Josh. xix. 40, 41.

Of the family of the Danites.] Sometimes the word *family* is used for a *tribe* (see Josh. vii. 17). Or the meaning may be "of a family among the Danites:" from among whom it was very proper to have a deliverer raised up to them, for the Danites were near neighbours to the Philistines, who oppressed them.

His wife was barren.] Was not likely to have any children.

3 And the angel of the Lord appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son.

4 Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing:

5 For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.

6 ¶ Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, A man of God came unto me, and his countenance was like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible: but I asked him not whence he was, neither told he me his name:

7 But he said unto me, Behold, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and now drink no

wine nor strong drink, neither eat any unclean thing: for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death.

8 ¶ Then Manoah intreated the Lord, and said, O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us that we shall do unto the child that shall be born.

9 And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah; and the angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field: but Manoah her husband was not with her.

10 And the woman made haste, and ran, and shewed her husband, and said unto him, Behold, the man hath appeared unto me, that came unto me the other day.

11 And Manoah arose, and went after his wife, and came to the man, and said unto him, Art thou the man that spakest unto the woman? And he said, I am.

Ver. 3. *The angel of the Lord appeared unto the woman.*] As he did to Gideon (vi. 12), in human shape, as the relation shows in the following verses, 5, 8, &c.

Thou shalt conceive.] The greatest men of this nation were born of barren women; as Isaac was anciently, and Samuel and John the Baptist in future times.

Ver. 4. *Drink not wine nor strong drink.*] She was to live as the Nazarites did (Numb. vi. 2, 3), while she carried him, in her womb, and, perhaps, while she nursed him; because, as it follows in the next verse, he was to be a perpetual Nazarite unto God, from his conception to his death (ver. 7), which he could not have been if she had drunk wine or strong drink; because a child in the womb and its mother live by the same nourishment.

Eat not any unclean thing.] It is likely, they were too negligent in those days, in observing the precepts about meats; otherwise there would have been no need to mention this.

Ver. 5.] See upon Numb. vi. 4.

He shall begin to deliver Israel.] He did not perfectly deliver the Israelites from the yoke of the Philistines, but it was done after his death by Samuel; who put an end to this forty years' tyranny, by his famous victory at Eben-ezer (1 Sam. vii. 13), as the same Sir J. Marsham observes: who supposes Eli to have died in the midst of this servitude; that is, twenty years before this victory. Samson therefore only sorely galled the Philistines, but they still continued to oppress the Israelites, as they did when he was born; for it appears by these words, that when the angel spake to them, they were under the hand, that is, the power of the Philistines, and so continued all his days: for it is said, xv. 20, that he judged Israel twenty years, "in the days of the Philistines;" that is, while they tyrannized over Israel: from which tyranny he was so far from being a complete deliverer, that he himself was taken and bound by them; nor had he ever any command over the Israelites.

Ver. 6. *The woman—told her husband.*] The angel seems to have appeared to her in the field, and she acquainted her husband with it when she came home. *A man of God.*] So they called prophets.

Like the countenance of an angel of God.] That is, venerable, or full of majesty; for so the men of God, I suppose, sometimes appeared; as may be gathered from the story of St. Stephen, who, being full of the Holy Ghost, when he stood before the council of Jerusalem, his face shone, "as if it had been the face of an angel" (Acts vi. 15).

I asked him not whence he was.] The lustre of his countenance struck such an awe into her, that she made no inquiry who he was, nor whence he came, and he was not pleased to tell her. Though the Vulgar, (against both the Hebrew text, the Chaldee, and the LXX.) hath it, "She asked him who he was, and whence he came, and what was his name, but he would not tell her."

Ver. 7.] She recites the words of the angel unto her husband: who, as Josephus fancies, hearing her highly commend the person who appeared to her for his beauty and majesty, began to suspect her chastity; which is a conceit for which there is no ground, but much against it.

Ver. 8. *Then Manoah intreated the Lord.*] To make good the forenamed conceit, Josephus makes this to be the prayer of his wife, that he might satisfy the jealousy of her husband; directly contrary to what is here expressly said, that Manoah made this request (see lib. v. Antiq. cap. 10).

Teach us what we shall do unto the child.] He did not in the least question his wife's chastity; no, nor blame her credulity, but desired himself to see the person (if God pleased) who had brought this good news to them, and to be informed how they should educate the child.

Ver. 9. *God hearkened unto—Manoah.*] Who, it appears by this, desired only further satisfaction in that which he already believed.

The angel of God came again.] Where, I suppose (ver. 6), he appeared to her before: and, I think, all interpreters agree, that it was on the very same day.

Manoah—was not with her.] This is no sign of his jealousy, but rather quite contrary, that he had a great opinion of her virtue.

Ver. 10. *The other day.*] The word *other* is not in the Hebrew, but it may be translated, *to-day*. And, perhaps, he appeared to her at the first in the morning, and now in the evening.

Ver. 11. *Manoah—went after his wife.*] Who led him the way, to show him where the man was.

Come to the man.] Whom his wife had desired to stay a while, till she called her husband to him, as Josephus probably enough conjectures: but I cannot imagine how he came to add, that when her husband saw him, οὐδ' οὐτως ἐπαύετο τῆς ἰστορίας, "he was not instantly rid of his suspicion;" for there is nothing like it in the following words.

Art thou the man that spakest unto the woman?]

And told her she should have a son.

I am.] The same Jewish writer adds, that Manoah

12 And Manoah said, Now let thy words come to pass. How shall we order the child, and *how* shall we do unto him?

13 And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman let her beware.

14 She may not eat of any *thing* that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean *thing*: all that I commanded her let her observe.

15 ¶ And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, I pray thee, let us detain thee, until we shall have made ready a kid for thee.

16 And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread: and if thou wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the LORD. For Manoah knew not that he *was* an angel of the LORD.

17 And Manoah said unto the angel of the

prayed him to tell him what he had said to his wife; but the angel replied, it was enough that he had told it her.

Ver. 12.] These words may be no more than a wish, that what he foretold might prove true; though some look upon them as a prayer to God to make them good. The Hebrew word *nishpat*, which we translate *order*, signifies here the rule whereby he should live.

Ver. 13.] This general answer might have been sufficient; but that they might be the more careful, he adds, in the next verse, all the particulars he had mentioned to his wife, yer. 4, and something more largely.

Ver. 14. *Of the vine,*] i. e. Neither grapes nor raisins.

Neither let her drink wine] This seems to lay a charge upon him as well as her, to see this abstinence observed.

All that I commanded her let her observe.] Breed him up a Nazarite all the days of his life.

Ver. 15.] He desired him to stay and accept an entertainment from them, which was anciently given to strangers, especially when they appeared like more than ordinary persons (Gen. xviii. 3, 4, &c.), and was continued to these days (Judg. vi. 18). Some think he intended to offer a sacrifice of peace-offerings, and feast the man of God with that part which belongs to him that brought it to be offered.

Ver. 16. *I will not eat of thy bread.*] He was persuaded to stay, but not to taste of his meat; for the word *bread* comprehends all provision of food.

If thou wilt offer a burnt offering,] Or, *But* if thou hast a mind to express thy thankfulness, offer a *burnt-offering*, which must be wholly sacrificed unto the Lord. A prophet (as Manoah took this to be) might warrant men to sacrifice, though they were not priests, nor at the tabernacle, as Elijah did at Mount Carmel.

Manoah knew not that he was an angel] As he did shortly after, when he appeared to be more than an angel.

Ver. 17.] He desired they might show themselves grateful to him, by making him some present, which they could not do, unless they knew his name, and where he dwelt. So Josephus interprets "doing him honour, *ἐν χάριτι αὐτοῦ καὶ δωρεὰν παράσχεσι*, that they might give him thanks, and bestow some gift upon him."

Ver. 18. *It is secret?*] Or rather (as it is in the margin) "it is wonderful;" so the LXX. *θαυμάσιον*, "admirable." Whose essence (for that is meant by *name* in Scripture) is to be admired, but cannot be

LORD, What *is* thy name, that when thy sayings come to pass we may do thee honour?

18 And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it *is* secret?

19 So Manoah took a kid with a meat offering, and offered *it* upon a rock unto the LORD: and the angel did wonderously; and Manoah and his wife looked on.

20 For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar. And Manoah and his wife looked on *it*, and fell on their faces to the ground.

21 But the angel of the LORD did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife. Then Manoah knew that he *was* an angel of the LORD.

22 And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God.

23 But his wife said unto him, If the LORD

comprehended. This shows it was the Lord himself; that is, the Word of the Lord, who was to be the Messiah; unto whom the prophet Isaiah gives the same name of *Pele*, the *wonderful* (Isa. ix. 6).

Ver. 19. *A meat offering,*] Which usually attended the burnt-offering, as we read in the book of Leviticus.

Offered it upon a rock] He did not offer it, properly speaking, but laid it upon the rock, as on an altar, to be offered unto the Lord. And so the LXX. *προσένευκε*, "he brought it to be offered;" he laid *τοῦς ἄρτους καὶ τὰ κρέα ἐπὶ τῆς πέτρας*, "he laid the bread and the flesh upon the rock."

The angel did wonderously;] The word *angel* is not in the Hebrew, and therefore this is to be referred unto Jehovah, immediately foregoing, who appeared in the form of an angel, and now acted suitable to his name *Pele*, *wonderful*; unto which the word *maphli* (*did wonderously*) plainly alludes; that is, he brought fire, it is probable, out of the rock, as in the days of Gideon. So Josephus; for we read of no fire that Manoah brought, and yet there was a flame, in which the angel went up into heaven.

Manoah and his wife looked on,] Which shows that Manoah was only a spectator of what was done, but did not offer the sacrifice.

Ver. 20. *From off the altar,*] So that part of the rock is called where the flesh and the bread were laid, being, I suppose, a very great stone, flat at the top like an altar.

Ascended in the flame] In which he went up *ἕως τοῦ οὐρανοῦ* (as Josephus speaks) "as in a chariot."

Manoah and his wife looked on it, and fell on their faces] Being astonished when they saw him, whom they took only for a prophet, to be the angel of the Lord; and, perhaps, worshipping the Divine Majesty, who had appeared in such an illustrious manner to them, and praying him to preserve their lives, which they thought in danger by such a sight.

Ver. 21. *Did no more appear*] There being no further occasion for it.

Manoah knew that he was an angel] By the wonderful things that he did, and ascending up to heaven in a flame, which demonstrated his celestial nature, which could not be hurt by fire.

Ver. 22.] This has been an old opinion among the Israelites (see upon vi. 22.)

Ver. 23. *If the Lord were pleased to kill us, &c.*] She seems to have had a better consideration of the thing than her husband, and strongly argues him out

were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offering at our hands, neither would he have shewed us all these things, nor would as at this time have told us such things as these.

24 ¶ And the woman bare a son, and called

of his fears, as altogether unreasonable; and, first, she makes God's acceptance of a sacrifice from them a plain demonstration of his favour to them; and his acceptance of it appeared by his kindling a fire himself, whereby it was consumed; and by the ascension of the angel in the flame, as if he went to carry the sacrifice unto God, and present it to him in heaven.

Neither—shewed us all these things.] Concerning the birth of a son, and the manner of his education, and his beginning the deliverance of Israel from their oppressors, of which there was no hope, if God intended to take away their lives from whom this son was to issue.

Nor would as at this time have told us such things] Appeared again and again unto them, to acquaint them with these things, at a time when such visions were rare, and when they were in such distress that God seemed to have abandoned them to the will of their enemies. These were two unanswerable arguments that they had no reason to think God would take away their lives, but continue them for the fulfilling his promise.

Ver. 24. *The woman bare a son.*] We have no direction whereby to know the time of his birth, but only this, that the angel said before he was conceived (ver. 5), that he should "begin to deliver Israel from the hands of the Philistines." Which is a plain indication they were then under their power; that is, the forty years' oppression of the Philistines was begun; and, consequently, since his twenty years' judicature was in "the days of the Philistines," (xv. ult.) that is, during their tyranny, he was born in the beginning of it: for we cannot well suppose that he began to be their deliverer before the eighteenth year of his age, as primate Usher observes in his *Annal.* ad A. M. 2849.

his name Samson: and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him.

25 And the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.

Samson.] Which Josephus saith signifies *ισχυρον*, strong, or robust; but whence he derived it I cannot imagine. Some think from *Shemesh*, which signifies the sun, which is a body of mighty force. So St. Jerome, who thinks Samson is as much as *their sun*; a great "light of Israel," as David is called.

The Lord blessed him.] As he grew up there plainly appeared in him extraordinary endowments of body and mind, which the Lord bestowed on him.

Ver. 25. *Began to move him*] To do some unusual things, beyond mere human power, which were specimens of an heroic virtue. The Targum translates it, "the spirit of fortitude or courage," &c.

At times] Upon certain occasions, when it would be visible to the people that God intended to work deliverance by him.

In the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.] See ch. xvi. 31. There was no army of the Danites encamped where Samson displayed his valour; but this is the name of a place called Machana-Dan (the camp of Dan), in which perhaps Samson lived. The reason of this name is given afterward in the eighteenth chapter, ver. 12, where there is a history of an expedition of the Danites; which, though placed after this, yet was really before the times of Samson. But this camp, it appears by that place, did not lie between Zorah and Eshtaol, but in the tribe of Judah, or in the very borders of it: therefore the word *and* must be here supplied; "in the camp of Dan, and between Zorah and Eshtaol," towards which that camp lay. If this be not allowed, we must suppose that the six hundred men, mentioned xviii. 11, made their encampment between Zorah and Eshtaol before they marched out of their own country, and gave that place the same name which the other had near Kirjath-jearim, where they encamped the first night.

CHAPTER XIV.

1 Samson desireth a wife of the Philistines. 6 In his journey he killeth a lion. 8 In a second journey he findeth honey in the carcass. 10 Samson's marriage feast. 12 His riddle by his wife is made known. 19 He spoileth thirty Philistines. 20 His wife is married to another.

1 AND Samson went down to Timnath, and saw a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines.

2 And he came up, and told his father and

CHAP. XIV.

Ver. 1. *Samson went down to Timnath.*] A city in his own tribe, as we read Josh. xix. 47 (see there), but fallen, it is probable, into the possession of the Philistines, near to whose country it lay, who at this time oppressed the Israelites, and made them their tributaries, which did not hinder, but rather promote, all manner of commerce between them.

Saw a woman in Timnath.] That is, he fell in love with her; according to the vulgar saying among the Greeks, *εκ του ὄραν το ἔρως*, "from looking comes loving."

Ver. 2. *Told his father and his mother.*] This was a part of the honour they thought was owing to their parents, to advise with them about their marriage, of

his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines: now therefore get her for me to wife.

3 Then his father and his mother said unto

which they did not treat, but left it to their parents. So it seems by this to have been in ancient times, though their children were of age (as Samson is now supposed to be), and, according to the later doctors among the Jews, fit to contract marriage themselves (see Selden, lib. ii. Uxor. Hebr. cap. 3, and see above, xii. 9).

Get her for me to wife.] This was when Samson was about twenty-two years old, as primate Usher computes it, who thinks Eli judged Israel at this time in civil affairs; but Sir J. Marsbam makes account, as I observed, he died in the middle of this servitude.

Ver. 3. *Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren.*] That is, in their own family.

him, *Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines?* And Samson said unto his father, Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well.

4 But his father and his mother knew not that it *was* of the Lord, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines: for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.

5 ¶ Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath, and came to the vineyards of Timnath: and, behold, a young lion roared against him.

6 And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily

Among all my people,] In the whole tribe of Dan.

That thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines?] Which was against the law of Moses, in Exod. xxxiv. 16; Deut. vii. 3. For though they were none of the seven nations of Canaan, yet they were under the same condemnation, and their land was given to the Israelites.

Samson said unto his father,] His mother, some think, expressed such dislike to the motion, that he applied himself wholly to his father, and besought him to favour his choice, because he was deeply in love with her.

Ver. 4. *Knew not that it was of the Lord,]* He felt some Divine motion in him, which carried him to this place to seek a wife; but his parents knew not of it till he told them (as some think), and then readily consented.

He sought an occasion against the Philistines:] Which he knew this treaty of marriage would give him, whether it succeeded or miscarried.

The Philistines had dominion over Israel.] They were still, as they had been several years, under the power of the Philistines, who treated them, it is likely, with such scorn and contempt, as if they had been their slaves.

Ver. 5. *Then went Samson down,—to Timnath,]* He overcame them by his importunity; or perhaps told them, as I said before, what a motion he felt from God to desire this match.

Came to the vineyards] Unto which he turned aside, upon some occasion not here mentioned.

A young lion roared against him.] Came with full mouth (as we speak) to devour him. By this, and many other places, it appears, there were lions in Judea, from whence several places had their names, as Lebaoth, Josh. xvi. 32, and Beth-lebaoth, xix. 6. Every one also knows, that a young lion, come to his full strength, was the fiercest of all other. And so *ephraim* (Kimchi observes) is used for a lion grown bigger than *gur*, which signifies a lion's whelp.

Ver. 6. *The Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him,]* The same Spirit mentioned in the last verse of the foregoing chapter; which endued him with extraordinary courage and undauntedness of mind, together with a supernatural strength of body.

He rent him as he would have rent a kid,] That is, as easily and speedily. The Hebrew word certainly signifies to “tear in pieces;” and therefore, if it be true that Josephus saith (lib. v. Antiq. cap. 10), that he throttled him with his hand (ἀγχεῖ ταῦς χερσὶ), the meaning is, that, after he had strangled him, he rent him in pieces.

He had nothing in his hand:] If he had encountered him being armed with some weapon, it had been a bold action; but when he was naked to receive his assault, was a miraculous resolution, by which he

upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and *he had* nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done.

7 And he went down, and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well.

8 ¶ And after a time he returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcase of the lion: and, behold, *there was* a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the lion.

9 And he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating, and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat: but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcase of the lion.

was encouraged to undertake greater things, as David was by the same power given him.

He told not his father or his mother] Being afraid, perhaps, that this action might come to the ears of the Philistines, which might make them jealous of him.

Ver. 7. *Talked with the woman:]* Discoursed with her about marriage, which he propounded to her.

She pleased Samson well.] All things were agreed, and she was espoused to him: but before the espousals she was converted to the Jewish religion, and made an entire proselyte, as R. Levi ben Gersom, and Moses Mikotzi, and other Hebrew doctors say; and then it was not unlawful to marry a stranger, as Joshua, they say, did Rahab (see Selden, lib. v. De Jure Nat. et Gent. cap. 15, and Buxtorf, De Sponsalibus et Divortijs, sect. 31).

Ver. 8. *After a time]* In the Hebrew it is *after-days*: that is, a year, as that phrase often signifies, and is so translated by us, Exod. xiii. 10, where *mijamim jamim* is rightly translated “from year to year” (see also Gen. iv. 3, and ch. xi. of this book, ver. 4).

He returned to take her,] To complete his marriage: which was not wont to be celebrated between a man and a young virgin till twelve months after the espousals (as the Hebrew doctors say), that she might have so much time to adorn herself, and make herself every way fit for marriage (see Selden, lib. ii. De Uxor. Hebr. cap. 8). But if in that twelve months' time she lay with any other man, it was accounted adultery, and punished with death, because she was really his wife.

To see the carcase of the lion:] Which was now a mere skeleton, the flesh being all consumed: and so the Syriac interpreter here renders it.

There was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase] Bees are observed, by Aristotle and others, to abhor stinking smells, and to abstain from flesh; which hath made some think it strange that a swarm of bees should breed in the carcase of a lion; but they did not consider that time had consumed the flesh, or it was eaten up by birds and beasts, and nothing but the bare bones remained; in which the bees did not breed, but settled themselves, when they swarmed, as they have done sometimes in dead men's skulls and in their tombs (see Bochart, in his Hierozoicon, p. 2, lib. iv. cap. 10, and Vossius De Orig. et Progressu Idolol. lib. iv. cap. 79).

Ver. 9. *He took thereof in his hands,]* Or, as the Syriac translates it “it dropped into his hands,” from the combs, that is, which they had made either in the belly, as St. Ambrose thinks, or in the breast, as Josephus, or (which Vossius rather thinks) in the head, or in the mouth of the lion, as the LXX. and Vulgar understand it: though Bochartus thinks that, instead of *iv στόματι*, “in the mouth,” it should be

10 ¶ So his father went down unto the woman: and Samson made there a feast; for so used the young men to do.

11 And it came to pass, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him.

12 ¶ And Samson said unto them, I will now put forth a riddle unto you: if ye can certainly declare it me within the seven days of the feast, and find it out, then I will give you thirty sheets and thirty change of garments:

13 But if ye cannot declare it me, then shall ye give me thirty sheets and thirty change of

garments. And they said unto him, Put forth thy riddle, that we may hear it.

14 And he said unto them, Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness. And they could not in three days expound the riddle.

15 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they said unto Samson's wife, Entice thy husband, that he may declare unto us the riddle, lest we burn thee and thy father's house with fire: have ye called us to take that we have? is it not so?

16 And Samson's wife wept before him, and

read in the LXX. ἐν σώματι λέοντος, "in the body of the lion."

Went on eating,] Which was not unlawful, in case of hunger, though it was found in a carcass; because such ceremonial laws, as forbid such things, were not observed in cases of necessity: as appears by David's eating the show-bread, and Elijah's eating food brought him by ravens.

And came to his father and mother,] From whom he had turned aside for awhile, as he did when they first went to Timnath (ver. 5).

He gave them, and they did eat,] Wild honey being delicious food in that country, as many places show (Deut. xxxii. 13, and Ps. lxxxii. 16).

He told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcass] For then, perhaps, they would not have eaten it.

Ver. 10. *So his father went down unto the woman,]* (Together with his wife and his son) to demand her, who was espoused to Samson, to consummate the marriage.

Samson made there a feast,] According to the custom of all countries; which feast was called by the Jews "the nuptial joy," with which no other was to be intermixed; and all labour ceased, as long as it lasted (see Selden, lib. ii. Uxor. Hebr. cap. 11, p. 173).

Ver. 11. *When they saw him,]* What a goodly person he was.

They brought thirty companions to be with him,] Her friends, out of respect to him, brought this great number of bridemen to honour his nuptials; but some of the Jews think they had a further end in it, that they might serve as a guard to him, if he should attempt any disturbance; of which, they fancy, the Philistines were afraid, when they saw he was a man of might.

Ver. 12. *I will now put forth a riddle]* This shows how ancient the custom was (which we find afterward among the Greeks), of proposing questions to be resolved in their computations and feasts; that they might not be spent merely in dull eating and drinking, but there might be something to exercise and whet the wits of the company: and they called such riddles as these, which were contrived to puzzle men's thoughts, by the name of γρίφοι, which the scholiast upon Aristophanes defines to be παρόντων ζήτημα, "a question put among their cups." Athenæus discourses largely of such problems, as they also called them, in his Deipnosophists (see Bochart, in his Hierozoicon, p. 2, lib. iv. cap. 12).

The seven days of the feast,] So long the nuptial solemnity was wont to continue in ancient times (Gen. xxix. 27). They could not shorten the days, as the Jewish doctors tell us, but they might lengthen them; as they did at Tobit's marriage, when the solemnity continued fourteen days, though according to custom they were bound to keep but three, she being

a widow, as Selden observes in the forenamed book, p. 185, and Buxtorf in his Synagoga Judaica, cap. 35.

I will give you thirty sheets, &c.] The Greeks followed this example, and gave rewards to him who resolved the question proposed, but set a mulet on those that could not.

Ver. 13. *Then shall ye give me thirty sheets, &c.]* Most take *sidinim* (from whence the word *sidon* seems to come) for such linen cloths as the whole body may be wrapped in; and therefore properly translated *sheets*: and *change of garments* signify new robes, which they might change for the old: but of the word *sidon*, see Braunius De Vestitu Sacerd. Hebr. lib. i. cap. 7, n. 7.

Put forth thy riddle,] They agreed to the conditions, and bade him propound it.

Ver. 14. *Out of the eater, &c.]* The opposition is manifest in the first part of the riddle, but not in the second; for weakness is opposed to strength, not sweetness, whose opposite is bitterness, or sharpness: but Bochartus hath ingeniously observed, that these two words are sometimes confounded; for, in the Arabic language, the word *mirra*, which signifies *strength*, comes from *marra*, which signifies to be *bitter*: and so it is among the Latins, where *acer*, a sharp man, is as much as a valiant man, who eagerly (as we speak) engaged his enemies: and this very word (as he and others have noted) is used of lions, whom Ovid in his *Fasti* calls

"Genus acre leonum."

And therefore the riddle is truly this: "Food came from the devourer, and sweetness from that which is eager and sharp; i. e. fierce.

They could not in three days] Whereupon (it appears by what follows) they applied themselves to his wife, and desired her (with good words, it is likely, at first) to try what she could do by her caresses, to persuade him to unriddle it to her.

Ver. 15. *On the seventh day,]* Which was the last day of the feast; when they were in danger to lose their wager.

Entice thy husband,] By letting her know it; who they expected would tell it them.

Lest we burn thee and thy father's house,] From entreaties they now betake themselves to threatenings, and those very terrible; which they concluded would make her as pressing upon him as they were upon her.

Have ye called us] This signifies that they were invited by her friends to the feast.

To take what we have?] To make us pay very dear for our good cheer.

Is it not so?] Will not your kindness conclude in rudeness, by stripping us of our raiment?

Ver. 16. *Samson's wife wept before him,]* She added tears to her entreaties.

Thou dost but hate me, and lovest me not,] This was

said, Thou dost but hate me, and lovest me not: thou hast put forth a riddle unto the children of my people, and hast not told it me. And he said unto her, Behold, I have not told it my father nor my mother, and shall I tell it thee?

17 And she wept before him the seven days, while their feast lasted: and it came to pass on the seventh day, that he told her, because she lay sore upon him: and she told the riddle to the children of her people.

18 And the men of the city said unto him on the seventh day before the sun went down,

prudent enough, to pretend to doubt of his affection, because he concealed this secret from her; for a new married couple are usually so kind as freely to unbosom themselves one to another.

I have not told it my father nor my mother,] With whom he had been long acquainted.

Shall I tell it thee? Whom he did not yet so well know as to be sure she could keep a secret.

Ver. 17. *She wept before him the seven days,]* That is, the rest of the seven days of the feast which remained after the third, she importuned him continually with tears, and upbraided him, I suppose, with want of kindness to her, as the foregoing verse imports.

Because she lay sore upon him,] Made him very uneasy by her importunity, which he could not resist, though he had conquered the lion.

She told the riddle to the children of her people,] For whom she had more affection than for her husband, or feared their displeasure more than his.

Ver. 18. *The men of the city said—before the sun went down,]* Just before the time was expired, which was prefixed for the solution of the riddle.

What is sweeter than honey? and what is stronger than a lion? This is a compendious answer to the latter part of the question, which sufficiently comprehends the first: and St. Ambrose thinks, that, as soon as this answer was out of their mouth, Samson immediately interposed and said, "What is more perfidious than a woman?" which he had out of Josephus, who saith the same; and something like it follows in the next words.

If ye had not plowed with my heifer,] The meaning is, that without the assistance of his wife (whom he compares to a young heifer, which is not yet subdued to the yoke of obedience) they had continued still as ignorant as they had been all the time of the feast. Ralbag, indeed, and some others, take the word *ploughed* in a lascivious sense; as if he meant that they had lain with his wife, or otherwise they had not got the secret out of her. But the words will not bear this interpretation; for he doth not say, "If ye had not ploughed my heifer" (which might have been so interpreted), but, If ye had not ploughed

What is sweeter than honey? and what is stronger than a lion? And he said unto them, If ye had not plowed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle.

19 ¶ And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them, and took their spoil, and gave change of garments unto them which expounded the riddle. And his anger was kindled, and he went up to his father's house.

20 But Samson's wife was given to his companion, whom he had used as his friend.

with my heifer; which plainly implies using her help to find out what they desired (see Bochart. par. i. Hierozoicon, lib. ii. cap. 41).

Ver. 19. *The Spirit of the Lord came upon him,]* Which he had not always; but at special seasons it moved him, and gave him power to do extraordinary things, which otherwise had not been warrantable (see ver. 6, and xiii. ult.)

Ashkelon,] A city of the Philistines.

Slew thirty men of them,] As they were making merry, it is probable, either in the field, or the city, at some public solemnity, when great companies used to be gathered together, and to appear in their best apparel.

Took their spoil,] Whatsoever they had about them; and perhaps they that fled left a great many things behind them.

Gave change of garments] Together with the sheets he promised; which he purchased, perhaps, with the spoil.

His anger was kindled,] Against his wife for betraying him, and against his companions for their underhand dealing.

He went up to his father's house,] Left his wife with her own relations, and went to live at home with his father. It is plain by the whole story, that Timnath lay low, there being a descent from his father's house to it, unto which they went up from thence (ver. 1, 2, 5, 7, 10).

Ver. 20. *Samson's wife was given to his companion]* She it seems was as angry as he; and looking upon herself as forsaken, was easily persuaded to marry one of his bridemen.

Whom he had used as his friend] With whom he was more familiar, and treated him with greater kindness than he did the rest that honoured him with their company. For he, I suppose, was the principal brideman, who was called by the name of "the friend of the bridegroom," as we read in the gospel of St. John, iii. 29 (see Selden, lib. ii. Uxor. Hebr. cap. 16, p. 200, &c.). This usage, no doubt, incensed Samson the more afterward against them; for he saw there was no faith in any of them.

CHAPTER XV.

1 Samson is denied his wife. 3 He burneth the Philistines' corn with foxes and firebrands. 6 His wife and her father are burnt by the Philistines. 7 Samson smiteth them hip and thigh. 9 He is bound by the men of Judah, and delivered to the Philistines. 14 He killeth them with a jawbone. 18 God maketh the fountain En-hakkore for him in Lehi.

1 But it came to pass within a while after, in the time of wheat harvest, that Samson visited his wife with a kid; and he said, I will go in to

my wife into the chamber. But her father would not suffer him to go in.

2 And her father said, I verily thought that

"after a year" (xiv. 8), when his anger was appeased.

In the time of wheat harvest,] Which was about the feast of Pentecost; a time of great joy.

CHAP. XV.

Ver. 1. *Within a while after,]* In the Hebrew the word is *mijamin*; which, in other places signifies

thou hadst utterly hated her; therefore I gave her to thy companion: is not her younger sister fairer than she? take her, I pray thee, instead of her.

3 ¶ And Samson said concerning them, Now shall I be more blameless than the Philistines, though I do them a displeasure.

4 And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes, and took firebrands, and turned

Samson visited his wife with a kid;] Which was no contemptible present, as appears by the story of Judah and Tamar, Gen. xxxviii. 17. For it was a delicious food, not only in Judea, but in other countries, as Bochartus hath shown in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 2.

I will go in to my wife into the chamber.] He attempted, with the usual freedom which husbands have with their wives, to go into her apartment, and enjoy her company.

Her father would not suffer him.] For the reason following in the next verse.

Ver. 2. *I verily thought that thou hadst utterly hated her;]* He thought he had good grounds to conclude he would never come near her more, having not heard from him a whole twelvemonth.

Therefore I gave her to thy companion:] Whom it is likely she loved, having contracted an acquaintance with him by the friendship he had with her husband (xiv. ult.). For though she was (as the Hebrew doctors suppose) a proselyte to the Jewish religion, yet she was not so well instructed as to know that it was not lawful, by their law, to marry another, till Samson had given her a bill of divorce; which he had not done, intending to return again to her.

Is not her younger sister fairer than she?] He had no mind to quarrel with Samson; and therefore endeavoured to assuage his anger with the offer of his other daughter, who was more beautiful than her who had forsaken him. This, indeed, was contrary to the law of Moses; but the Philistines, it seems, continued their old abominable customs, which God intended, by giving his law, to abolish (Lev. xviii. 21, 27, 30).

Ver. 3.] He seems to have turned away in scorn and indignation, without making a reply to his father-in-law; but told the next persons he met, that he would be revenged of the Philistines for the wrong that had been done him; and that they might blame themselves for the mischief he intended them. By which it appears, that the people of that place approved of this marriage, and perhaps honoured it by their presence; whom Samson resolved therefore to chastise, not as a private person, but as appointed by God to vindicate the oppression of the Israelites. Which Grotius thinks he did *ex naturali jure*, as a piece of natural justice (see lib. ii. De Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 20, sect. 8, n. 3).

Ver. 4. *Went and caught three hundred foxes.]* Some make a difficulty to believe this, because foxes are subtle creatures, and not easily caught: but they should consider such things as these, which Bochartus hath represented, that this country abounded with foxes, from whence several places had their names, particularly one in the tribe of Dan (see ch. i. 35, and Josh. xix. 42), and that under this name of foxes may be comprehended a creature very like a fox, called *thoes*, which go together in herds; so that two hundred (as good authors report) have been seen in a company together. And next, it is not said he caught these at one time, or in a day and a night; but there might be a week or a month's time allowed for the accomplishment of his design; in which his servants, and neighbours, and friends, no doubt, assisted him,

tail to tail, and put a firebrand in the midst between two tails.

5 And when he had set the brands on fire, he let them go into the standing corn of the Philistines, and burnt up both the shocks, and also the standing corn, with the vineyards and olives.

6 ¶ Then the Philistines said, Who hath done this? And they answered, Samson, the son in

if he desired it; so that such a number might be caught in a short time: for they were not caught, as some imagine, only by hunting, but in snares and nets, as he demonstrates in his Hierozoicon, lib. iii. cap. 13, where in answer to such as ask why he chose foxes rather than dogs, or some other creatures, he thinks it is sufficient to say, that he brought about two ends; by the same means freeing the country from a great many noxious animals, by which he did much hurt unto their enemies.

Took firebrands, and turned tail to tail.] Which he tied together with a cord; yet not close, but at a distance, that they might run the better.

Put a firebrand in the midst.] Which he so fastened, that it should not fall off by their motion.

Ver. 5. *He let them go into the standing corn of the Philistines.]* Near unto which he let them loose; and they naturally ran into it to hide themselves from the fire; of which they are observed to be afraid. Besides, being coupled, they could not run into their holes.

Burnt up both the shocks, and also the standing corn.] By this it appears, that it was in the midst of wheat-harvest when this was done; some corn being cut, and other still standing; but all consumed. For the fire being once begun, the foxes were the more affrighted, and desiring to run from it, this still carried it to another place, where there was corn left, till they had burnt it quite up: besides, it is observed by the same author, that foxes do not run straight forward, but they make many turnings, by which means they destroyed the more.

With the vineyards and olives.] Foxes are observed to love grapes, and Solomon speaks of them as noxious to vineyards (Cant. ii. 15), whither they ran to satiate their hunger, after they had been long kept up by Samson. Some think, that as part of the three hundred foxes were sent among the corn, so the other part among the vines and olives: or, perhaps, being all let into the corn, and finding the flame increasing there, they went to seek shelter in the vineyards, whither they carried the fire.

Bochartus observes a very famous monument of this fact of Samson's in Ovid's fourth book of his Fasti; where he saith, the Romans were wont every year, in the middle of April, to let loose some foxes in the Circus, with burning torches fastened unto their backs. The original of which custom, he justly thinks, could not be from so small an occasion as Ovid mentions, from the report of an old man he met withal. But that it was derived from hence, may well be questioned; because, though it fell out at the same time of the year that Samson did this thing, yet one can give no reason why the Phenicians (from whom the Romans must be supposed to borrow it) should celebrate the memory of this mischief which Samson did them, in such a representation of it (see him, in the place before mentioned, p. 856, 857, &c.).

Ver. 6. *Who hath done this?]* The owners of the corn, or perhaps the country in general, made an inquiry after the author of this mischief.

They answered, Samson.] Some of those who heard Samson's threatening words (ver. 3), it is likely, gave this information.

law of the Timnite, because he had taken his wife, and given her to his companion. And the Philistines came up, and burnt her and her father with fire.

7 ¶ And Samson said unto them, Though ye have done this, yet will I be avenged of you, and after that I will cease.

8 And he smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter: and he went down and dwelt in the top of the rock Etam.

9 ¶ Then the Philistines went up, and pitched in Judah, and spread themselves in Lehi.

10 And the men of Judah said, Why are ye come up against us? And they answered, To bind Samson are we come up, to do to him as he hath done to us.

Burnt her and her father.] I suppose they burnt their house, and them in it. Whereby that very calamity came upon her, which she sought to avoid by betraying her husband (xiv. 15).

Ver. 7. Though ye have done this.] The words in the Hebrew are a concise form of speech, "If ye had done after this manner;" that is, punished them sooner for the injury done him, it might have seemed love of justice; but now they did it only out of love to themselves.

Yet will I be avenged of you.] Or, but I will surely take a farther revenge of you. Unto which, no doubt, he was moved not by his own private spirit, but by that Spirit which raised him up to deliver God's people from their oppressors.

After that I will cease.] That is, unless they gave him further occasion, there should be an end of this quarrel.

Ver. 8. He smote them hip and thigh.] It is hard to understand the meaning of this; of which Josephus only saith, that he slew many of them, *ἐν πεδίῳ τῶν Παλαιστίνων*, "in a field of the Philistines;" but saith not a word concerning the import of *hip and thigh*. But the Chaldee paraphrast interprets it, He smote both *footmen and horsemen*, the one resting on their legs (as the Hebrew word *shock* signifies), and the other on their thighs, as they sat close to their horses. They that think this to be forced, take the meaning to be, that he smote them both on their legs and their thighs, as they fled away, so as to disable them from any service, though he did not kill them. I omit other interpretations.

With a great slaughter:] The word is "with a great stroke," and so the LXX. translate it, which agrees well with the last interpretation, that he sorely wounded them.

He went down.] With respect to the country of the Philistines he went up (as appears by the next verse), but from the mountainous part of Judea, where he was, he first went down.

Dwelt in the top of the rock Etam.] A strong place in the tribe of Judah (as Josephus relates), to the top of which no more than one man could come abreast, as we speak. By all this, and by what follows in the rest of his history, it is plain that Samson had no commission from God, nor was moved by him to raise an army, and make open war (as Gideon, and Jephthah, and others did), for the deliverance of Israel from the yoke of the Philistines, but only to weaken them, and to keep them in awe, that, out of dread of him, they might be less cruel in their oppression. And this, no doubt, he understood to be all that God intended to do by him, from the words of the angel (xiii. 5), "he shall begin to deliver Israel."

11 Then three thousand men of Judah went to the top of the rock Etam, and said to Samson, Knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us? what is this that thou hast done unto us? And he said unto them, As they did unto me, so have I done unto them.

12 And they said unto him, We are come down to bind thee, that we may deliver thee into the hand of the Philistines. And Samson said unto them, Swear unto me, that ye will not fall upon me yourselves.

13 And they spake unto him, saying, No; but we will bind thee fast, and deliver thee into their hand; but surely we will not kill thee. And they bound him with two new cords, and brought him up from the rock.

Ver. 9. The Philistines went up, and pitched in Judah.] With a great number of men, as if they intended an absolute conquest of their country.

Lehi.] A place so called afterward, from the jaw-bone wherewith Samson smote them.

Ver. 10. Why are ye come up against us?] Since they paid their tribute (as Josephus observes) and had committed no offence against them, not having taken part with Samson in any thing he had done, they might well expostulate with them about this invasion.

To bind Samson are we come up.] They soon satisfied them that they had no quarrel with them, but only with Samson, whom, if they would deliver up bound to them, they would withdraw their army.

To do to him as he hath done to us.] Punish him for the injuries he had done them; or rather, put him to death, as he had killed many of them.

Ver. 11. Men of Judah went to the top of the rock Etam.] In the Hebrew it is *went down*; i. e. into the cave where he was in the top of the rock: for it is said, *ver. 13*, that they brought him up to the Philistines, whereas from the top of the rock it was down.

That the Philistines are rulers over us?] And therefore not to be offended by us.

What is this that thou hast done unto us?] To provoke them to come against Judah.

As they did unto me, so have I done unto them.] He saith nothing of any motion he had from God to do what he had done, but only tells them, that he had merely requited the wrong he had received from the Philistines.

Ver. 12. We are come down to bind thee.] They came with a little army, to show they could by force take him; but they rather desired he would quietly resign himself to them, that they might deliver him bound to the Philistines.

Swear unto me, that ye will not fall upon me yourselves.] He doth not upbraid them with their base cowardice, in coming so many against one man, and that to give up their deliverer into their enemies' hands, but consents to their desire, on condition that they would solemnly engage to do him no hurt themselves; for he was unwilling to shed the blood of his brethren, as he might have done, if they had attempted any thing against him.

Ver. 13. No; but we will bind thee fast, and deliver thee.] They promised to do as he desired, if he would submit to be bound and delivered unto the Philistines, who would not be otherwise satisfied.

They bound him with two new cords.] To put him absolutely into the power of the Philistines; for two cords, and those fresh and new, wherewith they bound

14 ¶ *And* when he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him : and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and the cords that *were* upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands.

15 And he found a new jawbone of an ass, and put forth his hand, and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith.

16 And Samson said, With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, with the jaw of an ass have I slain a thousand men.

him, were sufficient to show their real desire to comply with their demands.

Ver. 14. *When he came unto Lehi,*] Where the Philistines had spread themselves (ver. 9).

The Philistines shouted] As soldiers used to do, when they had gotten a great victory, and their mischievous enemy being fallen into their hand.

And the Spirit of the Lord] Or, "But the Spirit of the Lord," &c. Their joy was instantly quashed ; for, by the mighty power of God, the cords immediately snapped in sunder.

As flax that was burnt] Which is consumed in a moment.

His bands loosed from off his hands.] The Hebrew, to express how speedily and easily they were loosed, saith, *they melted*, or were dissolved, as wax is by the fire.

Ver. 15. *He found a new jawbone of an ass.*] Of an ass that had not been long dead. So the word *terijah* signifies, which Kimchi here saith is an Arabic word, signifying moist and fresh, and therefore, not so brittle as one that is dry, and hath laid long in the air and the sun (see Bochart, in his Hierozoic. par. i. lib. ii. cap. 15).

Put forth his hand, and took it.] The providence of God laid it in his way, that he might not be wholly unarmed, when he had a numerous company of enemies to deal withal.

Slew a thousand men therewith.] The Philistines, no doubt, were strangely amazed to see the cords fall so easily, and suddenly, from his hands, and to see him come boldly, or rather furiously, towards them, which put them in a confusion, and gave him such advantage against them, that he made this great slaughter among them : wherein was fulfilled the promise of Moses, Lev. xxvi. 8, where he saith expressly, "One man of you shall chase a thousand." It is not unlikely, also, that the Philistines might fear the men of Judah, on this occasion, would join with him, which made them turn their backs and expose themselves to slaughter. But it was by a wonderful strength which God infused into him, that he was able to pursue them so long till he had done such execution, which is incredible only to those who do not consider the power of God, who can raise our powers to what degree he pleases, and enfeeble the spirits of those who oppose his designs ; so that they shall have no power to help themselves. It may not be amiss also here to note, that there are instances of men, who, by their natural courage, have made great havoc among their enemies : for Flavius Vopiscus reports, that Aurelian, in the Sarmatic war, slew forty-eight men with his own hands in one day ; and in divers days, nine hundred and fifty ; upon which the boys made a song, and shouted in their dances, after a military manner, "Mille, Mille, Mille, Mille, Mille, Mille, decollavimus. Unus homo, Mille, Mille, &c., Mille, Mille, vivat, qui Mille, Mille occidit." And, upon another occasion, another little

17 And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking, that he cast away the jawbone out of his hand, and called that place Ramath-lehi.

18 ¶ And he was sore athirst, and called on the LORD, and said, Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant : and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised ?

19 But God clave an hollow place that *was* in the jaw, and there came water thereout ; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again, and he

song was made of him, which Salmasius found thus disposed in ancient MS.

"Mille Sarmatus, Mille Francoe
Semel et Semel occidimus.
Mille Persas quarrimus."

Ver. 16. *Samson said,*] Then he composed a triumphant song.

With the jawbone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, &c.] This seems to have been the beginning, and, perhaps, the end of the song. In which words, Belehi bachamor chamoreha morathaim, every one may observe a graceful allusion ; *chamor* signifying both an ass, and also a heap.

Ver. 17. *When he had made an end of speaking,*] Of reciting the song before mentioned, which contained more than these few words, as this phrase seems to import.

He cast away the jawbone out of his hand,] Which he held there while he was speaking.

Ramath-lehi.] That is, the projection, or casting away of the jaw-bone, as the Chaldee and Kimchi interpret it, for so the word *rama* signifies, to throw any thing from one. It is called, ver. 9 and 14, simply *Lehi* : it being usual to leave out the beginning of names, as I have often observed, Salem being put for Jerusalem, and Shittim for Abel-shittim, &c.

Ver. 18. *He was sore athirst,*] By his great toil in the fight, and by his speaking so long, and so earnestly, as it is likely he did afterward.

Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant.] This is an express confutation of the fancy of Josephus, that God sent this thirst upon him, as a punishment for not giving him the glory of his victory, but ascribing it to his own strength ; for which I can see no colour ; for though God be not mentioned in his song, but only the jaw-bone, yet that was in itself so weak an instrument, that his acknowledging twice it was the only thing wherewith he slew so many, was a sufficient signification, that he ascribed not the victory to human power, but to the power of God, whose Spirit he felt come mightily upon him, when he set upon them : but what is there tacitly insinuated, is here in so many words expressed.

Now shall I die for thirst.] It seems he was very faint, for want of some refreshment, which made him so earnestly implore relief from God, who, he knew, would not fail to supply him in so great a necessity : for the remembrance of former benefits, when we thankfully acknowledge them, is a mighty support to faith, in the expectance of future : besides, he represents himself to God as a *servant* of his, who had taken all this pains, not to satisfy his own revenge, but by his instigation, and for the deliverance of his people.

Ver. 19. *An hollow place*] The Hebrew word *maetes* properly signifies the socket in which the great teeth in the jaw are fastened (as Bochartus evidently proves, par. i. Hieroz. lib. ii. cap. 16), one of which teeth he made drop out, and then caused water to come forth out of that hollow place : but our great

revived: wherefore he called the name thereof En-hakkore, which *is* in Lehi unto this day.

primate follows those who think God made a cleft in some part of the earth, in that place called Lehi, from whence he made a fountain of water to spring up. And so Josephus saith, he brought it, *κατα τινος πέτρας*, "out of a certain rock."

There came water therout;] From this cavity he caused water to issue (whereas blood is wont to flow when a tooth is plucked out, just as he brought water out of a rock in the wilderness, and made the meal and the oil to multiply in the widow of Sarepta's vessels.

When he had drunk,] It is probable he took up the jaw, when he saw the water bubble out of it, and let it run into his mouth till he had quenched his thirst.

His spirit came again,] He was so spent, it seems, that he was ready to die, till God sent him this water, unto which his power gave such a spirit, that it was as reviving as a draught of wine.

En-hakkore, which is in Lehi] Or, as Bochart, I think, more truly renders it, "En-hakkore-asher Be-lehi;" that is, the fountain of him that called, which

20 And he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years.

is in the jaw (see him in the above-mentioned place, p. 205.)

Unto this day,] Some have imagined, that the fountain continued in Lehi unto the time that this book was written: but Bochart there observes, that these words, *unto this day*, are not to be joined with those next before; for they are separated by an accent which divides them: and therefore, the meaning is, that it is called to this day by the name forementioned.

Ver. 20.] All his time they remained under the power of the Philistines, who, they confess (ver. 11), were their rulers, as they continued to be for forty years together (xiii. 1), of which these twenty were a part. In which he was not able to perfect their deliverance, but only began it by several small defeats he gave the Philistines, and several damages he did them: but, after all, he left the Israelites under their dominion; nor was there any deliverer arose till Samuel, who, I observed before, completed what Samson began (1 Sam. vii. 13).

CHAPTER XVI.

1 Samson at Gaza escapeth, and carrieth away the gates of the city. 4 Delilah, corrupted by the Philistines, enticeth Samson. 6 Thrice she is deceived. 15 At last she overcometh him. 21 The Philistines take him, and put out his eyes. 22 His strength renewing, he pulleth down the house upon the Philistines, and dieth.

1 THEN went Samson to Gaza, and saw there an harlot, and went in unto her.

2 And it was told the Gazites, saying, Samson is come hither. And they compassed him in, and laid wait for him all night in the gate of the city, and were quiet all the night, saying, In the morning, when it is day, we shall kill him.

3 And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight, and took the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and went away with them, bar and all, and put them upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of an hill that is before Hebron.

4 ¶ And it came to pass afterward, that he

CHAP. XVI.

Ver. 1. *Then went Samson to Gaza,]* His late victory made him despise the Philistines, as Josephus thinks (*καταρπονών των Παλαιστίνων*), and adventure to go, in a bravery, into one of their principal cities, which lay in the south part of their country, towards Egypt. But it seems to me more likely, that he went thither secretly and unobservedly, in the dusk of the evening, or in a disguise, that he might the better spy in what posture they were, and what advantage he might possibly have of them.

Saw there an harlot,] Who kept, it is likely, a public-house to entertain strangers; but was as public herself; which had been the condition of Rahab. So Josephus *ἔτι τινος πόλεως καταγωγῶν διέτρεβε*, "he took up his lodging in one of the public inns of the city."

Went in unto her,] Was ensnared by her beauty to lie with her.

Ver. 2. *The Gazites,]* The magistrates of the city. *Samson is come hither,]* By this it appears his coming thither was not publicly known; but by some means or other discovered: perhaps by the woman herself, into whose house he went, who gave private information of his being there.

They compassed him in,] The meaning is not that they beset the house; for the next words show the contrary; that they intended to seize him as he went out of the city.

Laid wait for him] Especially in that gate which led to his own country.

Were quiet] Made no noise, for fear he should be alarmed, and contrive some way of escape; or desperately set upon them, and break through the guards.

We shall kill him,] He would fall into their hands they imagined, having no apprehension of danger.

Ver. 3. *Samson lay till midnight,]* When he was admonished, perhaps by a dream, to be gone; or had some intelligence from his servants (whom he set to watch) that they lay in wait for him.

Arose at midnight,] In the dead time of the night, when nobody was stirring; and the soldiers themselves, perhaps, asleep; imagining he would lie till morning.

Took the doors, &c.] He did not stay to break them open, but plucked up the posts out of the ground, with the doors hanging upon them fast barred; which so astonished the guards, that they had no heart to follow him.

Put them upon his shoulders,] He seems to have carried them a little way in his hands, and then lifted them up to his shoulders, and carried them before their faces in triumph. Which argued a mighty strength, and no less confidence in God.

An hill that is before Hebron,] Some take this hill to have been near Hebron; which was twenty miles from this place. But it is more probable (as Peter Martyr conjectures) it lay between Gaza and Hebron, within the view of both: that inhabitants of the one city might behold them to their confusion; and they of the other to their encouragement to hope for deliverance.

loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah.

5 And the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and said unto her, Entice him, and see wherein his great strength *lieth*, and by what *means* we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to afflict him: and we will give thee every one of us eleven hundred *pieces* of silver.

6 ¶ And Delilah said to Samson, Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength *lieth*, and wherewith thou mightest be bound to afflict thee.

7 And Samson said unto her, If they bind me with seven green withs that were never dried, then shall I be weak, and be as another man.

8 Then the lords of the Philistines brought

up to her seven green withs which had not been dried, and she bound him with them.

9 Now *there were* men lying in wait, abiding with her in the chamber. And she said unto him, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And he brake the withs, as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire. So his strength was not known.

10 And Delilah said unto Samson, Behold, thou hast mocked me, and told me lies: now tell me, I pray thee, wherewith thou mightest be bound.

11 And he said unto her, If they bind me fast with new ropes that never were occupied, then shall I be weak, and be as another man.

12 Delilah therefore took new ropes, and

Ver. 4. *Afterward,*] How long after is not known. *He loved a woman—of Sorek,*] It is certain that Sorek was a place in the land of Judea; famous for choice vines (as Bochart observes, from Gen. xlix. 11, Isa. v. 2, Jer. ii. 21), and not above a mile and a half from Eschol; whence the spies brought a bunch of grapes, for a sample of the fruitfulness of the country. Unto this place Samson retired to refresh himself, perhaps, after his labours, with the delights of it; and there saw a woman, with whom he fell in love. But whether she was a woman of Israel, or one of the daughters of the Philistines (who now were the rulers of the country of Judah, xv. 11), and whether he loved her as his wife, or kept company with her as a harlot, is not here signified. St. Chrysostom and others are of opinion, that he was married to her. But then one would think, there should have been some brief mention of their wedding solemnities; or of his bringing her home to his own house. And the Philistines would not have been so bold as to attempt to draw her into their party, and bribe her to betray him into their hands. Which argues she had not the affection of a wife to him; but was a mercenary woman, that would do any thing to get money. And so Josephus understands it, *παρέδωκε δι' ἡδῆ τὰ πάτρια*, &c., "he forsook the institutions of his country," and followed the degenerate manners of strange people, *ἐρασθεὶς γυναικὸς ἑταίριζομένης*, "being enamoured with a harlot among the Philistines:" which was the beginning of all the evils that befell him. For he did not keep her company for a night; but dwelt with her, and gave up himself so entirely to her, that he doated on her.

Ver. 5. *The lords—came up unto her,*] There were five of them in all (as we read, iii. 3), who, it is likely, all joined together to make a purse (as we speak) wherewith to corrupt her; and sent their agents to make large offers to her, if she would come into their interests.

Entice him,] It is probable, that he had often declared that the source of his strength was a secret, known only to himself: which they hoped he might, with her blandishments, entice him to reveal unto her.

That we may bind him] That she might not startle at the proposal, they tell her, they had no intention to kill him; but only to keep him fast in chains, and afflict him; so as to make him humble, and bring him low, that he might not be able to do them more mischief.

Eleven hundred pieces of silver,] By which is commonly understood so many shekels; which made in all five thousand five hundred, which makes almost two Hebrew talents. For the Jews make it a rule, that where *pieces of silver* are mentioned, the meaning is shekels (see Gen. xxiii. 15).

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Ver. 6. *Tell me—wherein thy great strength lieth,*] She did not bluntly ask him this question, but, as Josephus very properly tells the story, the next time they were eating and drinking together, and he was caressing her, she fell into an admiration of all his wonderful deeds, and highly extolled them; desiring him to tell her how he came so much to excel all other men in strength.

Therewith thou mightest be bound] So that he should not be able to help himself.

Ver. 7.] Her last words, perhaps, made him suspect something. However, *ἐτι ἰσχυρὸς ἦν* (as Josephus speaks), "he was yet strong in his understanding," and not perfectly besotted on her; and therefore did not trust her with this important secret, but answered her deceitfully. Which cannot be excused from being a downright lie; unless we suppose he only jested with her, not believing she would take such an improbable thing for a truth.

Ver. 8. *The lords—brought up to her seven green withs*] It seems they lurked somewhere thereabout, that they might be informed speedily of what passed. And they took care to provide the withes themselves, that there might be no defect in them.

She bound him] *Καθεύδοντα, μεθύοντα*, &c. She bound him hard with the withes, when he was asleep, and full of drink, as Josephus speaks.

Ver. 9. *In the chamber,*] In another room of the house, near to that where Samson slept, she had placed a band of soldiers (as Josephus also interprets it), who were ready, upon notice to seize him. This is an argument that Delilah was not his wife; for in his own house, where he had his servants about him, it had not been possible for her to have placed soldiers secretly in any room without their knowledge.

The Philistines be upon thee,] One would think they might have set upon him when he was in a deep sleep. But the plot was otherwise laid between them and Delilah; and they thought it not safe to come near a sleeping lion, for fear he should chance to awake, and tear them in pieces.

He brake the withs,] They found he was as subtle as he was strong; having deluded both her and them.

Ver. 10. The Hebrew writers rightly observe, that she did not say this to him immediately after the other; but at the next opportunity she took occasion to complain of his want of kindness in not acquainting her with what she desired to know; as if she was not able to keep the secret of a friend, which it was not fit for any body else to understand, as Josephus expresses it.

Ver. 11.] He persisted in his resolution to delude her.

Ver. 12. *Delilah—took new ropes,*] This looked more like truth than the former, and she took care,

bound him therewith, and said unto him, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And *there were* liers in wait abiding in the chamber. And he brake them from off his arms like a thread.

13 And Delilah said unto Samson, Hitherto thou hast mocked me, and told me lies: tell me wherewith thou mightest be bound. And he said unto her, If thou weavest the seven locks of my head with the web.

14 And she fastened *it* with the pin, and said unto him, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And he awaked out of his sleep, and went away with the pin of the beam, and with the web.

15 ¶ And she said unto him, How canst thou say, I love thee, when thine heart *is* not with me? thou hast mocked me these three times, and hast not told me wherein thy great strength *lieth*.

no doubt, to have the strongest ropes that they could get. And then made him a new entertainment, where he ate and drank till he was heavy with sleep; and then she took the opportunity to bind him as she had done before him.

In the chamber.] In the inner room, where they were formerly disposed so secretly, that Samson knew not of it; for if he had, he would have discovered her treachery.

He brake them from off his arms] Which deterred them from breaking out upon him.

Ver. 13. *Tell me wherewith thou mightest be bound.*] She prays him now to deal sincerely with her; for she persisted as resolutely in her attempts to draw the secret from him as he did in concealing it; which he still continued to do.

If thou weavest the seven locks of my head] The Nazarites being bound never to cut their hair, did not, I suppose, let it hang loose, but curled it up in locks, or plaited and brodered it after the manner of a chain: and Samson's hair was distributed into seven of these plaited locks (see Dr. Spencer concerning this, lib. iii. cap. 6; dissert. 1, p. 585).

With the web.] He seems to direct her to wrap these seven locks about a weaver's beam (as the Chaldee understands it), or to weave them one within another, so that they should be but one lock, and then he should be like another man, which is here to be understood. And in this he comes a little nearer to the truth but still deceives.

Ver. 14. *She fastened it with the pin.*] That they might keep tight and not be unloosed.

And awaked out of his sleep.] This shows that she had taken the former advantages of him in his sleep.

And went away with the pin of the beam.] And thereby appeared as strong as ever he was. For, as the Vulgar understands it, she fixed this pin in the earth; or, as the LXX. in the wall. But there is nothing like it in the Hebrew text.

Ver. 15.] She now uses her utmost art to overcome him; by telling him, I suppose, she would cast him off, because he did but pretend to love her; as appeared by his not trusting her: but, notwithstanding her importunate desire to be gratified in a small request, he had no less than three times put a cheat upon her.

Ver. 16. *When she pressed him daily*] Repeated this often from day to day, most earnestly pressing him to give her a proof of his real affection, by disclosing this secret.

So that his soul was vexed] He was upon such a rack by two contrary passions struggling in him, love

16 And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, so that his soul was vexed unto death;

17 That he told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I *have been* a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any *other* man.

18 And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once, for he hath shewed me all his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her, and brought money in their hand.

19 And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she

to her, and care not to lose his strength, that he was weary of life. That is, very melancholy, and unconcerned what became of him.

Ver. 17. *He told her all his heart.*] God having forsaken him, because he had abandoned himself to sensual pleasure, his love of the harlot prevailed over his care of himself.

There hath not come a razor upon mine head, &c.] These words were spoken with a greater seriousness than any of the former; which made her conclude he had given her a true account. For thus Josephus paraphrases, "I am under the care of God; by whose providence being born, I nourish my hair; for God forbade that I should ever have it cut off. All my strength lying in the increase and continuance of this hair" (lib. v. Antiq. cap. 10).

If I be shaven, then my strength will go from me.] There have been men of wonderful strength, whose memory is preserved in history; particularly by Pliny, lib. xii. Natural. Histor. cap. 20; and more are collected by Caspar Schottus, in his *Mirabilia Naturæ et Artis*, lib. iii. cap. 36. And now, at my present writing of this, there is more than one person in this city of extraordinary strength. But there is a demonstration that Samson's strength wholly depended upon the power of God, and was not inherent in himself; but came upon him when there was need, as long as he preserved himself consecrated unto God, by not shaving his head, and observing all other things belonging to the vow of a Nazarite. Which was a thing so notorious, that the heathens were not ignorant of it; but from hence devised (as learned men have observed), the fable of Nisus, the king of Megara; upon whose hair the fortune of his kingdom depended (see Huctius, in his *Questiones Alnetanæ*, lib. ii. cap. 12, sect. 28, and our Dr. Jackson, in his first book on the Creed, cap. parag. 3).

Ver. 18. *He told her all his heart.*] Which she perceived, as I said, by the manner of his speaking.

She sent and called for the lords] Who still, it seems, waited thereabouts, to see what would be the success of their design; which she gave them hopes she should at last accomplish. This could not but have been discovered by some of Samson's servants, if he had had a family there, as he would if he had been married. I look upon this, therefore, as a proof that this woman was not his wife.

Come up this once.] She was afraid they would not have hearkened to her any more, having been so often deluded; which made her give them this full assurance.

Brought money in their hand.] Which they never

began to afflict him, and his strength went from him.

20 And she said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him.

21 ¶ But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza,

and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house.

22 Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven.

23 Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand.

did before; but now showed her the reward was ready, if she performed her work.

Ver. 19. *She made him sleep*] Having given him, as Delrio thinks, a sleeping potion. Others think she had drawn him in to drink wine (which Josephus supposes she had done in former entertainments), unto which he not being accustomed, he was intoxicated with it. And having broken the law of the Nazarites in this point, was justly delivered up by God to suffer all that followed.

Upon her knees;] Resting his hand, I suppose, upon her knees. Or, perhaps, she set him upon her knees, and with her arms about his neck, expressed the greatest affection to him, and care of him.

To shave off the seven locks] Which he did so gently, being a man of art, as not to awake him.

She began to afflict him,] Not by any sensible pain; but by weakening him, and bringing him low (as the Hebrew word is often interpreted). For as soon as the razor touched his head, his strength began to be diminished.

His strength went from him.] When all the locks were shaved off, his strength quite failed him.

Ver. 20. *The Philistines be upon thee,*] She cried so loud, and also shook him so much (out of pretended kindness to him, that he might escape the danger), that she roused him out of his sleep.

I will go out as at other times] She had so often said those words, that he was in no fear; but thought to do as he had done before, that is, prepare himself to fall upon them.

He wist not that the Lord was departed from him.] Being newly awakened out of a profound sleep, and scarce come to himself, he did not miss his hair; and so had no apprehension that God had deserted him.

Ver. 21. *The Philistines took him,*] But he soon found he had no power at all left to resist his enemies; who laid hold on him, and took him prisoner.

Put out his eyes,] By a just judgment of God, as the Mishna observes in the title Sota, cap. 8, where they say he followed the delight of his eyes, and so he was punished with the loss of them. Which the Jews are wont to call *measure for measure*. They did not put him to death, much less cut him in pieces, as their hatred and fury might have provoked them to do; for they had promised Delilah they would only bind him, and afflict or humble him (ver. 5), and in those days all men made some conscience of keeping their word.

Brought him down to Gaza,] To be exposed there to scorn, where he had exposed them to shame, by carrying away the gates of their city. It was a place also of great strength, where he would be kept secure; and it was remote also from his own country.

Bound him with fetters of brass;] Put very strong and heavy fetters upon his legs.

Grind in the prison house,] As slaves were wont to do. See upon Exod. xi. 5, and St. Jerome, Isa. xlvii. 2, where this is turned to another sense, according to the conceit of many of the Jewish doctors; but without any ground, for it is threatened there as a punishment to Babylon, and so it was inflicted here as a

piece of drudgery, unto which Samson, as other prisoners, was condemned.

Ver. 22. *After he was shaven,*] Or (according to the marginal translation), "As when he was shaven." That is, grew in time to the same length it was of before Delilah cut it off: so that though his Nazariteship was interrupted by the shaving of his head, yet it was renewed, by letting his hair grow, and observing all other rules belonging to it. He could not offer sacrifice indeed for his expiation (as the law was in case of an interruption), but repented, no doubt, of his folly, and began his Nazariteship again, with prayer to God for a pardon of his former violation of it; and in this state of penitence he continued some time; for his hair would be a good while in growing again to its former length: when, being restored to the condition wherein he was before he lost the favour of God, together with his hair, the Divine Majesty was reconciled to him, and restored his former strength; which grew and increased, as his hair did.

Ver. 23. *The lords—gathered them together*] Not immediately after the taking of Samson, but after he had been some time in prison, as appears by the verse foregoing: for it is likely they made great preparation for the solemnity mentioned in the next words.

To offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon] To give thanks to their god at a festival, which they appointed, I suppose, on purpose to express their joy for their taking Samson prisoner: or, as Josephus thinks, *ἱερῆς οὐρῆς τοῖς Παλαιστῖνῶς δημοτελοῦς*, "there being a public festival kept among the Philistines" (which all nations had at certain seasons), they made it more famous, by greater sacrifices than ordinary, and by greater feasting and rejoicing, which were expressions of their thankfulness to their god; who is called Dagon, because, as R. Solomon, and many others think, he was in the form of a fish (for *dag* signifies a fish) from the navel downward, and upward in a human shape. Certain it is, this god had a human shape in the upper parts, for we read 1 Sam. v. 4, of his head, and the palms of his hands; though nothing is there said of his feet. It is certain, also, that the Syrians abstained from fish, as Porphyry notes; at least from the fish of that lake hard by which the temple of the famous goddess Derceto stood, not far from Askelon: in which, as Lucian saith, in his *Dea Syria*, *ἰχθύες ἐπιπαραίαι*, "sacred fishes were bred." This Derceto was the same with Venus, as many learned men think, whom the Sidonians called Atarge, and others Artage; but most commonly Astarte, which, in the Scripture, is Ashtaroth, the goddess of the Sidonians (1 Kings xi. 5, 33, 2 Kings xxiii. 13), and of the Philistines also (1 Sam. xxxi. 10), whom the Israelites imitated (1 Sam. vii. 3, 4). And, worshipping the gods of those who ruled over them, no wonder they followed their wicked manners, and gave themselves over to fornication: which is the best account that can be given of Samson's living in this sin, without reprehension; the nation being depraved, and having lost their ancient discipline, which corrected this vice; for their law permitted no harlot to be in Israel.

Our god hath delivered Samson] All nations had this

24 And when the people saw him, they praised their god; for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, which slew many of us.

25 And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called for Samson out of the prison house; and he made them sport: and they set him between the pillars.

26 And Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand, Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them.

27 Now the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines were there; and there were upon the roof about three

thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport.

28 And Samson called unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.

29 And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left.

30 And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life.

sense, that they owed all that they enjoyed unto God; and especially made their acknowledgments to such gods as they worshipped, for the victories they got over their enemies.

Ver. 21. *When the people saw him,*] For he was publicly exposed to all men's view, in his fetters, I suppose, and grinding in the prison.

They praised their god.] Some hymns, perhaps, were composed on this occasion; which they sang in praise of Dagon.

Our God hath delivered, &c.] This was part of their song, which the Greeks call *Pæan*: and they give the very same epithet to Samson, that Homer doth to Hector, whom he frequently calls ἀνδροφόνου, "the slayer of men."

Ver. 25. *When their hearts were merry,*] As they used to be with good cheer, music, and suchlike entertainments, at their festivals.

Call for Samson,] The lords of the Philistines ordered him to be sent for.

That he may make us sport.] It is uncertain whether they meant, that they would make themselves sport with him by flouts and jeers; or that they would have him make them sport, by ridiculous gestures and speeches: Josephus takes it in the first sense.

They called for Samson] Perhaps they made him dance in his chains, or played with him at some such sport as we call blind-man's buff: but it is hard to believe that such a generous spirit as his would submit to do any thing that should make them laugh; therefore they made themselves all the sport they could, by their abuses of him, which he was forced to suffer.

They set him between the pillars.] That he might be the more visible to every one in the place.

Ver. 26. *Samson said unto the lad that held him*] And led him about, as he was directed.

Suffer me that I may feel the pillars] Which supported the roof of it, as appears from ver. 29.

That I may lean upon them.] To rest himself, pretending he was weary, as Josephus expounds it.

Ver. 27. *The house was full of men and women;*] Some think this house was one of their temples, wherein they met to praise their god, and then to feast, as the manner was, upon the sacrifices which were offered on such occasions (see ix. 27). And, indeed, no private house can be thought to have had a room wide enough to contain such a number of people: but their temples were, in many places, large enough, and made so on purpose that a vast number might assemble in them; particularly that of Diana at Ephesus is celebrated for its greatness, as well as for its beauty and riches (see Pliny, lib. xxxv. Nat. Hist. cap. 14), all

the people round about, from all parts, running thither at several solemnities, as many have noted: but others think it was some theatre, like those in after-times built by the Romans, some of which were of a prodigious bigness: see Pliny, in the same book, cap. 15, where he mentions two theatres built by C. Curio, who was killed in the civil wars, on Cæsar's side. They were made of wood, so ample as to contain all the Roman people (as he speaks), and contrived with such art, that each of them depended upon one hinge: which moved Pliny to admire at the madness of the people of Rome, who would venture into a place, for their pleasure, where they sat tam infida instabilem sede, "in such an uncertain and unstable seat;" for if that hinge had slipped, there had been a greater slaughter than at the battle of Cannæ. This I mention, to silence the cavils of those who fancy no such capacious building could be made, as relied only on two pillars; which is not so strange as this admirable fabric of Curio.

There were upon the roof about three thousand] Every one knows that the roof of their houses and temples were flat, so that men might stand or walk there; but how they should see Samson from thence we cannot conceive, unless we suppose there were windows to open upon occasion, whereby to look into the house; or perhaps there were battlements at the top, in the inside (as in our cathedrals), where this great company of men and women stood: by which we are to understand the vulgar sort; for the lords of the Philistines, and persons of quality, were in the body of the house.

Ver. 28. *O Lord God, remember me, &c.*] A most ardent prayer, proceeding from the anguish of his soul, as Josephus observes; nothing being more grievous than to be mocked, and exposed to public scorn, which he calls δεινότατον ἔν τῷ κακῷ, "the sorest of all evils:" but whether he spake these words within himself, or, as some think, with an audible voice, cannot be determined.

That I may be at once avenged] If this had proceeded from a spirit of private revenge, God would not have heard his prayer (for he doth not love to gratify men's passions); but that is a proof that this desire proceeded from God (as St. Austin understands it, lib. i. De Civ. Dei, cap. 21), who intended to punish the Philistines for oppressing Israel, as well as abusing Samson, and depriving him of his eyes.

Ver. 29. *On which it was borne up, &c.*] On which the weight of the roof relied.

Ver. 30. *Let me die with the Philistines.*] He is not to be thought properly a self-murderer; for he was moved by an heroic spirit from God himself, to make

31 Then his brethren and all the house of his father came down, and took him, and brought him up, and buried him between

himself a sacrifice (as I may call it) for the good of his country: and it is no more than great soldiers do, who are content to lose their lives, in defence of a post where they are placed, for the preservation of the army to which they belong (see Grotius, in his book *De Jure Belli et Pacis*, lib. ii. cap. 19, sect. 5, n. 4).

The house fell] But it was not by his might, but by a miraculous power of God, that this house was subverted, whereby all their mirth and jollity was extinguished in a moment.

So the dead which he slew at his death, &c.] This last act was the greatest of his whole life: for he not only slew more, but persons of greater note (their principal rulers and governors), and destroyed one of their temples (as most authors take this house to have been), together with their god: which must needs put those that survived into the greatest consternation and confusion.

This was a thing known to the heathen; for it is a very probable conjecture of some great men, that hence the Greeks framed the fable of their Hercules, who lived about this time, and whose name is the same with Samson's, if it be derived from *Shemesh, the sun*: for Hercules is as much as *Or-ehol*, that which enlightens all, i. e. *the sun*. Of him it is reported, by Herodotus, That being bound in Egypt, he was brought in a pompous manner to be sacrificed to Jupiter; and resting awhile, till he could be placed on the altar, he broke out and slew all that were present.

Ver. 31. *Then his brethren, and all the house of his father*] By "brethren" are commonly meant in Scripture the nearest kindred; and by "the house of his father" is meant, all the rest of his relations: or, perhaps, after the birth of this child, God bestowed the blessing of other children upon Manoah and his wife; as he did upon Hannah, after the birth of Samuel.

Came down, and took him,] By the permission of

Zorah and Eshtaol in the buryingplace of Manoah his father. And he judged Israel twenty years.

the Philistines, who had so much humanity (as all nations anciently had) as not to prohibit enemies from burying their dead; but the Israelites were now in subjection to the Philistines, and did not join with Samson in any of his enterprises; which he performed solely by himself: and besides, the Philistines were much humbled and mollified no doubt, by this late disaster.

Brought him up,] With some pomp, or solemnity, it is likely; he being a very great man, and famous for his wonderful exploits.

Zorah and Eshtaol] These were two cities in the tribe of Dan (Josh. xv. 33), but on the frontiers of the tribe of Judah, as some gather from Nehem. xi. 29.

The buryingplace of Manoah his father.] To be buried in the sepulchres of their ancestors was accounted a great blessing by all nations, as Ezekiel Spanhemius notes upon Callimachus's hymn to Diana, ver. 131, 132. And we have examples of it in Scripture, Gen. xlvi. 29, 30; Nehem. ii. 3, 5, as the contrary was accounted a curse, 1 Kings xiii. 22.

He judged Israel twenty years.] This was said before, xv. 20, and here mentioned again to show that he continued to judge Israel (that is, to vindicate them from their oppressors, for we read of no other act of a judge), till he died. When he did as great an act as any he had done all the time of his judicature (or rather greater) for the humbling of the Philistines, who domineered over the Israelites, and restoring them to their liberty: which, though he could not effect, yet he did so much towards it, by the many mischiefs he did them, that not many years after his death they had courage to betake themselves to their arms, and fight the Philistines, whom they overthrew, and subdued; so that they came no more to molest the Israelites all the days of Samuel, under whose government, as I observed before, they recovered their liberty from the long oppression of this people (1 Sam. vii. 10, 13).

CHAPTER XVII.

1 *Of the money that Micah first stole, then restored, his mother maketh images, 5 and he ornaments for them.*
7 *He hireth a Levite to be his priest.*

1 AND there was a man of mount Ephraim, whose name was Micah.

2 And he said unto his mother, The eleven hundred shekels of silver that were taken from

thee, about which thou cursedst, and spakest of also in mine ears, behold, the silver is with me; I took it. And his mother said, Blessed be thou of the LORD, my son.

CHAP. XVII.

Here begins the second part of this book, which gives an account of several memorable transactions in or about the time of the Judges; whose history the author would not interrupt by intermixing these matters with it, but reserved them to be related apart by themselves, in the five following chapters, wherein he first gives an account how idolatry crept into the tribe of Ephraim; which he doth in this chapter: and then, secondly, how it was propagated among the Danites, in an expedition they made, wherein they sacked Laish (ch. xviii.): and then, thirdly, he relates a most foul adultery committed in the tribe of Benjamin (ch. xix.): after which follows the destruction of that tribe for countenancing that fact (ch. xx.): and, lastly, the restoration of it (ch. xxi.).

Ver. 1. *Micah.*] When this man lived, and did what

follows, we may with some certainty gather from ver. 6, which tells us there was no king in Israel at this time; that is, no supreme governor, with a power to keep the people to their duty. Which anarchy happened (as primate Usher and other great men observe) between the death of those elders who survived Joshua, and the first oppression of Israel by Chushan: in which space of time, it is manifest, the Israelites first fell from the worship of God, and polluted themselves with idolatry, see ii. 13, iii. 7, where we read the "children of Israel forsook the Lord, and did evil in his sight," i. e. committed idolatry: the beginning of which defection from God is described briefly in this chapter.

Ver. 2. *He said unto his mother,*] Who seems to have been a rich widow, that lived with her son Micah.

The eleven hundred shekels of silver] There is no

3 And when he had restored the eleven hundred *shekels* of silver to his mother, his mother said, I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the LORD from my hand for my son, to make a graven image and a molten image: now therefore I will restore it unto thee.

4 Yet he restored the money unto his mo-

mention of shekels in the Hebrew; but our interpreters followed the rule I mentioned, that where *pieces of silver*, or *silverings*, are spoken of, the meaning is *shekels*.

That were taken from thee,] Of which she was robbed: or, as the Vulgar understands it, which she had separated, or set apart; that is, devoted and consecrated to a holy use, but somebody had stolen and perverted to their own use.

About which thou cursedst,] Abjured all her family to discover the money; with some sort of curse upon them, if they knew where it was, and concealed it (see Dr. Hammond upon St. Matt. xxvi. annot. 1).

And spakest of also in mine ears,] He was present, when she made this solemn adjuration.

The silver is with me; I took it.] He confessed the truth, for fear the curse should light upon him.

Blessed be thou of the Lord, my son.] She prayed the curse might be turned into a blessing upon him, for his ingenuous confession.

Ver. 3. *I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the Lord*] This, some think, is the meaning of her cursing before mentioned. She confirmed, with an oath, the consecration of the money to God, after the manner of those who vowed any thing unto him (Lev. xxvii. 28).

From my hand] Resolving not to keep it for my own use: or, thou shalt have it as a gift from me.

For my son, to make a graven image and a molten image:] For the convenience of Micah and his family; that he might make some resemblance of God, whereby to worship him at home, without the trouble of going, upon all occasions, to the tabernacle at Shiloh. For it appears by the name Jehovah, to whom she consecrated the silver, that she did not intend to forsake the Lord God of Israel, but only to worship him by an image; unto which the Israelites had very early inclined (Exod. xxxii.), and afterward generally relapsed into it in the days of Jeroboam.

Some are of opinion, that her meaning was, her son might make either a graven or a molten image, which he pleased; but it is manifest he made both, from xviii. 18, where they are evidently mentioned as distinct. But that these were a representation of the two cherubims which covered the ark, I dare not affirm; for they being of different kinds, one a graven, the other a molten image, seems to import the contrary; for the cherubims were both alike. But see our most learned Dr. Spencer, lib. iii. cap. 3, dissert. 7, sect. 4.

I will restore it unto thee.] She resolved to return it into his hands, for the use before named.

Ver. 4. *Yet he restored the money unto his mother;*] These words seem to signify, that at the first he only brought the money to her, offering to restore it; but she bid him keep it: which he refused to do; but would have her take it again into her hands, which she did.

His mother took two hundred shekels of silver,] Some think she reserved the rest for her own private use, contrary to her vow: but it is more probable, that she gave them to her son, to make the ephod and teraphim, and other things belonging to that Divine service, which they intended to set up in their house.

Gave them to the founder,] It is not certain whether this silver was melted, and then the images made of

ther; and his mother took two hundred *shekels* of silver, and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a graven image and a molten image: and they were in the house of Micah.

5 And the man Micah had an house of gods, and made an ephod, and teraphim. and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest.

it; or that for this sum of money the founder sold these images to him, made perhaps of brass, silvered over. And this is most probable, because they would have been very small, if they had been made only of two hundred shekels of silver.

They were in the house of Micah.] Placed in some room of his house, where he intended to worship, as it follows in the next verse.

Ver. 5. *The man Micah*] This seems to import, that hereupon he looked upon himself, and was accounted, a very considerable person.

Had an house of gods,] The Hebrew words *beth Elohim* may well be translated "a house of God;" as Peter Martyr here understands it. And so the phrase is used in other places, Gen. xxviii. 22, and in the next chapter of this book, ver. 31. For his intention was to make an imitation of the house of God at Shiloh at his own home; which may also be truly called "a house of gods" (as we translate it), because, whatsoever his intention was, to worship God by images, was accounted by him the worshipping of other gods.

Made an ephod,] That the Divine service in his house might be performed with a greater resemblance of what was done at the tabernacle in Shiloh, he made priestly garments, as Peter Martyr understands it: who takes the *ephod* to comprehend not only the breastplate adjoining to it, but the rest of the vestments used by the high-priest; for he intended, it appears by the next words, to set up an oracle in his own house. But whatsoever resemblance this *ephod* had in its shape and form to the *ephod* of the high-priest, it had none of that rich work in it which the high-priest's *ephod* had, nor any girdle or breastplate belonging to it; being no more such a garment as that golden ephod, than his Levite was a priest; or his teraphim, an urim and thummim.

Teraphim,] Of this word I have said enough, upon Gen. xxxi. 19, where I have shown, they were images whereby the eastern people consulted God, and hoped to receive answers from him. And therefore I take Micah's meaning to have been, to set up a holy oracle in his house, where the priest wearing an *ephod*, and other sacred habiliments, should consult God by these *teraphim*. But, as Mr. Selden well observes (in his *Syntagma i. De Diis Syris*, cap. 2), the worship of the true God and of idols, were here blended together by him. For the *ephod* and the Levite (whom he afterward provided) were intended, no doubt, for the service of the true God; but the graven and molten image, and the *teraphim*, belonging unto demons (as he speaks), by which the children of Dan, in the next chapter, desire the Levite to inquire of God for them; for they neither trusted to the *ephod* alone, which related to God, nor to their *teraphim* alone, which were an invention of their own; but thought it necessary to join both together in Divine worship. And thus began idolatry in Israel, by the superstition of an old woman, who put this into her son's head. Many of the Jews fancy she was Delilah: who having got so much money of every one of the lords of the Philistines, thought it was fit to employ some of it to express her devotion. But this is an idle conceit, which hath no ground, but only her being named in the foregoing chapter; which relates a history of things long after Micah's time.

6 In those days *there was* no king in Israel, but every man did *that which was* right in his own eyes.

7 ¶ And there was a young man out of Beth-lehem-judah of the family of Judah, who *was* a Levite, and he sojourned there.

8 And the man departed out of the city from Beth-lehem-judah to sojourn where he could find a *place*; and he came to mount Ephraim to the house of Micah, as he journeyed.

9 And Micah said unto him, Whence comest

thou? and he said unto him, *I am* a Levite of Beth-lehem-judah, and I go to sojourn where I may find a *place*.

10 And Micah said unto him, Dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a priest, and I will give thee ten *shekels* of silver by the year, and a suit of apparel, and thy victuals. So the Levite went in.

11 And the Levite was content to dwell with the man; and the young man was unto him as one of his sons.

Consecrated one of his sons,] In the Hebrew it is, "filled the hand" of one of his sons; that is, as many think, the eldest son of his family, into whose hands he put sacrifices to be offered unto God. For that was the rite of initiating priests, as we find Exod. xxxi. 24; Lev. viii. 27.

Ver. 6. *In those days there was no king in Israel,]* That is, this was before the time of the Judges, when these things fell out; in whom there was a sovereign power to correct abuses, and especially to suppress idolatry; which power being now wanting, it was the reason Micah took upon him to make himself a private temple in his own house; because the ways (as Grotius conjectures) were dangerous when there was no supreme governor, being infested with thieves, or not kept in good repair, which made travelling uneasy. This last is more probable than that robbers infested the country; for it was now a time of peace, when the Levite travelled from one part of the land to the other securely enough; and the Danites sent spies a long way to search out the country of Laish without danger; and afterward marched with a great body to seek a new settlement; which one would think, should rather have been employed in clearing their country where they were from such pestilent cut-throats, as some suppose to have infested it.

As for the name of king, it was given to the judges; just as it was to Moses, who was their supreme governor; but was not properly a king, as Hermannus Conringius observes, in his book De Rep. Hebr. sect. 49, &c.

But every man did that which was right in his own eyes.] And there can be no worse state of things (as Pet. Martyr here observes) than for every one to be left unto his own will and pleasure; as they were now, when they left the Lord their God: for being "without the true God," they were also "without a teaching priest, and without law," as the prophet Azariah's words are, 2 Chron. xv. 3, where he seems, in that and the following verses, to describe the lamentable state of things in these times, after the death of Joshua, and the elders that outlived him, to the days of Samuel.

Ver. 7. *Beth-lehem-judah]* There was another Beth-lehem in the tribe of Zebulun (Josh. xix. 15), and therefore this is called Beth-lehem-judah, to distinguish it from that.

Of the family of Judah, who was a Levite,] By his mother's side he was of the tribe of Judah. Which is the most easy explication, notwithstanding what Kimchi saith to show that the genealogies are not derived from the mother. For here is no account of his genealogy, which is mentioned afterward, xviii. 30, from his father; but it is noted that his mother was of the tribe of Judah, to show how he came to live at Beth-lehem, which was no Levitical city.

He sojourned there,] Lived there as a stranger (for so the word *gour* signifies in the next verse), not as a citizen and inhabitant of the place.

Ver. 8. *To sojourn where he could find a place:]*

By this it appears he was a kind of vagabond, who rambled about from place to place to find a subsistence; for though there was sufficient provision made for the Levites, by the tithes of the land, yet we may well think they were not duly paid in a time of such confusion, that every man did what he list; there being no judge to see them do their duty.

He came—to the house of Micah,] As he travelled about the country, he came hither, to beg an alms, perhaps, or, at best, to seek for some employment.

Ver. 9. *Whence comest thou?]* He examined him, as the manner was, unto what country he belonged, and what was his business.

I go to sojourn where I may find a place,] He was looking out for a maintenance somewhere or other, to support him in his necessitous condition.

Ver. 10. *Dwell with me,]* He desires him to seek no further, but stay there, and settle with him in his house.

Be unto me a father and a priest,] The prophets, and other great men, were called anciently by the name of *father*, as Elisha calls Elijah, 2 Kings ii. 12, and the king of Israel calls Elisha, 2 Kings vi. 21, and the king of Syria is represented as speaking to him in the same language, 2 Kings viii. 9, and king Joash, xiii. 14. Therefore Micah's meaning is, he would make him the director and governor of his family, and reverence him accordingly, if he would undertake to perform all sacred offices among them.

I will give thee ten shekels,] Next to honour, he promised him money, and all things needful for his support.

A suit of apparel,] Or, as it is in the margin, a "double suit." For so the LXX. and the Vulgar, *ζῆνος ἱματίων*, "a couple of garments." And there being something of order signified in the word *herech*, which we translate *suit*, many understand hereby a winter and a summer suit of clothes: and De Dieu hath justified this interpretation of a double garment out of the Ethiopic language, where this word signifies a companion; whence it may be probably concluded, that here is intended not one suit only, but two at least. With whom agrees Hottinger in his *Smegma Orientale*, cap. 5, p. 88, where he observes, that all, in a manner, are of opinion, that more suits of apparel than one are signified by this word; but whence to fetch that signification is not to be found but in the Ethiopic language, where it signifies a companion, a friend, another self, as his words are.

Thy victuals,] His constant diet at his table.

The Levite went in,] Accepted of his offer, so far as to go into his house, and see how he liked every thing.

Ver. 11.] After some time he resolved to settle in his house. He treated him with such affection, that he was the more willing to stay there.

Ver. 12. *Micah consecrated the Levite,]* A wonderful presumption in them both; Micah having no authority to consecrate, nor the Levite (who was not of Aaron's family) being capable of the priestly office.

12 And Micah consecrated the Levite; and the young man became his priest, and was in the house of Micah.

But such was the confusion of those times, for want of a judge, that Micah's superstition had no check upon it; and the Levite's poverty and ambition tempted him to accept of the preferment proffered to him: his youth also made him the more ignorant.

[*Was in the house of Micah.*] Continued with him to execute the priest's office.

Ver. 13] Who he thought had more right to the office, and would be more acceptable to God than his own son, whom he had consecrated before, ver. 5. By this it is evident, that he did not intend to forsake the Lord; but his mind was so blinded, that he took

13 Then said Micah, Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest.

one small benefit for a sufficient sign of his favour, when he was guilty of so many heinous offences against the Divine Majesty: first, in making idols, and then in making one of his sons a priest; and after that, in drawing a poor young man into the same crime with him; and in taking upon him to consecrate a base Levite to be a priest; of which office he was not capable, if he had had power to consecrate one, which he had not. But both of them were intruders into that which belonged not to them; and thereby drew upon themselves a curse, rather than a blessing.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1 *The Danites send five men to seek out an inheritance. 3 At the house of Micah they consult with Jonathan, and are encouraged in their way. 7 They search Laish, and bring back news of good hope. 11 Six hundred men are sent to surprise it. 14 In their way they rob Micah of his priest and his consecrate things. 27 They win Laish, and call it Dan. 30 They set up idolatry, wherein Jonathan inherited the priesthood.*

1 In those days *there was no king in Israel*: and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought them an inheritance to dwell in; for unto that day *all their inheritance had not fallen unto them among the tribes of Israel.*

2 And the children of Dan sent of their family five men from their coasts, men of valour, from

Zorah, and from Eshtaol, to spy out the land, and to search it; and they said unto them, Go, search the land: who when they came to mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah, they lodged there.

3 When they *were* by the house of Micah, they knew the voice of the young man the Levite:

CHAP. XVIII.

Ver. 1. *In those days there was no king in Israel.*] These words seem to be repeated, to suggest the reason of such enormous practices as are before mentioned, and here follow in this chapter.

[*In those days*] When there was no judge in Israel. That is, saith the author of Tzemach David, in the interval between the government of Jair and Jephthah. Which is an idle opinion; and yet be saith he should be of it, did he not reverence his masters, who are of another mind; which is the truer: that these days were before there was a judge in Israel, between the death of Joshua and the elders that survived him, and the time of Othniel, who was the first judge that God raised up unto them. So Josephus, lib. v. Antiq. cap. 2.

[*The tribe of the Danites*] Or rather, *a tribe, &c.* For so the word *shebet* is sometimes used for a family in a tribe; as in the twentieth chapter of this book, ver. 12, it is said, "the tribes of Israel sent messengers to all the tribes of Benjamin," i. e. to all the families of the tribe of Benjamin; and in Isa. xix. 13, De Dieu observes the same: who also truly notes, that when the whole tribe is spoken of, it is not said *shebet hadani*, as it is here, but *shebet Dan*. Therefore *hadani* here, and in other places, signifies a family derived from that tribe.

[*Sought them an inheritance to dwell in;*] Some of that tribe which was very much straitened by the old inhabitants of the land (who pent them up in a narrow compass, which was not sufficient for them), inquired where they might find a commodious settlement in some other place.

[*All their inheritance had not fallen unto them*] They had an inheritance allotted them, as well as the rest of the tribes (Josh. xix. 40, &c.), but by their sloth, and for want of that brotherly assistance which other tribes should have afforded them, they could not get

possession of a considerable part of it; but were forced by the Amorites to content themselves with the mountainous part of their country, leaving them none of the champaigne (as Josephus observes), nor all the mountains neither (see the first chapter of this book, ver. 34, 35). Wanting room therefore for all their people and cattle, and being unable to deal with the Amorites, they sent some, as it here follows, to seek for a dwelling somewhere else.

Ver. 2. *The children of Dan sent of their family five men*] It is no improbable conjecture of Arius Montanus, that there were five families of the Danites; out of each of which one man was chosen to make the following discovery.

[*Men of valour,*] Who could not be daunted if they were taken for spies. Some think also men of quality; such as those whom Moses sent to spy out the land of Canaan.

[*From Zorah and from Eshtaol,*] Which places are the first named in the account of the lot of their inheritance (Josh. xix. 41).

[*To spy out the land,*] They were sent *εις μεσσηριον* (as Josephus speaks) "into the midland country" (for the Danites were seated near the Philistines towards the sea-coast), to see if they could find out a convenient place for them.

[*To search it;*] To inquire into the condition of it, and of the inhabitants.

[*Go, search the land;*] They had a commission from their elders to go whither they directed them, in the plain country wherein Laish stood (ver. 14).

[*When they came to mount Ephraim,*] These two tribes joined, as I observed upon it. 35.

[*House of Micah,*] To the place where his house stood.

[*They lodged there.*] Not in Micah's house, but in some place of Mount Ephraim, not far from it; as we may guess by the next verse.

Ver. 3. *When they were by the house of Micah,*]

and they turned in thither, and said unto him, Who brought thee hither? and what maketh thou in this *place*? and what hast thou here?

4 And he said unto them, Thus and thus dealth Micah with me, and hath hired me, and I am his priest.

5 And they said unto him, Ask counsel, we pray thee, of God, that we may know whether our way which we go shall be prosperous.

6 And the priest said unto them, Go in peace: before the LORD is your way wherein ye go.

7 ¶ Then the five men departed, and came to Laish, and saw the people that *were* therein, how they dwelt careless, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure; and *there was* no magistrate in the land, that might put *them* to shame in *any* thing; and they *were* far from the Zidonians, and had no business with *any* man.

Near to which, it is probable, there was a public inn, for the entertainment of such as came from the neighbouring parts to worship, or to ask counsel of the oracle at Micah's house.

They knew the voice of—the Levite:] Having been acquainted with him heretofore, when, it is probable, he was in their country; for he had led a wandering life.

They turned in:] Went into Micah's house, at his invitation, or to salute him, and inquire of his welfare.

Who brought thee hither?] Far from that city of the Levites, I suppose, to which he belonged.

What maketh thou in this place?] What business hast thou in this place?

What hast thou here?] How dost thou live and maintain thyself? For they knew he had been poor.

Ver. 4.] He told them the agreement between Micah and him, mentioned in the foregoing chapter.

Ver. 5.] They were as ignorant, it seems, as he; and thought God would give an answer there, as well as at his own house.

Ver. 6. *Go in peace:*] Whether he had any answer from the teraphim, or feigned it out of his own head, is not certain; but he encouraged them to proceed in their design.

Before the Lord is your way:] He pretended to have this answer from the Lord, who, he assures them, would direct, guide, and protect them in their proceedings; for that is the meaning of their way *before the Lord:*] under his eye; that is, his care and providence, who would dispose all things for their good success. Now, if the Levite did not devise this answer, which he thought would please them, but heard a real voice from the teraphim, which promised them prosperity, then it was permitted by God, to serve the ends of his providence, just as Nebuchadnezzar was encouraged by his diviners, to undertake the siege of Jerusalem (Ezek. xxi. 21, 22).

Ver. 7. *Laish,*] Called Leshem in Josh. xix. 47, where this story is briefly told, by way of anticipation: see my notes there. It was a city which lay at the foot of Libanus, near the fountain of Jordan, as Josephus saith in the place above named.

They dwelt careless, after the manner of the Zidonians,] Had no fear of any enemy, no more than the Zidonians, who were a powerful people, in a strong city; whose customs, I suppose, they imitated.

Quiet and secure:] Because they knew nobody of whom they had any fear.

That put them to shame in any thing: To punish them for any thing they did, which made them live

8 And they came unto their brethren to Zorah and Eshtaol: and their brethren said unto them, What say ye?

9 And they said, Arise, that we may go up against them: for we have seen the land, and, behold, it is very good: and are ye still? be not slothful to go, and to enter to possess the land.

10 When ye go, ye shall come unto a people secure, and to a large land: for God hath given it into your hands; a place where *there is* no want of any thing that *is* in the earth.

11 ¶ And there went from thence of the family of the Danites, out of Zorah and out of Eshtaol, six hundred men appointed with weapons of war.

12 And they went up, and pitched in Kirjath-jearim, in Judah: wherefore they called that place Mahaneh-dan unto this day: behold, it is behind Kirjath-jearim.

as they pleased. There are very various interpretations of these words, of which De Dieu hath given the best account.

They were far from the Zidonians,] Who might have otherwise come to their assistance, upon any sudden invasion, they following the manners and customs of that people; but they were a day's journey from them, as Josephus there saith.

Had no business with any man.] No traffic or commerce with any of their neighbours, nor they with them. This disposition laid them open to be a prey to any resolute invader.

Ver. 8.] From whence they were sent, ver. 2. They asked them what account they brought from their journey.

Ver. 9. *Arise, that we may go up against them:*] This shows that they were particularly directed to make a discovery of Laish.

It is very good:] Ἰνὴ ἀγαθὴν καὶ πλούσιον, as Josephus expresses it, "a goodly country, and very fertile."

Are ye still?] Their brethren did not seem at first to believe them, which makes them stir them up by this question, and the following exhortation.

Be not slothful to go, and to enter:] They speak as if they had no more to do, but to march thither, and take possession of the country.

Ver. 10. *Ye shall come unto a people secure, and to a large land:*] They use two arguments to excite them to the enterprise; that it was easy, and would be very advantageous.

God hath given it into your hands:] They add the encouragement the priest had given them (ver. 6), which was the greatest of all.

A place where there is no want of any thing:] This magnifies the goodness of God to them, in discovering a country to them abounding with all manner of good things, which they very much wanted in the mountains wherein they were pent up (see ver. 1).

Ver. 11. *Of the family of the Danites,*] Either family is here put for a tribe, or the singular number for the plural; there going out of some of the families of the Danites, the following number.

Six hundred men:] Carrying their wives, and children, and household-stuff with them; for they nothing doubted of making a settlement there (see ver. 21).

Pitched in Kirjath-jearim,] Not in the city itself, but in the fields belonging to it, as appears from the last words of this verse. See concerning this place Josh. xv. 9, 60, which lay in the north part of the tribe of Judah, and so lay in the road to Laish.

13 And they passed thence unto mount Ephraim, and came unto the house of Micah.

14 ¶ Then answered the five men that went to spy out the country of Laish, and said unto their brethren, Do ye know that there is in these houses an ephod, and teraphim, and a graven image, and a molten image? now therefore consider what ye have to do.

15 And they turned thitherward, and came to the house of the young man the Levite, even unto the house of Micah, and saluted him.

16 And the six hundred men appointed with their weapons of war, which were of the children of Dan, stood by the entering of the gate.

17 And the five men that went to spy out the land went up, and came in thither, and took the graven image, and the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image: and the priest stood in the entering of the gate with the six hundred men that were appointed with weapons of war.

Mahaneh-dan] See xiii. ult.

Behind Kirjath-jearim.] On the west of it, towards the Mediterranean Sea, which is called the hindermost sea, Deut. xi. 24, as, on the contrary, the east is called Kedem, which imports as much as *before*. Here the Danites encamped the first night, after they came from Zorah and Eshtaol.

Ver. 13. *Unto mount Ephraim.*] The second day's march was to this place, still more northward.

Unto the house of Micah.] Unto the town or village where Micah lived; for they did not yet come to his house, but afterward (ver. 15).

Ver. 14. *Then answered the five men*] In the Hebrew language he is said oftentimes to answer who speaks first, as in 1 Kings i. 28, and many other places.

And said unto their brethren.] Who knew, perhaps, that they called at this place by the way, and asked them, who dwelt there.

That there is in these houses] i. e. In that town or village, viz. in Micah's house, which was the chief in the town (see ver. 12).

An ephod, &c.] Which the Levite had shown them, or told them were in the house.

Consider what ye have to do.] Whether it might not be expedient to carry those sacred things along with them, which they fancied would be an assurance of the Divine presence with them: for from thence they had received an answer of peace, when they went to spy the country whither they were now going (ver. 6).

Ver. 15. *They turned thitherward.*] To that part of the house where the Levite had his apartment, not to the sacred place where the forenamed idols were.

Saluted him.] Or, asked him of his health and welfare, as the Hebrew phrase signifies, "Asked him of peace."

Ver. 16. ¶] Whether the five men brought the Levite out to them, or, he, hearing there was such a company there, came out to view them, after the salutation was over.

Ver. 17. *Came in thither.*] Having brought him out, they returned back to the place where they knew the images, &c., were.

Took the graven image, &c.] That is, while the Levite was discoursing with them, and wishing them, perhaps, good success, they robbed the chapel, and took away all the furniture of it. Some think, Micah, also, was with him at the gate, entertaining them with

18 And these went into Micah's house, and fetched the carved image, the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image. Then said the priest unto them, What do ye?

19 And they said unto him, Hold thy peace, lay thine hand upon thy mouth, and go with us, and be to us a father and a priest; *is it* better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel?

20 And the priest's heart was glad, and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image, and went in the midst of the people.

21 So they turned and departed, and put the little ones and the cattle and the carriage before them.

22 ¶ And when they were a good way from the house of Micah, the men that were in the houses near to Micah's house were gathered together, and overtook the children of Dan.

meat and drink. But that is confuted by what follows.

Ver. 18. *Fetched the carved image, &c.*] They not only took them, as is said before, but brought them out openly before the Levite's eyes, who saw them in their hands, and thereupon expostulated with them.

What do ye?] Will you be guilty of such a sacrilege; or, will you thus requite me, who have been very kind to you?

Ver. 19. *Lay thine hand upon thy mouth.*] Keep silence, and make no noise. So this phrase is used thrice in the book of Job, xxi. 5, xxix. 9, xxxix. 37, and in the book of Proverbs, xxx. 32, and the prophet Micah, vii. 16.

Go with us.] They invite him to serve them in the same quality as he did Micah, promising him the same authority, reverence, and affection that he had from him: and, moreover, they represent to him, in the next words, how much more advantageous it would be to minister unto so great a part of a tribe than to one private person.

Tribe and a family] They were not a tribe, but only a part of it; yet so considerable a part being a great family, they are called a "tribe and a family;" that is, a whole family in that tribe.

Ver. 20. *The priest's heart was glad*] To think he should so very much mend his condition; for the same arguments which prevailed with him to dwell with Micah, were far stronger now (viz. covetousness and ambition) to move him to go along thence.

He took the ephod, &c.] Under which is comprehended also the molten image, which the five men brought out of the house with the other (ver. 17, 18).

Went in the midst of the people.] Who undertook to guard him from any assault that might be made on any side to bring him back: or he went, perhaps, with those sacred things (as they accounted them) in the midst of the people, in imitation of the ark, which was so placed when the camp of Israel marched (Numb. x. 21).

Ver. 21.] Both for safety, if any should pursue them, and that they might march no faster than they were able to bear it.

Ver. 22. *House of Micah.*] Who did not immediately miss the Levite and his idols, and spent some time in assembling his neighbours.

Houses near to Micah's house] If there was not a town there before, it is likely the place of worship

23 And they cried unto the children of Dan. And they turned their faces, and said unto Micah, What aileth thee, that thou comest with such a company?

24 And he said, Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the priest, and ye are gone away: and what have I more? and what is this that ye say unto me, What aileth thee?

25 And the children of Dan said unto him, Let not thy voice be heard among us, lest angry fellows run upon thee, and thou lose thy life, with the lives of thy household.

26 And the children of Dan went their way: and when Micah saw that they were too strong for him, he turned and went back unto his house.

which Micah set up made many resort thither, and settle their habitation there.

Overtook] Hoping to recover what they had taken away.

Ver. 23.] Desiring them to stop their march till they had spoken with them. Accordingly they made a stand, and faced about, asking what he would have, and what he meant, to bring a little army with him, as if he intended an assault.

Ver. 24.] By gods he means the symbols of the Divine presence; for he was not so sottish as to believe that he could make his god, he being a worshipper of Jehovah (xvii. 3, 13). He thought it a strange question to ask what he ailed, when they had taken away that which he valued above all things in the world.

Ver. 25.] They that were next to him advised him not to say a word more, lest, if the whole army should hear his reproaches, mischief might follow. There are always such fierce and furious men among soldiers, who are incensed to bloody executions upon the least provocation; and these being men going to make their fortune (as we speak) it is likely were generally of such a violent temper.

Ver. 26. *Went their way.*] Turned about again, and pursued their march, with neglect and scorn of Micah.

Micah—went back unto his house.] His zeal was not so great for his gods, but he loved his life better.

Ver. 27. *They took the things*] i. e. They kept them and carried them along with them.

Came unto Laish.] They seem to have made three days' march in this expedition, encamping first at Kirjath-jearim, and the next night at Micah's house, and coming the next day to Laish.

Unto a people that were at quiet.] Whom they found in the posture the spies had described them, ver. 10, having no scouts abroad to bring them notice of any approaching danger, nor any guards of the passes to their city, or at its gates; so that they were easily surprised.

They smote them—and burnt the city.] Killed the people of the country and city, unto which they set fire, when they had taken, I suppose, the spoil of it. Thus was fulfilled the prophecy of Moses concerning this tribe, Deut. xxxiii. 22 (see there).

Ver. 28. *They had no business with any man;*] See ver. 7, which deprived them of all intelligence.

Beth-rehob.] A city near to Hamath, in the most northerly part of the country (see Numb. xiii. 21).

They built a city.] Larger, perhaps, than the former; which being not big enough to contain them, they thought fit to burn it and build a better.

Ver. 29. *Dan.*] They gave it this name, that it

27 And they took the things which Micah had made, and the priest which he had, and came unto Laish, unto a people that were at quiet and secure: and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and burnt the city with fire.

28 And there was no deliverer, because it was far from Zidon, and they had no business with any man; and it was in the valley that lieth by Beth-rehob. And they built a city, and dwelt therein.

29 And they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was born unto Israel: howbeit the name of the city was Laish at the first.

30 ¶ And the children of Dan set up the graven image: and Jonathan, the son of Gershom,

might be remembered they belonged to the people of Israel though they lived at a great distance from their own tribe, in the very extremity of the north of Judea (whereas the tribe of Dan had their lot in the south); from whence came the common saying afterward, when they would express the whole length of the country "from Dan to Beer-sheba."

The name of the city was Laish.] This seems to signify, that they did not burn the whole city, but so much as might strike a terror into the inhabitants, and make their conquest more easy; for he speaks of it as still the same city, though it lost its old name.

Ver. 30. *Set up the graven image.*] Together with the molten, no doubt, and made use of the ephod and teraphim here, as Micah had done in his house; fancying, I suppose, it was by a Divine direction from this oracle, that the five men had such good success when they went to spy out this land (ver. 5, 6).

Jonathan.] This was the name of the Levite who came along with them.

Son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh.] So not only the Hebrew, but the Chaldee, and the LXX. (both in the Roman edition, and in that of Basil, and in the Palatine MS. as Hottinger observes), which will not let us doubt it is the true reading: though the Vulgar hath put Moses instead of Manasseh, according to an idle conceit of some of the rabbins who say, the letter nun, in the middle of the word is not written even with the rest, but suspended above the rest of the letters, to show, that though he was indeed the son of Moses, yet he should rather be called the son of Manasseh, because he did the works of Manasseh, and not of Moses; that is, was an idolater. So Kimchi (as the same Hottinger observes), who therein follows the Talmudists, in Bava Bathra. (See his *Thesaurus Philologicus*, lib. 1. cap. 2, quest. 4; and Bartoloccius, in his *Kirjath-sepher*, tom. i. p. 114). And thus they made this Jonathan to be the grandchild of Moses, for Gershom was his son: but it is not likely he would have been left in so poor a condition, if he had been so nearly related to their great lawgiver; nor would he have had so ill an education. And, being now but a youth, it is not probable that he was the son of that Gershom, but of some other, who had the name of this famous ancestor given him, though his father's name was Manasseh: but it is wholly uncertain from what family of the Levites this man was derived; and these names, no doubt, were common to more than those who first bare them.

Were priests of the tribe of Dan.] Of that part of the tribe who settled here at Laish.

Until the day of the captivity of the land.] Some

the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land.

caillers have endeavoured to frame an argument from hence, that this book was written in later times, after the ten tribes were carried away by Salmanassar; or, as some of the Jews in Seder Olam interpret the "captivity of the land," to signify that by Nebuchadnezzar; but Kimchi and Rablag very well object against this, that it is altogether unlikely these images should have been suffered to continue in the days of David; who was a man after God's own heart, and set himself to advance true religion to the utmost of his power, all the country over, from Dan to Beersheba: therefore Kimchi, with great reason, concludes, that by the "captivity of the land" is meant the taking of the ark by the Philistines, and carrying it captive into the temple of Dagon: which is confirmed, as our famous Selden observes (Syn-tag. i. De Diis Syris, cap. 2), by the next verse, which saith, that, till Shiloh was destroyed these images remained. And this taking of the ark, the Psalmist expressly calls a *captivity*, when he saith, lxxviii. 60, 61, "He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, &c., and delivered his strength into captivity, his glory into the enemy's hand." As for the interpretation of Rablag, who takes this captivity to have been in the days of Jabin, king of Canaan, it is not worth counting.

Ver. 31.] Which was all the time of the judges mentioned in this book; who, though zealous reformers, could not, it seems, extend their authority

31 And they set them up Micah's graven image, which he made, all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

to the very skirts of the country, where idolatry still lurked in this corner of the land; for scarce any one of the judges ruled over the whole country of Israel; but only over such tribes as they delivered from imminent danger. This appears by the armies which Barak and Gideon raised; and in the double oppression they lay under, at the same time, in the west and in the east, by the Philistines and the Ammonites; when Jephthah was raised up against the latter, and Samson against the former: no wonder therefore that none of them could make a general reformation, nor abolish the idolatry in this place: but God used the Philistines as instruments to put an end to it; for when they destroyed Shiloh, where the true house of God was, they destroyed *this house of gods* (as they esteemed it, see xvii. 5), being a resemblance of it: and perhaps as they brought the ark into the field against the Philistines, so the Danites brought these images, with the ephod and teraphim, and the priest, who was slain with Hophni and Phinehas; or, as Huetius thinks, carried captive into the land of the Philistines, with a great many other Israelites. But this place remained still so famous for the resort of people thither to worship, that when Jeroboam set up his golden calves, he erected one of them here in Dan, as another in Bethel: where there having been a real appearance of God, in ancient time, to Jacob, the people were easily made to believe there had been the like in Dan, in the time here mentioned.

CHAPTER XIX.

1 A Levite goeth to Beth-lehem to fetch home his wife. 16 An old man entertaineth him at Gibeah. 22 The Gibeonites abuse his concubine to death. 29 He divideth her into twelve pieces, to send them to the twelve tribes.

I AND it came to pass in those days, when there was no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite sojourning on the side of mount Ephraim, who took to him a concubine out of Beth-lehem-judah.

2 And his concubine played the whore

against him, and went away from him unto her father's house to Beth-lehem-judah, and was there four whole months.

3 And her husband arose, and went after her, to speak friendly unto her, and to bring her again, having his servant with him, and a couple

CHAP. XIX.

Ver. 1. *In those days*] In the time before mentioned, xvii. 6, xviii. 1 (see there).

A certain Levite] He seems to have been a stranger in this country, as the other Levite was, who sojourned in the land of Judah (xvii. 7).

Who took to him a concubine] That is, a wife of the secondary sort, without such solemn espousals, or a dowry, as those called *wives* had. So the Talmudists generally think. But Abarbanel, following Rasi, thinks, that a *concubine* was taken with espousals, and only wanted a dowry, or a jointure (as we speak). Certain it is, such persons were really wives; and it was adultery in any other person that lay with them, but he who had married them. As this man had this woman, for he is expressly called her husband in the next chapter (xx. 4), and her father is called his father-in-law in this chapter (ver. 47). See Selden, lib. v. De Jure Nat. et Gent. cap. 7; and Buxtorf. De Sponsal. et Divortis, p. 11, &c., where the opinion of Abarbanel is largely represented.

Ver. 2. *Played the whore*] Was false to his bed, into which she admitted some other person.

Went away from him] To escape the punishment unto which she was liable as an adulteress: but there are those who, by the word *tizneh*, which we translate "played the whore," will have no more to be meant, but that she was froward and contumaciously disobedient; so that she could not endure his company, but forsook him: the Chaldee plainly inclines this way; and the LXX. translate it ἀρραβὴν αὐτοῦ, "She carried herself like a fury to him;" and Josephus ἀπορρίπιος ἔλξε, "She behaved herself untowardly."

Was there four whole months.] Or, as the others take it, "A year and four months." For *days* in Scripture frequently signify a year: but the LXX. and Josephus take it for so many days as made four months.

Ver. 3. *Her husband—went after her.*] His anger was over by this time, and his affection to her revived: perhaps also he heard she repented, and was become a better woman.

To speak friendly unto her.] In the Hebrew, "To speak to her heart;" that is, to make her sensible of his kindness to her, notwithstanding her offence, and to assure her of his pardon.

of asses: and she brought him into her father's house: and when the father of the damsel saw him, he rejoiced to meet him.

4 And his father in law, the damsel's father, retained him; and he abode with him three days: so they did eat and drink, and lodged there.

5 ¶ And it came to pass on the fourth day, when they arose early in the morning, that he rose up to depart: and the damsel's father said unto his son in law, Comfort thine heart with a morsel of bread, and afterward go your way.

6 And they sat down, and did eat and drink both of them together: for the damsel's father had said unto the man, Be content, I pray thee, and tarry all night, and let thine heart be merry.

7 And when the man rose up to depart, his father in law urged him: therefore he lodged there again.

8 And he arose early in the morning on the fifth day to depart: and the damsel's father said, Comfort thine heart, I pray thee. And they tarried until afternoon, and they did eat both of them.

9 And when the man rose up to depart, he, and his concubine, and his servant, his father in

law, the damsel's father, said unto him, Behold, now the day draweth toward evening, I pray you tarry all night: behold, the day groweth to an end, lodge here, that thine heart may be merry; and to-morrow get you early on your way, that thou mayest go home.

10 But the man would not tarry that night, but he rose up and departed, and came over against Jebus, which is Jerusalem; and *there were* with him two asses saddled, his concubine also *was* with him.

11 *And* when they *were* by Jebus, the day was far spent; and the servant said unto his master, Come, I pray thee, and let us turn in into this city of the Jebusites, and lodge in it.

12 And his master said unto him, We will not turn aside hither into the city of a stranger, that is not of the children of Israel; we will pass over to Gibeah.

13 And he said unto his servant, Come, and let us draw near to one of these places to lodge all night, in Gibeah, or in Ramah.

14 And they passed on and went their way; and the sun went down upon them *when they were* by Gibeah, which *belongeth* to Benjamin.

15 And they turned aside thither, to go in

To bring her again,] To his own habitation, from whence she went away.

Having his servant with him,] And for that end came attended with a servant, to carry her and her baggage (as we now speak), with necessary provisions.

She brought him into her father's house:] She seems to have been as ready as he for a reconciliation.

He rejoiced to meet him.] Embraced him with great affection and joy.

Ver. 4.] Would not let him go away, as soon as he desired.

Ver. 5. *He rose up to depart:]* With an intention to leave him, and return to his own house.

Comfort thine house with a morsel of bread,] Her father had no mind to part with him so soon, hoping, by keeping him longer in his house, their conjugal love and affection would be more confirmed: and devising this way to detain him, by desiring him to take a short repast with him, before he began his journey; for this is meant by "a morsel of bread," under which all sort of provisions are comprehended: wherewith he desired him to *comfort*, or, as the word literally signifies in the Hebrew, *support his heart*: which in English we express exactly by "stay his stomach with a morsel," &c. For in many authors, the *heart* signifies the stomach, as several have observed, particularly Gataker, in his *Cinnus*, lib. ii. cap. 16.

Ver. 6.] He made him a great feast, at which they sat a long time. For he was earnest with him not to think of going away that day, but to spend it joyfully with him and with his daughter.

Ver. 7.] He pressed his stay so hard, that when he offered to be gone, he prevailed with him to lodge there another night.

Ver. 8.] Stay till after dinner. He prolonged the entertainment, so that the sun began to decline before they had done.

Ver. 9. *He, and his concubine, and his servant,]* Who had made all ready for their journey.

The day groweth to an end,] In the Hebrew the words are, "It is the pitching time of the day;"

that is, when men pitch their tents, to take their rest.

Thine heart may be merry:] He prays him that they may rejoice together one night more.

To-morrow get you early on your way,] He promises not to detain them longer than this night, but to let them go away as early as they pleased next morning, without any entertainment.

Ver. 10.] Suspecting his father would use still the same kind artifice, or some other, to keep him longer with him. He carried away all that he brought (ver. 3), and his wife also, whom he went to invite again to dwell with him.

Ver. 11.] The famous city of Jerusalem (anciently called Jebus) had been taken by the children of Judah (i. 8), but the Jebusites still kept the strong fort of Sion, till the time of David, and thereby so commanded the lower town, that they forced the children of Judah and Benjamin to let them dwell with them there (i. 21; Josh. xv. ult.); and it appears by this place, that they were the ruling party, and therefore it is called "this city of the Jebusites" (see Josh. x. 1).

Ver. 12.] This is an argument that he was not like the other Levite, mentioned in the seventeenth chapter; for he would not take up his lodging among idolaters; and it also shows, that the greater part of the inhabitants were Jebusites, and the children of Israel had little or no power there; yea, it is possible that this happened so long before the days of the judges, that Jerusalem was not yet taken by the children of Judah. Gibeah was possessed by the children of Israel, viz. the Benjamites.

Ver. 13.] The servant, I suppose, made some objection against Gibeah, and therefore he put him to his choice either to go thither, or to Ramah; which was also a city belonging unto Benjamin, both of them lying northward of Jerusalem, and not far from it.

Ver. 14.] This is noted, to distinguish it from another Gibeah which belonged to Judah (Josh. xv. 57).

Ver. 15. *They turned aside—to lodge in Gibeah:]* Being unable to reach Ramah, unless they would have travelled in the night, which had not been safe.

and to lodge in Gibeah: and when he went in, he sat him down in a street of the city: for *there* was no man that took them into his house to lodging.

16 ¶ And, behold, there came an old man from his work out of the field at even, which *was* also of mount Ephraim; and he sojourned in Gibeah: but the men of the place *were* Benjamites.

17 And when he had lifted up his eyes, he saw a wayfaring man in the street of the city: and the old man said, Whither goest thou? and whence comest thou?

18 And he said unto him, We are passing from Beth-lehem-judah toward the side of mount Ephraim; from thence *am* I: and I went to Beth-lehem-judah, but I *am now* going to the house of the Lord; and there *is* no man that receiveth me to house.

19 Yet there is both straw and provender for our asses; and there is bread and wine also for me, and for thy handmaid, and for the young man *which is* with thy servants: *there is* no want of any thing.

He sat him down in a street] There being, I suppose, no public inn in the town, unto which strangers might resort.

There was no man that took them into his house] They were grown so lewd in this place, that there was no humanity left among them; but the ancient custom of hospitality, in entertaining strangers, was quite abolished: or, if any had so much goodness remaining as to be inclined to it, they durst not make any invitation of a stranger to their houses, for fear of drawing mischief upon themselves, from their debauched neighbours.

Ver. 16. *At even.*] Before it was quite dark, "which was also of Mount Ephraim," where this Levite dwelt, "and he sojourned in Gibeah." Being but a sojourner himself, he had the more compassion on a stranger.

The men of the place were Benjamites.] This was one of the cities given to the priests, Josh. xxi. 17. But the priests did not inhabit them alone, especially now when they were but few, and therefore let other persons, who were not priests, dwell there together with them.

Ver. 17. *Wayfaring man*] Who looked as if he was at a loss for a lodging.

Whither goest thou? and whence comest thou?] These were the usual questions made to travellers.

Ver. 18. *We are passing from Beth-lehem-judah, &c.*] This is a full answer to one part of his question, giving him an account where he commonly lived; though his occasions carried him to Beth-lehem-judah, he now immediately came from thence.

I am now going to the house of the Lord;] That is an answer to the other part of his question; for Shiloh, where the house of God was settled, was in the tribe of Ephraim (Josh. xviii. 1); and thither, like a good man, he intended first to go, and give thanks to God, for restoring his wife to him; and, perhaps, to offer an expiation for her sin; and then to return to his own home, on the side of Mount Ephraim.

No man that receiveth me to house.] Whereby he was in danger to lie in the street all night.

Ver. 19.] He uses very civil and humble language, and also signifies he did not desire to be chargeable to anybody: being so well provided with all things

20 And the old man said, Peace *be* with thee; howsoever *let* all thy wants *lie* upon me; only lodge not in the street.

21 So he brought him into his house, and gave provender unto the asses: and they washed their feet, and did eat and drink.

22 ¶ *Now* as they were making their hearts merry, behold, the men of the city, certain sons of Belial, beset the house round about, and beat at the door, and spake to the master of the house, the old man, saying, Bring forth the man that came into thine house, that we may know him.

23 And the man, the master of the house, went out unto them, and said unto them, Nay, my brethren, *nay*, I pray you, do not *so* wickedly; seeing that this man is come into mine house, do not this folly.

24 Behold, *here is* my daughter a maiden, and his concubine; them I will bring out now, and humble ye them, and do with them what seemeth good unto you: but unto this man do not so vile a thing.

25 But the men would not hearken to him:

necessary, that he need not be a burden to him that would entertain him.

No want of any thing.] But only of a lodging.

Ver. 20. *Peace be with thee;*] He saluted him kindly, after the usual manner that friends and neighbours greeted each other.

Howsoever] Do not speak of that.

Let all thy wants lie upon me;] I had rather entertain thee at my charge, than suffer thee to lie in the streets.

Ver. 21. *So he brought him into his house, &c.*] Took care both of them and of their beasts, at his own costs, as the words seem to import.

Washed their feet.] As the custom was in those countries after travelling.

Did eat and drink.] Sat down to supper.

Ver. 22. *As they were making their hearts merry,*] Eating and drinking very freely.

Certain sons of Belial.] See Deut. xiii. 13.

Beset the house] That none might go out; "and beat at the door;" as if they would force their entrance: which made the master of the house come to ask them what they would have.

Bring forth the man—that we may know him.] These last words are capable of a good meaning, as if they designed only to examine him, and know who he was, and whence he came, &c., but the old man being acquainted with their wicked manners, understood their lewd intentions, and accordingly gave them the following answer (see Gen. xix. 5).

Ver. 23.] He endeavours to divert them from their purpose with kind words and humble entreaties; urging withal, the title the man had to his protection by the laws of hospitality, and the greatness of the sin they were about to commit.

Ver. 24.] His earnest desire to preserve the laws of hospitality from violation (which was a thing very sacred in those days), made him forget the care he ought to have had to preserve his daughter's purity. He hoped also, perhaps, that they were not grown yet so wicked as to offer this injury to a neighbour, though they regarded not what they did to strangers, which made him offer them the man's concubine also, supposing it better than to let them do violence to her husband. He must be considered as in a confusion of thoughts (like Lot, see Gen. xix. 8), and so not to

so the man took his concubine, and brought her forth unto them; and they knew her, and abused her all the night until the morning: and when the day began to spring, they let her go.

26 Then came the woman in the dawning of the day, and fell down at the door of the man's house where her lord *was*, till it was light.

27 And her lord rose up in the morning, and opened the doors of the house, and went out to go his way: and, behold, the woman his concubine was fallen down at the door of the house, and her hands *were* upon the threshold.

28 And he said unto her, Up, and let us be

going. But none answered. Then the man took her up upon an ass, and the man rose up, and gat him unto his place.

29 ¶ And when he was come into his house, he took a knife, and laid hold on his concubine, and divided her, *together* with her bones, into twelve pieces, and sent her into all the coasts of Israel.

30 And it was so, that all that saw it said, There was no such deed done nor seen from the day that the children of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt unto this day: consider of it, take advice, and speak *your minds*.

have minded so much what was right, as what was least wrong.

Ver. 25. *The men would not hearken to him:*] And the Levite also, I suppose, absolutely refused to have the old man's daughter or his concubine exposed to their lust: whence arose a quarrel, inasmuch that they threatened and designed to kill him (as he himself tells the story, xx. 5), which, it is likely, moved the old man to persuade him not to be so obstinate; but for the preservation of his life, which was in great danger, to yield a little to them: and persuading the men of the city not to be so furious, they came at last to compound the matter; and finding the Levite so resolutely bent to defend himself, were content only to have his concubine (whose beauty they admired, as Josephus saith, when they saw her come into their city), and to let him and the old man's daughter alone. Unto this they agreed, of two evils choosing the least.

The man took his concubine, and brought her forth] With her own consent, it is probable; for she thought her husband would lose his life, and she not preserve herself.

When the day began to spring, they let her go.] Least the light should discover who they were that had been so villainously wicked.

Ver. 26.] She fell down dead, *εἰς τὸ λίκνός καὶ αἰσχύνῃς* (as Josephus speaks), with grief at what she had suffered, and *shame* to look upon her husband; and, it may be added, with the excessive abuse of her body.

Ver. 27. *Her lord*] So the women in these old times called their husbands, out of reverence to them, as the head of the wife (see 1 Pet. iii. 5).

Went out to go his way:] Imagining, perhaps, that they intended to keep her, and he did not know where to find her, but must seek somewhere else by what means to recover her.

Her hands were upon the threshold.] She being stretched out at length: as people are sometimes, when they fall down with weariness upon their faces into a profound sleep.

Ver. 28.] Supposing her to be only in a deep sleep,

he began to rouse her up, and to speak comfortably to her (as Josephus takes it), knowing she was under a force, and did not willingly submit to their filthiness. When he saw she was dead he made no outcry; but (as Josephus observes), prudently carried her away, as fast as he could, to his own home.

Ver. 29. *Together with her bones.*] In the Hebrew words are, "according to her bones;" that is, some of the pieces were bigger, some lesser, according as the joints would suffer her body to be divided.

Into twelve pieces.] That every tribe might have a limb of her, Benjamin not excepted. Among whom it was to be hoped there were some who would resent so foul a fact, though committed by their own brethren.

Sent her into all the coasts of Israel.] Giving the messengers a charge (as Josephus observes) to relate how she had been abused, which was the cause of her death. He knew not what other course to take to have justice done; for, as Josephus there observes (lib. v. Antiq. cap. 2), there was no settled court of judicature established according to the law. Which is the reason he gives (chapter the fifth of that book) why Eglon attempted to subdue the Israelites, because they were all in disorder, the laws being not put in execution.

Ver. 30. *There was no such deed done nor seen*] They not only condemned the fact, but were highly incensed at it, as a crime beyond all that had been heard of since they were a people: for it was a mixture of adultery and murder, with an attempt of sodomy, and that upon a Levite; a person consecrated to the Divine service, in some lower ministries.

Consider of it, take advice.] These are either the words of the messenger, or rather of the people themselves, who exhorted one another not to pass over this deed, only with expressing their abhorrence of it; but to consider, and consult one with another what was to be done, and to declare their opinion freely, how so heinous a crime was to be punished. And accordingly we find, in the beginning of the next chapter, that, by common consent, the whole body of the people met together to advise about this matter.

CHAPTER XX.

1 *The Levite in a general assembly declareth his wrong.* 8 *The decree of the assembly.* 12 *The Benjamites, being cited, make head against the Israelites.* 18 *The Israelites in two battles lose forty thousand.* 26 *They destroy by a stratagem all the Benjamites, except six hundred.*

1 THEN all the children of Israel went out, and the congregation was gathered together as

one man, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, with the land of Gilead, unto the LORD in Mizpeh.

CHAP. XX.

Ver. 1. *All the children of Israel went out,*] The

principal persons, who were appointed to represent the rest.

The congregation was gathered together] This con-

2 And the chief of all the people, *even* of all the tribes of Israel, presented themselves in the assembly of the people of God, four hundred thousand footmen that drew sword.

3 (Now the children of Benjamin heard that

gregation consisted of the captains of thousands and hundreds, &c., which had been established by Jethro's advice, together with the principal citizens, as Corn. Bertram probably thinks, whom they called to this assembly.

As one man,] Except the people of Jabesh-Gilead (xxi. 5, 8), and they of the tribe of Benjamin, who had no sense of this wickedness. For there was a general summons, no doubt, issued out by command of their rulers, to require every one to meet at a certain place, mentioned in the following words, or otherwise to forfeit their lives.

From Dan even to Beer-sheba,] That is, all Israel on this side Jordan, and on the other, were of the same mind in this matter.

Unto the Lord in Mizpeh,] There was a place of this name in the land of Gilead, as we read, xi. 11, but this Mizpeh here mentioned was in the confines of Judah and Benjamin, for which reason it is sometimes ascribed to the former, Josh. xv. 38, and sometimes to the latter, Josh. xviii. 26, being a place very conveniently situated for a general meeting of all the people, who often assembled there in future times (1 Sam. vii. 5—7, 16, x. 17). And it was not far from Shiloh, which made it the more convenient; because from hence they might, upon any occasion, immediately go to consult the Divine Majesty; which they intended to do now, when they had despatched the business for which they met here, which was to examine the crime of which the Benjamites were accused; and if there were good proof made of it, to consider how to punish it as it deserved. Whence it is that Josephus saith, this congregation met in Shiloh, *Εἰς τὴν Σιλοὴν συλλεγόμενοι καὶ πρὸ τῆς ἀκρῆς ἀβρουζίντες*, as if it were the same with Mizpeh. And, indeed, in this history, there is a little difference made, because they were so near one to another (see ver. 26, xxi. 2). But Mr. Mede thinks that here was a famous place of prayer, which is the *house of God* mentioned in those two verses. For so the author of the first book of Maccabees saith (iii. 46). That when the holy city and sanctuary lay desolate, by the tyranny of Antiochus Epiphanes, the people assembled together at Maspah, to make their supplications unto God, *ὅτι τόπος προσευχῆς εἰς Μάσφα τὸ πρότερον ἐφ' Ἰσραὴλ*, "because at Maspah had been, in former times, a place of prayer, for Israel;" and therefore some of the Jewish doctors say, the first synagogue was built here, and make this the original of all those which were so frequent in aftertimes: for here, say Kimchi and Abarbanel, all the remaining kings of Canaan assembled (after the battle at Gibeon), to fight with Israel (Josh. xi. 3). And here Joshua finished his victories over the Canaanites (ver. 8), and therefore here, it is probable, he built an altar unto the Lord, in memory of so great a deliverance. But this conjecture is founded upon a plain mistake; for the land of Mizpeh, where Joshua completed his victories, was far from this, in the most northern parts of Canaan, near Lebanon, beyond the fountains of Jordan.

Mr. Mede, also, and Corn. Bertram think, that hither they brought the ark upon this great occasion, and so might properly be said to be gathered *unto the Lord*. But this seems to me improbable, that they should remove the ark hither, when it was so near them in Shiloh, to which they might as well go, as bring it to them. And as for that phrase, *unto the*

the children of Israel were gone up to Mizpeh.) Then said the children of Israel, Tell us, how was this wickedness?

4 And the Levite, the husband of the woman that was slain, answered and said, I came into

Lord, it is no argument that either the ark was here, or so much as a place of prayer; for where all the people of God were assembled in any place, there God was in a special manner present; as when they all assembled to make David their king, it is said, he made a league with them "in Hebron before the Lord," though there was no ark nor altar there (2 Sam. v. 3).

I see no reason therefore to believe, that the Israelites were now gathered at Mizpeh as a *place of prayer* (for Shiloh was appointed for that purpose, which was very near it), but as a fitting place for such a great assembly to meet, and consult what was to be done in the present case. That was their business here; and when they had an occasion to inquire of God, and to fast (and pray, no doubt), they went to Shiloh, to the house of God (see ver. 26, and 28).

Ver. 2. The chief of all the people,] The word we translate *chief*, is in the Hebrew the *corners*, who were the strength and support of the people, as the corner-stones are of a building; viz. the heads of their tribes, rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, fifties, and tens; who kept the people in some kind of order (now that they wanted a supreme governor, and the courts of justice were unsettled), and, it is likely, brought them along with them to this general assembly; which, in all probability, met in the open air, as they anciently did among the Romans, Athenians, and other people, as many learned men have observed. And Lycurgus, as Plutarch tells us, gave this reason for it, that noble rooms, adorned with pictures and statues, and such-like ornaments, did not contribute *εἰς εὐβουλίαν*, "to right counsels," but rather did hurt, by distracting their minds, and turning them from their business: but the true reason was, because vast multitudes met together, which no house would contain, and therefore they assembled in the field; as Livy tells us, when the cause of Appius Claudius was heard, the people were cited to come into the *campus Martius* (Lib. vi. cap. 20).

Four hundred thousand footmen that drew sword,] That is, together with so many of the people (for there could not be so many chieftains), that came ready-armed, to do as they should be directed. I have often observed, that the armies of the Jews were all infantry, there being no horses bred in their country. There are those, who, by the *corners of the people*, understand, not their chiefs, but *all the tribes of Israel* (making the next words the explication of these), who made up this great number of four hundred thousand; because, saith Cocceius, all the people, gathered together, is like a house that hath corners. But I shall not trouble the reader with various interpretations.

Ver. 3.] They could not be ignorant of such an universal concourse of the whole nation, except themselves, nor of the cause of their meeting; but when they were told of it, would take no notice of it, being stupidly insensible of the crime that had been committed among them, or foolishly confident of their own strength; or rather, imagining their brethren would attempt nothing by war against them. The Hebrew word *dabru* (*tell*) being in the plural number, denotes, that they spake to more than one; and therefore, in all probability, not only the Levite, but the good old man (his host) and his servant were there, to give an account of the fact.

Gibeah that *belongeth* to Benjamin, I and my concubine, to lodge.

5 And the men of Gibeah rose against me, and beset the house round about upon me by night, *and* thought to have slain me: and my concubine have they forced, that she is dead.

6 And I took my concubine, and cut her in pieces, and sent her throughout all the country of the inheritance of Israel: for they have committed lewdness and folly in Israel.

7 Behold, ye *are* all children of Israel; give here your advice and counsel.

8 ¶ And all the people arose as one man, saying, We will not any of *us* go to his tent, neither will we any of *us* turn into his house.

9 But now this *shall be* the thing which we will do to Gibeah; *we will go up* by lot against it;

10 And we will take ten men of an hundred throughout all the tribes of Israel, and an hun-

dred of a thousand, and a thousand out of ten thousand, to fetch victual for the people, that they may do, when they come to Gibeah of Benjamin, according to all the folly that they have wrought in Israel.

11 So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city, knit together as one man.

12 ¶ And the tribes of Israel sent men through all the tribe of Benjamin, saying, What wickedness *is* this that is done among you?

13 Now therefore deliver *us* the men, the children of Belial, which *are* in Gibeah, that we may put them to death, and put away evil from Israel. But the children of Benjamin would not hearken to the voice of their brethren the children of Israel:

14 But the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together out of the cities unto Gibeah, to go out to battle against the children of Israel.

15 And the children of Benjamin were num-

Ver. 4.] He relates from the beginning how it was; and they confirmed it, by their testimony to the truth of it. He being called her husband, it proves she was his legal wife.

Ver. 5.] A great number of them, who were not restrained by the rest; and therefore he imputes the crime to them all. For he resolved to lose his life, as Rabbag here observes, rather than submit to their abominable desires. But though he preserved himself, he could not deliver her from them; but they abused her to death.

Ver. 6.] Such a very heinous crime, as he thought the whole nation was bound to censure.

Ver. 7.] They all detested, he presumed, such foul wickedness, and therefore desires them to consider and resolve how to punish it. This could not be debated by all the multitude; therefore some of the principal persons, I suppose, were deputed to sit in council, and hear the cause, and then report their opinion to the several tribes.

Ver. 8.] The report being made from the great council, and their opinion declared, the people all agreed to keep in a body till they saw justice done, according to their resolution.

Ver. 9.] This seems to be a popular motion, who are in love with equality, and therefore desire, by their officers, that it may be determined by lots who shall go to war, and who shall stay at home to make provision for the army; for they did not know how long they should continue abroad, and it was not easy to provide for such a multitude.

Ver. 10.] So one man took care that nine of his brethren wanted nothing; and ten took care of ninety, &c. In the whole, there were forty thousand of the four hundred thousand who went out to forage for the army. That the rest might be wholly intent upon punishing the inhabitants of Gibeah according to their desires.

Ver. 11.] Nothing could contribute more to their good success, than this unity and concord among the officers and soldiers, who all agreed to put this resolution in execution.

Ver. 12. *Scat men through all the tribe of Benjamin.*] But first it was thought prudent and just, by the rulers of the people, to send an embassy to their brethren, to desire them to hearken unto reason; and therefore there was a select number chosen out of every tribe, who went to every city of Benjamin (it is probable), to offer such terms of peace as might prevent the war upon Gibeah. Or, they sent this

message to every family in Benjamin, which were originally ten, for Benjamin had so many sons; from whom sprang such a number of people, that it made R. Solomon say, From Rachel were descended twelve tribes; for there were two sons of Joseph which made two tribes, besides these ten families of Benjamin, who were so powerful and valiant, that it puffed them up with pride, and was the cause of their ruin.

What wickedness is this] In the first place, they were ordered to represent the greatness of the crime that had been committed among them.

Ver. 13. *Deliver us the men.*] This was agreeable to the law of nations, by which the Philistines had thus demanded Samson of the Israelites, who had done them mischief (xv. 10). See Grotius, who gives a great many other examples of it out of Pausanias, Strabo, and other authors (lib. ii. De Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 21, sect. 4).

That we may put them to death.] If the Benjamites themselves would not do justice upon them. According to the direction Moses had given in this law (Deut. xiii. 5). For the sin is taken away when it is duly punished.

The children of Benjamin would not hearken] They seem to have been unanimous in the defence of this wickedness, as the rest of the tribes were in their endeavours to have it punished. For quite contrary to all their brethren, who, upon the hearing of this crime, met together, examined into it, sent messengers to desire the malefactors might be delivered to be punished, before they would enter upon a war, they most perversely refused to come to their assembly, or deliver up the malefactors, or so much as excuse the fact. much less deny it, but prepare themselves to protect such lewd criminals with all their power. One can scarce think that there were no good men left among them, but they were so few, that they had no authority; and the generality were so depraved, that they took part with the evil-doers. Perhaps they took it ill that the other tribes should meddle with the concerns of theirs; but if they had any goodness in them, they would have saved them this labour, by calling the offenders to an account themselves: which they not doing, made the whole tribe guilty of the crime of a few, and provoked God justly to give them up to pursue their own destruction.

Ver. 14.] Instead of hearkening to their brethren, or giving any reason of their refusal to satisfy their desires, they prepare themselves to fight with them.

bered at that time out of the cities twenty and six thousand men that drew sword, beside the inhabitants of Gibeah, which were numbered seven hundred chosen men.

16 Among all this people *there were* seven hundred chosen men lefthanded; every one could sling stones at an hair *breadth*, and not miss.

17 And the men of Israel, beside Benjamin, were numbered four hundred thousand men that drew sword: all these *were* men of war.

18 ¶ And the children of Israel arose, and went up to the house of God, and asked counsel of God, and said, Which of us shall go up first to the battle against the children of Benjamin? And the LORD said, Judah *shall go up* first.

19 And the children of Israel rose up in the morning, and encamped against Gibeah.

20 And the men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin; and the men of Israel put themselves in array to fight against them at Gibeah.

21 And the children of Benjamin came forth out of Gibeah, and destroyed down to the ground of the Israelites that day twenty and two thousand men.

22 And the people the men of Israel encouraged themselves, and set their battle again in array in the place where they put themselves in array the first day.

23 (And the children of Israel went up and

Ver. 15. *Twenty and six thousand men that drew sword.*] So the Chaldee expressly mentions twenty-six thousand, but the Vulgate saith only twenty-five thousand, and the LXX. of the Roman edition twenty-three thousand; but other copies have twenty-five thousand, as Josephus also hath: who imagined, I suppose, that the number of twenty-six thousand would not agree with the account which follows, of twenty-five thousand and one hundred slain in the last battle and in the pursuit of them (ver. 35, 45), and six hundred only escaped (ver. 47), which make the number of twenty-five thousand seven hundred. But they should have considered, that the two former battles could not be fought without loss on the Benjamites' side, when so many fell of the Israelites (ver. 21, 25). And the other thousand men may well be supposed to have then perished, or some of them to have been left to defend their cities, where they were afterwards slain (ver. 48).

Beside the inhabitants of Gibeah.] Who were left, it is likely (or at least part of them), to defend that city, while the rest before mentioned went out to battle.

Ver. 16.] Who could use their left hand as well as their right in any exercise (see iii. 13). Such excellent marksmen there have been in other countries; particularly in the islands called Baleares, where they were bred from children to hit a mark with a stone slung out of a sling, or else to lose their breakfast, as Strabo relates (see Bochartus, in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. iii. cap. 10). This extraordinary skill in their arms (for it is likely they handled other weapons with the like dexterity) and their natural courage emboldened them, with such a small number, to undertake a war against such a vast multitude of their brethren. Which warlike disposition of theirs was prophesied of by Jacob, when he saith, "Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf;" which is an undaunted, fearless creature (Gen. xlix. 27).

Ver. 17.] This is mentioned again, to show that they all persisted steadfast in their resolution (ver. 2, 8), to see justice done upon the men of Belial before they would return to their own home.

Ver. 18. *Went up to the house of God.*] In Shiloh, which was not far from Mizpeh, "and asked counsel of God" by *urim* and *thummim*, as they did, i. 1. The Targum hath it, They asked counsel by the *Word of the Lord*. Some of their principal persons, that is, were sent to desire God to direct them, as he was wont to do in all great affairs concerning the safety of their commonwealth. For so God himself ordained, that the high-priest should appear before him with the breastplate of judgment, to ask counsel of him for them in all their weighty concerns (see Exod. xxviii. 30; Numb. xxvii. 21).

Judah shall go up first.] The same question and answer which we read in the beginning of this book;

there being a pre-eminence, we may observe all along, given to the tribe of Judah.

Ver. 19.] These words seem to tell us, that Judah was only to lead the van (as we now speak), and stand in the front of the battle, to make the first assault; but that all the rest went up with them.

Ver. 20. *Israel went out to battle against Benjamin.*] When the Benjamites heard that Israel were encamped against Gibeah, they came to the relief of it; and the Israelites marched out of their camp to engage them.

At Gibeah.] The battle was near that city.

Ver. 21.] Those forces which were left in Gibeah for its defence issued out upon the Israelites in their rear, as their brethren fought them in the front. Since God bade them go up, it may seem strange that they should receive such a defeat. But it is to be observed, that he did not promise them success; of which the Jews give these reasons: some of them say, that they sought him imperfectly, and therefore he gave them an imperfect answer. So D. Kimchi—they did not ask him if he would favour their enterprise, as they did at the last, when they said, "Shall we go up, or shall we desist?" That is, if we shall not succeed, we will cease the war. And then a clear and full answer is returned, "Go up, for tomorrow I will deliver them into thy hand" (ver. 28). But Abarinell thinks they did not ask counsel in a due place, nor by the proper person; but by some other than Phinehas the high-priest, of whom there is no mention till the third time they went to consult the oracle (ver. 28). But a better reason is given in Pirke Eliezer, where they say, God was angry with the Israelites for their neglect of him, in suffering spiritual adultery among them, while they were very earnest to punish carnal. So they make God's answer to have been, when they inquired of him the reason of the miscarriage, "Ye are zealous against the adultery of the tribe of Benjamin, but not against the idol of Micah" (cap. 38). And, indeed, they fell early into idolatry after the death of Joshua, and the elders that survived him (as we read in the second chapter of this book), with which, though the Benjamites were defiled as well as others, yet he used them as scourges to punish the rest; intending, in due time, to take a terrible vengeance on them, both for that and all their other sins.

Ver. 22.] Exhorted one another not to be disheartened by their loss, but to renew the fight; for they knew they had a good cause, which made them the bolder to hope for victory. They were not so superstitious as to imagine the place wherein they fought was unlucky, and that with the change of it they should change their fortune (as they now speak), but confidently resolved to encounter them in the same spot of ground where they were overthrown before.

wept before the LORD until even, and asked counsel of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up again to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother? And the LORD said, Go up against him.)

24 And the children of Israel came near against the children of Benjamin the second day.

25 And Benjamin went forth against them out of Gibeah the second day, and destroyed down to the ground of the children of Israel again eighteen thousand men; all these drew the sword.

26 ¶ Then all the children of Israel, and all the people, went up, and came unto the house of God, and wept, and sat there before the LORD, and fasted that day until even, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD.

27 And the children of Israel enquired of the

LORD, (for the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days,

28 And Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days,) saying, Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother, or shall I cease? And the LORD said, Go up; for to-morrow I will deliver them into thine hand.

29 And Israel set liers in wait round about Gibeah.

30 And the children of Israel went up against the children of Benjamin on the third day, and put themselves in array against Gibeah, as at other times.

31 And the children of Benjamin went out against the people, and were drawn away from the city; and they began to smite of the people, and kill, as at other times, in the highways, of

Though there are those that think the ground was not well chosen, and that they were the more easily defeated because they fought so near Gibeah; whose name imports that it was situated on high, which gave them greater advantages to annoy the Israelites.

Ver. 23. *Wept before the Lord*] They seem to have been sensible that this was one cause of their loss, that they had not more solemnly sought the Lord, as they now do; but with greater grief for their loss than for their sin.

Asked counsel of the Lord,] The Targum here uses again the same phrase; Asked counsel "by the Word of the Lord, saying, Shall I again go up to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother?" They seem to imagine that God did not approve of their going to war among themselves, who were all brethren.

Go up against him.] Here is a leave to go up, but without any promise of success; which they should have desired.

Ver. 24. *Israel came near*] Near to Gibeah.

Ver. 25.] They had now destroyed forty thousand, which was a much greater number than the Benjamites had in their whole army.

Ver. 26. *All the people,*] Not only all the warriors, but other people.

And sat there] Upon the bare ground, as they used to do, in very great sorrow.

Fasted that day] Afflicted their souls for their sins, which they had not done before; at least not with such seriousness as now they did.

Offered burnt offerings] This had not been done before. That is, they had not made such solemn supplications to God as now they did by these offerings (see upon Lev. i. 3). And in particular, it is evident, that in ancient time burnt-offerings were offered as prayers for forgiveness of sins, that so they might obtain God's blessing (Job i. 5). And Balaam, (who no doubt understood the ancient rites of religion) offered these offerings to obtain power from God to help Balak and destroy the Israelites (Numb. xxiii. 3, 15, &c.)

And peace offerings] These were offered to acknowledge benefits received (which ought to accompany our prayers), and some of them also were a kind of prayer to God for the benefits they hoped still to receive (see upon Lev. vii. 16).

Ver. 27.] The same expression is again in the Targum, "by the Word of the Lord." They had inquired of the Lord before, but not as they ought to have done; and therefore no mention is made till now of the presence of God continuing among them. For,

confiding in the justice of their cause, and their vast forces, they seem to have made but slight and perfunctory addresses to God before they undertook the war.

Ver. 28. *Phinehas—stood before it*] *To stand before it*, is as much as to minister unto God before the ark, where he resided (see upon Deut. x. 8, xviii. 7). Some think this is here set down to direct us to the time when this war was made, which was not long after the death of Joshua (as I said before, xix. 1), otherwise Phinehas must have been now (if this were after the time of the judges) above three hundred years old, which is far beyond the age to which men then lived; for it was above so many years since he did that noble fact mentioned in Numb. xxv. Saidus Batriedes, therefore, more justly makes him to have been high-priest only twenty-five years; and the Chron. Alexandr. mentions three other priests between him and Eli, as Mr Selden observes, lib. i. De Succession. in Pontif. cap. 2.

Shall I yet again go out to battle] This is a plainer query than either of the former (as Pet. Martyr here observes); for at first they only asked what tribe should first go up, presuming the war was fit to be made (ver. 18), and the second time only whether God would have them renew the fight (ver. 23). But now they ask whether they should proceed in the war, or desist from any further attempt? that is, saith he, they leave it wholly to God's pleasure; desiring to do no more if he did not think good to accompany them with his blessing.

Go up; for to-morrow I will deliver them] Accordingly he condescended to give them a gracious answer, assuring them of a speedy victory.

Ver. 29.] This seems to intimate, that in the former onsets they had relied too much upon their numbers; but now, though they were encouraged by God himself, they grew more humble and less audacious in their enterprise, laying ambushes secretly in several places on several sides of the city.

Ver. 30.] I suppose they appeared in the same place mentioned ver. 22, as if they intended to renew the fight there. And this was, perhaps, the third day after the last battle; one having been spent in going to Shiloh, and another in fasting and prayer there. Or, by the third day may be meant the third day of battle.

Ver. 31. *Were drawn away from the city;*] The children of Israel pretending to avoid fighting, and to flee from them; as we read in the next verse they had agreed.

As at other times,] In the two former battles.

which one goeth up to the house of God, and the other to Gibeah in the field, about thirty men of Israel.

32 And the children of Benjamin said, They are smitten down before us, as at the first. But the children of Israel said, Let us flee, and draw them from the city unto the highways.

33 And all the men of Israel rose up out of their place, and put themselves in array at Baaltamar: and the liers in wait of Israel came forth out of their places, *even* out of the meadows of Gibeah.

34 And there came against Gibeah ten thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and the battle was sore: but they knew not that evil *was* near them.

35 And the LORD smote Benjamin before Israel: and the children of Israel destroyed of the Benjamites that day twenty and five thousand and an hundred men: all these drew the sword.

36 So the children of Benjamin saw that they were smitten: for the men of Israel gave place to the Benjamites, because they trusted unto the liers in wait which they had set beside Gibeah.

37 And the liers in wait hastened, and rushed upon Gibeah; and the liers in wait drew them-

selves along, and smote all the city with the edge of the sword.

38 Now there was an appointed sign between the men of Israel and the liers in wait, that they should make a great flame with smoke rise up out of the city.

39 And when the men of Israel retired in the battle, Benjamin began to smite *and* kill of the men of Israel about thirty persons; for they said, Surely they are smitten down before us, as *in* the first battle.

40 But when the flame began to arise up out of the city with a pillar of smoke, the Benjamites looked behind them, and, behold, the flame of the city ascended up to heaven.

41 And when the men of Israel turned again, the men of Benjamin were amazed: for they saw that evil was come upon them.

42 Therefore they turned *their backs* before the men of Israel unto the way of the wilderness; but the battle overtook them; and them which *came* out of the cities they destroyed in the midst of them.

43 Thus they inclosed the Benjamites round about, *and* chased them, *and* trode them down with ease over against Gibeah toward the sun-rising.

To the house of God,] That is, to Shiloh.

Gibeah in the field,] So called, to distinguish it from this Gibeah; which, as I said, stood upon a hill, as the other did in lower ground.

About thirty men of Israel,] Whom they killed in the rear of their army, as they retreated.

Ver. 32.] From this flight they presumed they should get a new victory over such cowards; but this was only a stratagem of the Israelites, to draw them away from Gibeah into a more advantageous place of setting upon them.

Ver. 33. *All the men,]* All that were posted in a certain place, whither they designed to draw the Benjamites.

Rose up out of their place,] The sight of such a body of men appearing unexpectedly ready to encounter them, must needs be a great surprise to the Benjamites, who thought of nothing but pursuing those that ran away from them.

The liers—came forth out of their places,] At the same time, they that were placed in ambush behind them, rose up to assault the city.

Out of the meadows,] Whether it be translated the meadows, or the plains, or the flat ground that lay before the city, it is not material; for the sense is the same (see *Lud. De Dieu*).

Ver. 34.] Some look upon these as a detachment (as they now speak) from the main body at Baaltamar, who marched to assault the city on one side, while the liers in wait assaulted it on the other. The Benjamites fought stoutly, but were not sensible of the danger they were in to be destroyed.

Ver. 35.] This is a general account of the fight, and of the Benjamites' loss; the particulars of both are related in the following verses.

Ver. 36. *So the children of Benjamin saw that they were smitten,]* There was an apparent overthrow given them by the Israelites: the manner of which is described from the beginning of the action of this day, to the conclusion, in the following part of this chapter.

The men of Israel gave place,] Seemed to flee before them; as was before related.

Because they trusted unto the liers in wait,] Resolving not to fight till they saw their ambush had executed what was commanded against the city.

Ver. 37. *Rushed upon Gibeah,]* Which they did with all speed, as soon as they saw the Benjamites withdrawn a good way from the city, and fell upon the inhabitants on a sudden. Having entered the city, they spread themselves into the several parts of it, and killed all they found therein.

Ver. 38.] They had agreed beforehand, that when the city was taken by the liers in wait, they should set it on fire; whereby the Israelites might know when it was time to face about and fight with the Benjamites.

Ver. 39.] Till that sign was given, they retreated as if they were beaten, and lost some men; whereby the Benjamites were deceived into secure hopes of a new victory.

Ver. 40.] It is likely the Israelites shouted when they turned about to fall upon the Benjamites; which made them look back to see what unexpected supplies they had received.

Ver. 41. *The men of Benjamin were amazed,]* At this sudden change from flight to fighting.

They saw that evil was come upon them,] They being beset by the Israelites both behind and before.

Ver. 42. *They turned their backs before the men of Israel,]* Whom they had pursued; but now ran away from them. For they were beset on all other sides.

The battle overtook them,] That is, the men of war pursued them so closely that they could not escape.

Them which came out of the cities they destroyed,] Or, "they that came out of the cities," viz. of Israel, helped to cut them off.

Ver. 43.] For they made no resistance, but only sought where they might flee for safety. There is another translation of the latter part of this verse in the margin of our Bibles, with which I shall not trouble the reader, because it makes no alteration in the sense, which is to show where the greatest slaughter of them was made.

44 And there fell of Benjamin eighteen thousand men; all these *were* men of valour.

45 And they turned and fled toward the wilderness unto the rock of Rimmon: and they gleaned of them in the highways five thousand men; and pursued hard after them unto Gidom, and slew two thousand men of them.

46 So that all which fell that day of Benjamin were twenty and five thousand men that

Ver. 44. *There fell of Benjamin eighteen thousand men;* In the wilderness, eastward of Gibeah.

Men of valour.] Stout soldiers, as appears by the two defeats they had given to the numerous army of the Israelites.

Ver. 45.] The remainder of the army of Benjamin endeavoured to save themselves, by flying to a strong inaccessible place which was in that wilderness. They could not flee thither in a body, but scattered up and down in the highway; where they picked up five thousand more, and slew them. And following them very close, as far as to a place called Gidom, they killed two thousand more.

Ver. 46. *Twenty and five thousand men*] For they slew in the first conflict eighteen thousand; and in several parties, as they fled towards the rock Rimmon, seven thousand more, which make up this sum (see ver. 15).

Men of valour.] Who would not surrender themselves, but chose rather to be killed.

Ver. 47.] These seem to have turned into some nearer way unto the stronghold than the rest: or, being with the foremost, and more nimble than others (for it was accounted a rare quality in a soldier to be

drew the sword; and these *were* men of valour.

47 But six hundred men turned and fled to the wilderness unto the rock Rimmon, and abode in the rock Rimmon four months.

48 And the men of Israel turned again upon the children of Benjamin, and smote them with the edge of the sword, as well the men of *every* city, as the beast, and all that came to hand: also they set on fire all the cities that they came to.

swift of foot), got thither before the Israelites could overtake them. From whence they durst not adventure to stir, unless it were to fetch provisions; which they might easily do, the rage of the Israelites being in a little time slaked by so great a destruction, and turned into compassion.

Ver. 48. *The men of Israel turned again upon—Benjamin,*] Left their pursuit of them in the wilderness, and turned towards the country of Benjamin.

Smote—as well the men of every city, as the beast,] Those before mentioned were “men that drew the sword;” that is, soldiers. But there were a great many husbandmen, and shepherds, and others, whom in their fury they also slew.

All that came to hand;] Even women and children. For they had devoted to destruction all that came not up to Mizpeh, when they were summoned (xxi. 5), which none of the Benjamites did; for which reason they slew the men, women, and children, of Jabesh-gilead (xxi. 10).

They set on fire all the cities] This was as terrible an execution, as if they had been gross idolaters, whom they were commanded thus to punish (see Deut. xiii. 15, 16).

CHAPTER XXI.

1 *The people bewail the desolation of Benjamin.* 8 *By the destruction of Jabesh-gilead they provide them four hundred wives.* 16 *They advise them to surprise the virgins that danced at Shiloh.*

1 Now the men of Israel had sworn in Mizpeh, saying, There shall not any of us give his daughter unto Benjamin to wife.

2 And the people came to the house of God, and abode there till even before God, and lifted up their voices, and wept sore;

3 And said, O LORD God of Israel, why is this come to pass in Israel, that there should be to day one tribe lacking in Israel?

4 And it came to pass on the morrow, that the people rose early, and built there an altar, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings.

CHAP. XXI.

Ver. 1. *The men of Israel had sworn in Mizpeh,*] When they first assembled there, before they began the war against Benjamin (xx. 1, &c.).

There shall not any of us give his daughter unto Benjamin to wife.] They did not think of destroying the whole tribe when they took this oath; but only obliged themselves not to marry with them, no more than with the seven wicked nations of Canaan, because they refused to punish that villainous fact which had been committed among them, and resolved to defend the malefactors. This made the Israelites to abominate them, as people with whom it was not fit to contract an affinity.

Ver. 2. *To the house of God,*] Went up to Shiloh. *Lifted up their voices and wept sore;*] Some days after their fury was over, and they coolly considered what they had done in the heat of war, their joy and triumph for their victory was turned into mourning and lamentation for the loss of so many of their brethren; and instead of a feast, they seem to have kept a fast; as they did before the last battle (xx. 26).

Ver. 3.] This is an usual way of expressing great grief, wherewith they bewail the loss of a whole tribe, which they saw no means how to repair, because there were no women left in the tribe of Benjamin, with whom they in the rock of Rimmon might marry; and they had sworn that none of the other tribes should give their daughters to them; so that they must either marry with strange people, which was against the law, or remain unmarried, whereby the tribe would be extinct. They seem also to lament their own excessive wrath; for why should the women be destroyed with the men, who had no share in the management of public affairs; nor could be supposed guilty of refusing to make satisfaction for the injury done to the Levite's concubine?

Ver. 4. *Built there an altar,*] There seems to have been no need of this, there being one settled altar at the house of God, according to the law of Moses; and then it was unlawful to build another. But some think it was gone to decay in those bad times: which is very improbable, for they lately offered sacrifices there (xx. 26). And the daily sacrifice, no doubt, was continued in Israel, either to the Lord, or the

5 And the children of Israel said, Who is *there* among all the tribes of Israel that came not up with the congregation unto the LORD? For they had made a great oath concerning him that came not up to the LORD to Mizpeh, saying, He shall surely be put to death.

6 And the children of Israel repented them for Benjamin their brother, and said, There is one tribe cut off from Israel this day.

7 How shall we do for wives for them that remain, seeing we have sworn by the LORD that we will not give them of our daughters to wives?

8 ¶ And they said, What one *is there* of the tribes of Israel that came not up to Mizpeh to the LORD? And, behold, there came none to the camp from Jabesh-gilead to the assembly.

9 For the people were numbered, and, behold, *there were* none of the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead there.

other gods they joined with him. It is more likely, therefore, that they erected a new altar upon this present occasion, when such a multitude of sacrifices were to be offered by all the people of Israel, that the ordinary altar was not sufficient to contain them. Thus Solomon did when he dedicated the temple, 1 Kings viii. 64. And by the direction of God, it was frequently done in other places; and not only at the house of God, as by Samuel, 1 Sam. vii. xi. xiv., and David, 2 Sam. xxiv., and Elijah, 1 Kings xviii.

Offered burnt offerings] As they had done before the last battle. For God having made them victorious, they thanked him for it, and prayed him to continue his mercy to them; particularly begging his direction, it is probable, in the present strait wherein they were, about restoring the tribe of Benjamin.

Ver. 5.] When summons went out to call them together, under a great penalty upon those who absented themselves (see xx. 1). This great oath was in the nature of a *cherem*, as the Hebrews call it; whereby it was lawful for the *whole congregation* to devote those to destruction, who did not obey public orders in time of war, or great distress (see upon Lev. xxvii. 29). This oath, I take it, was made by the great assembly of their rulers (called *the whole congregation*) before they summoned the people to Mizpeh; as the other oath (mentioned ver. 1), was made after the people were come thither, upon the Benjamites' refusal to do justice.

Ver. 6.] They still continued to lament their too great severity against Benjamin, and begin to consult how to repair the breach they had made.

Ver. 7. *By the Lord*] The Targum continues its usual style "by the Word of the Lord."

We will not give them of our daughters to wives?] This was the question debated in their common council (see ver. 16), how to bring themselves out of this difficulty, into which they were brought by their oath, which, being rashly made, it might be thought ought not to be kept. But they had such a reverence to a solemn oath, that they resolved to do all that was possible to find a way to keep their oath, and yet not to let the Benjamites be without wives.

Ver. 8.] Some in the council proposed to make an inquiry into all their tribes, whether they could find any that had not regarded the other oath they had made (ver. 5). And it appeared (as the next words tell us) that, "Behold, there came none to the camp from Jabesh-gilead to the assembly."

Ver. 9.] A rare instance of piety, that none of the

10 And the congregation sent thither twelve thousand men of the valiantest, and commanded them, saying, Go and smite the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead with the edge of the sword, with the women and the children.

11 And this *is* the thing that ye shall do, Ye shall utterly destroy every male, and every woman that hath lain by man.

12 And they found among the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead four hundred young virgins, that had known no man by lying with any male: and they brought them unto the camp to Shiloh, which *is* in the land of Canaan.

13 And the whole congregation sent *some* to speak to the children of Benjamin that *were* in the rock Rimmon, and to call peaceably unto them.

14 And Benjamin came again at that time; and they gave them wives which they had saved alive of the women of Jabesh-gilead: and yet so they sufficed them not.

whole congregation of Israel (who were now numbered) departed home, till they had been at the house of God, to give thanks for the victory he had given them.

Ver. 10. *The congregation sent thither twelve thousand men*] This was the first result of their consultations.

Go and smite the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead] This was a city on the other side of Jordan, in the tribe of Manasseh; who were ordered to be slain, as public enemies, because they had not obeyed the order of the whole congregation; and, by refusing to join with them against the Benjamites, had made themselves partakers of their crimes.

With the women and the children.] In this, their anger transported them again beyond reason; for these had not offended. And if it be said they were all under the *cherem*, I do not see how they could justify their sparing all virgins, as we find they did by a public decree; unless we suppose, that God (before whom they now were) dispensed in this case, because of the public necessity.

Ver. 11.] The Hebrew doctors here raise a difficult question, as they account it, how they could know those who had lain with man, from those that had not. D. Kimchi fancies, that all the women were ordered to pass before the ark, and they who were stopped there, and could go no further, were taken for virgins. Others, that they passed before the crown of the high-priest, and they who had known a man turned yellow or pale. But these are idle conceits, and I will mention no more of them, which are still more extravagant; when the plain account is, that they slew such as were not commonly reputed to be virgins, and saved those that were (see Wagenseil, in his confutation of Lipman's *Carmen Memoriali*, p. 400).

Ver. 12. *They found—four hundred young virgins,—and they brought them unto the camp to Shiloh.*] Which shows, that the making them pass before the ark is a foolish conceit; for they were looked upon as virgins before they came to Shiloh, where the ark was.

In the land of Canaan.] Which the city of Jabesh-gilead was not; but in the land taken from the two kings of the Amorites, Sihon and Og.

Ver. 13.] To give them the public faith, that they might safely return, and be received kindly by the Israelites.

Ver. 14. *Benjamin came again*] All the six hundred men, who had saved themselves in that fortress.

15 And the people repented them for Benjamin, because that the LORD had made a breach in the tribes of Israel.

16 ¶ Then the elders of the congregation said, How shall we do for wives for them that remain, seeing the women are destroyed out of Benjamin?

17 And they said, *There must be an inheritance for them that be escaped of Benjamin, that a tribe be not destroyed out of Israel.*

18 Howbeit we may not give them wives of our daughters: for the children of Israel have sworn, saying, Cursed be he that giveth a wife to Benjamin.

They gave them wives,] Which they thought they might lawfully do, notwithstanding their oath, because it obliged those only who were present in the assembly where it was made, not the absent, as they of Jabesh-gilead were.

Sufficed them not.] For still two hundred wanted wives.

Ver. 15.] This gave occasion to a new lamentation, whereby they testified to the Benjamites how sorry they were for what had been done. For the punishment of their crime was approved by God, though they executed it with too much severity.

Ver. 16.] This made them enter into a new deliberation in the council of the elders, how to get wives for the two hundred men remaining, since there were none in the tribe of Benjamin, and no more to be found among themselves, without breaking their oath.

Ver. 17. These words, "there must be," are not in the Hebrew, where the words run thus, "The inheritance of them that are escaped, is for Benjamin," &c. That is, the children of Benjamin must have that part of the country which was given them by the Divine lot for their inheritance, and we must not give it to any other persons; for then a tribe would be lost in Israel. This was all that some in the council said, who proposed no means whereby this tribe should be restored, but only asserted it must be done, leaving others to consider how.

Ver. 18.] These persons, who spake next in the council, only increased the difficulty, by putting them in mind not to think to help their brethren by breaking their oath.

Ver. 19. *Then they said,]* Then some rose up in the council, after a long debate, and gave the following advice.

There is a feast of the Lord in Shiloh yearly] All the three great festivals were to be observed in the place where God settled his habitation, which was now in Shiloh, where all the people assembled to praise God, and to feast one with another. And though some think the feast of the passover to be here meant, yet it is more commonly, and with more reason, concluded, to be the feast of tabernacles, which was a time of exceeding great joy, because they had newly gathered their vintage; and then they dwelt in booths, behind which the Benjamites might conveniently lurk, and watch their opportunity to carry away the virgins. This feast of tabernacles, also, was the only season wherein the Jewish virgins were allowed to dance.

On the north side of Beth-el,] This is not a description of Shiloh, whose situation was better known than any other (being the place where all Israel went to worship), but of the place where they met to dance, which was not in the city, but in the fields, where they had more liberty, and a freer air.

On the east side of the highway that goeth up from Beth-el to Shechem,] This place is thus particularly

19 Then they said, Behold, *there is a feast of the LORD in Shiloh yearly in a place which is on the north side of Beth-el, on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Beth-el to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah.*

20 Therefore they commanded the children of Benjamin, saying, Go and lie in wait in the vineyards;

21 And see, and, behold, if the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in dances, then come ye out of the vineyards, and catch you every man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin.

described, that the Benjamites might know exactly where they might most advantageously lie concealed, to obtain their purpose.

Ver. 20. *They commanded the children of Benjamin,]* They had some authority who made this order; and Josephus calls them the *γερονσια*, the "senate of the elders," whom Bertram makes bold to call the Seventy, as if the great Sanhedrin (as the Jews call them) was now settled: for I have shown elsewhere that is not probable, though it be certain, from ver. 16, that there were some chief persons in every tribe, whom the people obeyed when there was no judge in Israel, who all seem to have been assembled on this occasion.

Go and lie in wait in the vineyards,] Which were nigh to the place before mentioned, and, it is likely, encompassed the place where they danced.

Ver. 21. *If the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance]* As they supposed they would, because it was the custom to express their joy in this manner: and though the women were not bound to come up to these solemn feasts, but only the men, yet some devout women did voluntarily frequent them, as we learn from the story of Habbah. And they that lived at Shiloh, and the places adjacent, no doubt, observed such times, as the men did, being near to the house of God; though it must be confessed, that parents were not wont to bring young virgins unto these feasts.

Then come ye out] When they saw them so engaged.

The daughters of Shiloh,] By "the daughters of Shiloh," perhaps, are not meant only such as lived in that city, but thereabouts, who all met on this occasion.

Go to the land of Benjamin.]) Carry them away to your own country; which they might the more easily do, because men and women did not, in those days, dance together, but women by themselves. Thus they thought they kept their oath, because they did not give them wives, but only suffered them to take them, and to keep them when they had them. The great Grotius endeavours to acquit them of violating their oath by this rule, That the signification of an oath is not to be extended, *ultra receptum loquendi morem*, "beyond the received manner of speaking;" therefore they were not perjured, who, when they had sworn not to give wives to the Benjamites, permitted those who were stolen to live with those that carried them away. *Aliud enim est dare; aliud amissum non repetere:* "For it is one thing to give, another not to demand that which is taken away not to be restored" (see lib. ii. *De Jure Belli et Pacis*, cap. 13, sect. 5). But this seems to me to be far from justifying them in this matter; for they did not merely permit them to take these virgins, but advise and direct, nay, order and command (as the word is in the foregoing verse), to take and carry them away. And, therefore, what Josephus saith to salve this business

22 And it shall be, when their fathers or their brethren come unto us to complain, that we will say unto them, Be favourable unto them for our sakes: because we reserved not to each man his wife in the war: for ye did not give unto them at this time, *that ye should be guilty.*

23 And the children of Benjamin did so, and took *them* wives, according to their number, of them that danced, whom they caught: and they

went and returned unto their inheritance, and repaired the cities, and dwelt in them.

24 And the children of Israel departed thence at that time, every man to his tribe and to his family, and they went out from thence every man to his inheritance.

25 In those days *there was* no king in Israel: every man did *that which was* right in his own eyes.

is not true, that it was done, οὐτε προσηγομένω οὐτε παλινορω, "the Israelites neither exhorting to it, nor prohibiting it."

Ver. 22. *When their fathers or their brethren*] Any of their nearest kindred.

Come unto us to complain.] Desiring them to do them right; which shows they were men of authority.

Be favourable unto them for our sakes.] Do not prosecute them for what they have done, because it was by our advice, who did not know otherwise how to provide them with wives.

Because we reserved not to each man his wife] If there be any fault it is ours, whose rage carried the slaughter too far, and left no women to preserve their tribe. They advise them therefore to let their anger cease now (as Josephus speaks), because they had let it break out ἀμείρω, "beyond all bounds" already.

For ye did not give unto them at this time, that ye should be guilty.] They put them in mind, that if there was any guilt, it was not in them that had kept their oath, and did not give wives to the Benjamites, nor could help their taking them. How Josephus came here to add to this speech, that they said they would tell them, they should have taken care to set a better guard upon their daughters, I cannot imagine; for, at such time of mirth, they always thought themselves secure from danger.

Ver. 23. *Benjamin did so, and took them wives according to their number,*] That is, they carried away two hundred, for so many they wanted. With this is commonly compared, by interpreters, the rape of the Sabine Virgins by Romulus: but there was a great deal of difference; for those were strangers, over whom Romulus had no power, and therefore was the cause of a war; but these were Israelites, subject to the authority of the elders, and was done to make peace and quiet. Though the truth is, the elders, in advising this, did wrong to those parents, whose children were taken away without their consent; but this they thought better than directly breaking their oath, or letting the tribe perish; for the preservation of which they were constrained to do some hard things: but in one thing they did very well, that they permitted them to take wives only "according to their number;" that is, every man a wife, and no more. So that though polygamy was tolerated, yet they did not advise or countenance it; no, not for the more speedy restitution of a tribe. It might happen, some of these young virgins were heresses, and so their estates would be translated into another tribe, but the Jews say, that law against marrying into another tribe, and inheriting land in another tribe, did not belong to future ages, but only to that wherein

the division of the land was made (see our great Selden, De Success. ad Leges Hebr. cap. 18, where he alleges this very example of it, fol. 59).

Unto their inheritance.] In the land of Benjamin.

Repaired their cities.] And tilled their land, as Josephus adds; so that in time this tribe was restored, εἰς πρότερον εὐδαιμονίαν, "to its former flourishing condition."

Ver. 24.] To look after his own private affairs, the public concerns being now at an end.

Ver. 25. *In those days there was no king in Israel.*] There were elders (ver. 16), who had some authority, and there was a high-priest (xx. 28); yet for want of a king (as our great primate Usher observes in his book of the Power of the Prince) all things went to wreck, and were in great confusion: and by a king, as Corn. Bertram observes (De Rep. Jud. cap. 9), is meant a supreme governor, such as Moses and Joshua were, and after them the judges: so this word is used Deut. xxxiii. 5. The meaning of these words therefore is, That in those days there were none who had so much power over all the Israelites as to keep them in order, and not only admonish them of their duty, but make all their tribes observe it, by punishing all public wrongs, and all whoredoms, and idolatries: and, consequently, there was no great Sanhedrin, as the Jews speak of in future times, which they would fain find in all ages foregoing.

Every man did that which was right in his own eyes.] For want of such a supreme authority, every tribe, and every city,—nay, which is more, every private man (as Bertram there glosses), committed many horrid things, which were not publicly punished. This was the cause of Micah's idolatry, as was noted before (xvii. 6), and of the Benjamites' filthiness (xix. 1), and now of these enormous things done by all the Israelites, in killing all the Benjamites without distinction, when the law required the children should not suffer for their parents' offence; in binding themselves by such a rash oath, to give them none of their daughters to be their wives; in killing all the women of Jabesh-gilead, who were not virgins; and now in permitting, nay, ordering this rape, rather than break a rash oath; which should teach men to be thankful for that authority which is over them, to preserve them from suchlike enormities; for which end (as the same primate there observes) the custom was among the ancient Persians, to let the people loose to do what they list, for five days after their king died, that, by the disorders which were then committed, they might see the necessity of having a king to govern them, and when they had one, to be more obedient to him.

THE

BOOK OF RUTH.

THIS book is a kind of appendix to the book of Judges, and a manuduction to the book of Samuel; and therefore fitly placed between them. It hath its title from the person whose story is here principally related; which indeed is wonderful. For she left her own country, kindred, and relations, which the Jews say (though I confess without any good proof of it) were not only honourable, but royal, out of her great affection to her mother-in-law, and her religion; to live with her in the land of Israel, in a poor and mean condition. It is very probable, the same person who wrote the book of Judges was the author of this also, viz., Samuel; who, by adding this to the end of that book, brought down the history unto his own times; and gave us withal the genealogy of David, from Pharez the son of Judah, that it might evidently appear Christ sprang out of that tribe, according to Jacob's prophecy, Gen. xlix. 10, but by a gentile woman (that all nations might hope in his mercy), full of faith, and of earnest desire to enter into that family; which made her despise the pride of her own nation, and choose to live despicably among the people of God.

CHAPTER I.

1 *Elimelech driven by famine into Moab, dieth there.* 4 *Mahlon and Chilion, having married wives of Moab, die also.* 6 *Naomi returning homeward,* 8 *dissuadeth her two daughters in law from going with her.* 14 *Orpah leaveth her, but Ruth, with great constancy accompanieth her.* 19 *They two come to Beth-lehem, where they are gladly received.*

1 Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Beth-lehem-judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.

2 And the name of the man was Elimelech,

and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Beth-lehem-judah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there.

3 And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons.

CHAP. I.

Ver. 1. *In the days when the judges ruled,*] These words direct us to the time when the things contained in this book fell out, though we cannot certainly tell what judges then ruled. David Ganz will have it to have been in the days of Ibzan, mentioned Judges xii. 8, because he was the only judge born at Beth-lehem; from whence he concludes him to have been the same with Boaz. But that is so weak a reason, that Guil. Vorstius, in his annotations upon him, thinks rather it was in the days of Deborah and Barak. I shall not mention his arguments, there being a great man of our own (the most learned Usher), who places this history in the times preceding; either in the days of Ehud, when the Moabites oppressed Israel, or rather of Shamgar, who succeeded him. Which is the opinion likewise of Du Pin, who takes these things to have been done about twenty-eight years after the death of Joshua (see Usseri Chronol. Sacra, par. i. cap. 12).

There was a famine] This inclines me to think these things came to pass in the days of Gideon, for that is the only time that we read of a famine in the days of the judges; when the Midianites, Amalekites, and the children of the east, "came and destroyed the increase of the earth, and left no sustenance for Israel, nor for their cattle" (Judg. vi. 3, 4).

Beth-lehem-judah] There were two Beth-lehems, as I have often noted: one in the land of Judah, the

other in the tribe of Zebulun (Josh. xix. 15). They had their name from the great fruitfulness of the place where they were situated; which argues this famine to have been very sore, that even in these places there was a scarcity of provision.

He, and his wife, and his two sons.] He carried his whole family with him into the neighbouring country of Moab, which was near to the land of Judah, at the end of the Salt sea; and it seems had now plenty in it, when the land of Israel was famished.

Ver. 2. *Elimelech.*] Who, if we may believe many of the Jewish doctors, was a noble and potent person in his country.

Naomi.] They make her also of a noble extraction, she being (as the Talmudists say in Baba Bathan) the niece of Naasson, prince of the tribe of Judah, and daughter of his brother Salmon.

Ephrathites] The name of Ephrathites is given them, because they were not only born, but, I suppose, bred up, and lived in the same place with their father; which, from its great fruitfulness, was called Ephrata, as well as Beth-lehem.

And continued there.] Settled their habitation in that country, which had not been lawful, unless it had been in a public calamity, or some great private necessity, as Maimonides observes (see Guil. Schickard, in his Mischpat Hammelech, cap. 3, theor. 10).

Ver. 3.] She a widow, and they fatherless. This, Josephus thinks, was after he had been there ten

4 And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years.

5 And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.

6 ¶ Then she arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread.

7 Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters in law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah.

8 And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, Go, return each to her mother's house: the Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me.

9 The Lord grant you that ye may find rest,

each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept.

10 And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people.

11 And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?

12 Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should have an husband also to night, and should also bear sons;

13 Would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands? nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes, that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me.

14 And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her.

years; but the most, if not all others, think he died a little after he came into this country.

Ver. 4. *They took them wives of the women of Moab;*] Which was not lawful, unless they had first become proselytes to the Jewish religion; as Aben Ezra concludes they were, from those very words from whence others prove the contrary, ver. 15, where it is said, "Orpah returned unto her people, and unto her gods." This is a testimony, saith he, that she had been converted to Judaism. But the Chaldee paraphrast is quite of another opinion, and saith they transgressed the commandment of the Lord, by taking to them strange wives. And so the Midrasch upon Ruth, as Buxtorf observes in his book *De Sponsalibus et Divortijs*, sect. 31.

Orpah, and—Ruth;] Who do not seem to have been of such great quality, as the Talmudists fancy, but of the common rank; otherwise they would not have been bestowed upon strangers.

Dwelled there about ten years.] After their marriage.

Ver. 5. *Mahlon and Chilion died*] For their days were cut short, saith the Chaldee paraphrast, because they married strange women; and for the same reason (if it be true) they may be thought to have died without issue, for there is not the least intimation that either of them had any.

The woman was left] In a very melancholy condition, being in a country of strangers.

Ver. 6. *She arose with her daughters in law.*] She packed up her goods, and made herself ready to leave the country of Moab, and her daughters accompanied her, it being the custom to conduct those whom they loved some part of their way when they went a long journey.

She had heard in the country of Moab how that the Lord had visited his people.] They were such near neighbours, that they soon had intelligence in Moab what was done in the land of Israel.

Ver. 7. *She went forth*] The necessity which forced her thither no longer remaining.

And her two daughters in law] Who loved her as their own mother.

To return unto the land of Judah.] This relates unto Naomi, for her daughters had never been there.

Ver. 8.] When they were come to the borders of the country of Moab, she said the following words. She desires them to accompany her no further, but go back to their own home. And it seems it was usual in Moab, as well as in Israel, for widows to

dwell with their parents. And the women here also had apartments distinct from the men, where the daughters lived with their mothers, as the sons with their father. She dismissed them with her blessing, praying God would be as good to them as they had been good wives to their husbands, and good daughters to her.

Ver. 9. *The Lord grant you that ye may find rest.*] And that they might be happily settled in houses of their own, with good husbands; whom she wishes they might long enjoy in peace and quietness.

She kissed them;] As was usual, when friends took their leave one of another, or when they met together.

They lifted up their voice, and wept.] Were all extremely grieved to think of parting.

Ver. 10.] They resolved to accompany her to Bethlehem.

Ver. 11.] This shows, that the custom of men's marrying their brother's widow, when he left no issue (which was before the law of Moses, Gen. xxxviii.) was so ancient, that it was derived into other countries, who were not descended from Abraham.

Ver. 12, 13. *Would ye tarry for them till they were grown?*] She persists in the same argument, and presses it home, that she was too old to marry, and they too young not to marry again: but should she marry immediately, and be sure she should have children, nay, sons, it would be unreasonable for them to wait till they were fit to be their husbands.

It grieveth me much for your sakes.] She would have them by no means think of any such thing; and likewise represents to them what a mean condition God had reduced her unto, which was the more heavy, because she was able to do nothing for them.

Ver. 14. *They lifted up their voice.*] It gave them great trouble, whether they thought of going with her, or of parting from her.

Orpah kissed her mother in law;] Took her leave of her. The Jews observe three sorts of kisses, which were usual and commendable amongst them, all others being wanton: one in token of reverence to any person's dignity (1 Sam. x. 1); a second at the meeting of friends (Exod. iv. 27); a third at their parting, of which they give this as an example. Unto which R. Tanchuma adds a fourth, saluting of near relations (Gen. xxix. 11), which is, in a manner, the same with the second. Drusius thinks there was another, which

15 And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister in law.

16 And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:

17 Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.

18 When she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.

19 ¶ So they two went until they came to

Beth-lehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Beth-lehem, that all the city was moved about them, and they said, Is this Naomi?

20 And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.

21 I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?

22 So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter in law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Beth-lehem in the beginning of barley harvest.

he calls the *kiss of prayer*, which was in use in the primitive church, and taken, he thinks, from the Jews: but Buxtorf saith, he can find no such thing in all their books (see Lex. Talmud. in the word *Nesikah*, fol. 1408).

Ruth clave unto her.] Would not part from her, but steadfastly resolved to go with her to her own country.

Ver. 15. *Thy sister in law is gone back—unto her gods.*] The principal of which was Chemosh, as we read Numb. xxi. 29; 1 Kings xi. 7. By this it appears, Orpah was not made a proselyte to the Jewish religion, but still continued to worship the gods of her country. Yet this did not make such a difference in the family (as diverse religions commonly do now), but that she loved her husband entirely, and had a great affection to his mother, even after his death.

Return thou] This may seem strange, that she should, in effect, press her to go and worship idols; but her intention was to try her, and to persuade her to do nothing rashly, especially not to change her religion, without due consideration, and weighing well her reasons for it: for if she had been led merely by her affection to her, to embrace also her religion, she might have revolted from it when she died, or when she saw her condition very desolate.

Ver. 16.] Be content, that is, with any condition in her company. This is a resolution to embrace the Jewish religion entirely, so as to be incorporated with the Israelites, as if she had been a native among them.

Ver. 17.] She resolves that nothing but death shall make a separation between them, and not that neither, wholly, for she would lie by her in the same sepulchre: and this she confirms with an oath, or solemn imprecation upon herself, that worse might befall her than any thing Naomi could suffer, if she did not faithfully adhere to her: which form of speech we find afterward in many places (1 Sam. iii. 17, xiv. 44, xx. 13, 2 Sam. iii. 9, 35, &c.).

Ver. 18.] She said not a word more to her of her leaving her, when she saw she had a settled and well-grounded resolution to become a proselyte to the true religion. So the Chaldee paraphrast explains it, representing Naomi as declaring to her at large, that there was a great number of precepts (no less than six hundred and thirteen) to be observed by those who would be of her religion. In particular, the rest of the Sabbath, to which they were obliged, and to worship one God alone, &c. Unto all which she answered, "Whatsoever thy people observe, I will do the same, as if I had been one of them from the beginning."

Ver. 19.] Which shows they were but in a mean condition, having no servant to wait on them, nor an ass to carry them. It being reported by them who knew Naomi that she was returned, all the people ran out of their houses to see her, and beholding a great change in her garb and countenance, they could scarcely believe it was she. But the Arabic and Syriac versions take it quite otherwise, "that all the city rejoiced, and said, This is Naomi." And the LXX. whom they follow, to the same purpose, ἡ πόλις ἠγάλλετο, "the city rang" with the news, and they asked if this were Naomi; for several had never seen her before, or did not remember her, but had only heard much of her.

Ver. 20. *Call me not Naomi, call me Mara.*] She told them her old name was not suitable to her present condition, which required she should rather be called by a contrary; from whence some gather, that Naomi was not the name given her at first by her parents, but a popular name commonly given her by her neighbours, because of her comely presence and courteous behaviour.

The Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.] This is the reason of the new name of Mara, whereby she would be called, which signifies *bitter*. Josephus saith that Naomi, in their language, signifies ευτυχία, "prosperity," and Mara δόνηρον, "grief and pain."

Ver. 21.] *I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty.*] The Targum takes this to relate unto her husband and children, with whom she went out to the country of Moab, which now were taken away from her; but it is reasonable to extend it to the estate they carried along with them for their support in a strange country, where they lived to spend it all.

Seeing the Lord hath testified against me.] God is said to testify against any persons when he passes sentence upon them, and judges them, by sending afflictions upon them; at which Naomi doth not murmur, but only humbly acknowledges God had inflicted grievous punishments upon her, which she thought testified his displeasure.

Ver. 22.] As much as to say, This is a brief account of Naomi's return to her own country, together with her daughter-in-law, who would accompany her. The time of their return is also noted, which was about the passover; for after the offering of the sheaf, mentioned Lev. xxiii. 10, 11, on the second day of unleavened bread, they began to cut barley: whence the Chaldee paraphrast thus explains these words, "They came to Beth-lehem in the entrance of the passover; and on that day the children of Israel began to mow the sheaf that was to be waved, which was of barley."

CHAPTER II.

1 *Ruth gleaneth in the fields of Boaz.* 4 *Boaz taking knowledge of her, 8 sheweth her great favour.* 18 *That which she got, she carrieth to Naomi.*

1 AND Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz.

2 AND Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter.

3 AND she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech.

4 ¶ And, behold, Boaz came from Beth-lehem, and said unto the reapers, The Lord be

with you. And they answered him, The Lord bless thee.

5 THEN said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this?

6 AND the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab:

7 AND she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: so she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house.

8 THEN said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearst thou

CHAP. II.

Ver. 1. *A mighty man of wealth.*] So *gibbor chail* is well translated; for riches make men mighty and powerful. Though the Chaldee would have it signify a man "mighty in the law," by which they do not mean a man of great wisdom and goodness, but, as that paraphrast explains it upon 1 Chron. iv. 22, 23, after the manner of the Jews (whose heads are full of their Academies and Sanhedrins), he was the *rab* or chief ruler of the academy of wise men at Beth-lehem.

Boaz.] Whose ancestors are mentioned in the conclusion of this book, and his descendants also, who lived at Beth-lehem as he did.

Ver. 2. *Let me now go to the field.*] This is a great argument of her modesty and dutiful affection to her mother-in-law, that she would not go any whither, no, not to earn something for their support, without her leave.

After him in whose sight I shall find grace.] Either she did not know that poor strangers had a right to glean, as well as the poor of Israel (Lev. xix. 9, 10), or out of her great piety she would not challenge it as a right, but as a favour, which she would thankfully acknowledge.

Go, my daughter.] This is a sign of Naomi's low condition, otherwise she would not have suffered her to go and seek for a supply of their needs among the poorest sort of people.

Ver. 3. *She went.*] Into a field, where she saw some reapers.

Gleaned in the field after the reapers.] Gathered up the scattered ears of corn, which fell from them, and were left behind them.

Her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz.] By the direction of God's good providence (not by any man's guidance) she came into a piece of ground which belonged to the great man before mentioned.

Ver. 4. *Boaz came from Beth-lehem.*] It is remarkable, that he followed her into the same field.

The Lord be with you.] Such was the piety of ancient times, that they were wont to pray God to prosper the honest labours of those that they saw employed, who made a return of the like prayers for them, which the gentiles themselves practised, especially in harvest-time, which they would not begin, by putting the sickle into the corn, till Ceres had been invoked, as Virgil informs us in his *Georgics*, lib. i. ver. 347, 348. This is the first time that we meet

with this religious salutation, "The Lord be with you;" which we afterward find was familiar, and was continued even to our Saviour's days, when the angel saluted the blessed Virgin after this manner (Luke i. 28).

Ver. 5. *Then said Boaz unto his servant*] To see them do their work, and that they had provision fit for them; and, it is likely, to pay them their wages. Josephus calls him *ἀρχόντος*, and the Chaldee calls him *rab*, the master, ruler, or governor of the reapers.

Whose damsel is this?] Either she did not appear, when all the city came to see Naomi; or Boaz did not take so much notice of her, as to know her again.

Ver. 6.] He did not know her name, perhaps, but he describes her as a stranger, that, out of love to her mother-in-law, and her religion, had left her own country, and come to dwell among the Israelites. So the Chaldee paraphrast makes him answer, "She is become a proselyte."

Ver. 7. *Let me glean*] What she might have demanded by the law as her right, she asks as a courtesy, which, no doubt, moved the man to be the more obliging to such a modest and well-bred woman.

So she came.] That is, he admitted her; for, perhaps, they were not bound to let the poor come immediately into the fields, as soon as the reapers had cut down the corn, and bound it up in sheaves, but when it was carried off. They might choose also, among the poor, whom they thought most worthy, or most necessitous.

Hath continued even from the morning until now.] That is, all the day; for I suppose it was in the afternoon when the heat of the day was over, that Boaz came to visit his reapers. So the servant describes her as a very diligent woman, who had not intermitted her labour, but only for a little time, to eat, or to rest herself.

That she tarried a little in the house.] The meaning is, she went and stayed awhile in the tent which was pitched in the field, for such as were weary to refresh themselves; or for other necessary occasions. So Aben Ezra expounds the word *house*; in which some think Boaz found her resting herself, and wondering to see a stranger there, inquired who she was.

Ver. 8. *Hearst thou not, my daughter?*] A form of speech calling for attention to what is said.

Go not to glean in another field.] He would not have her go to glean in any other field, nor to stir from thence to supply any of her wants, as appears by what follows.

Abide here fast by my maidens.] Who reaped as

not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens:

9 *Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn.*

10 Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldst take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?

11 And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast

done unto thy mother in law since the death of thine husband: and *how* thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore.

12 The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.

13 Then she said, Let me find favour in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens.

14 And Boaz said unto her, At mealtime come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip

well as men (as the next verse shows), and their company was the fittest for her on all accounts. Some think this was a labour too hard for women, and therefore they will have it, that his maidens only came to bring provisions for the men, as Virgil describes Thestylis to have done, in his second Eclogue, ver. 10.

Ver. 9. *Go thou after them.*] Observe their motions, and follow them.

Shall not touch thee?] Give thee no molestation, as the Vulgar understands it. And so the word *touch* sometimes signifies, "to do harm to others" (Ps. cv. 15). But the Chaldee paraphrast extends it further, that they should "not come near her," but keep at a distance from her, and consequently offer no incivility or rudeness to her, which was too common among rustics, especially when they were full of mirth in harvest and vintage-time.

When thou art athirst, go unto the vessels.] There was excellent water at Beth-lehem (2 Sam. xxiii. 15), which either the reapers, or some that attended them, had brought in vessels into the field, to quench their thirst when they were dry.

Ver. 10.] A posture of the greatest reverence and submission, either in civil or religious worship, and was used when they would express their most grateful sense of any favour done them (see Gen. xxiii. 7, 12. xxvii. 29, &c.). To "take knowledge" of any person, is to show kindness, in the Scripture language, and is the effect of *finding grace*, that is, favour with any one; which was the greater in Boaz, because he had never seen her before, or was not acquainted with her.

Ver. 11. *It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast done.*] Naomi had related to some friends, who had informed Boaz at large of her great affection to her mother.

And art come unto a people which thou knewest not.] To be a proselyte to their religion (as the Chaldee paraphrast explains it), upon which account the greatest kindness was due to her.

Ver. 12. *The Lord recompense thy work.*] He looked upon it as a very high act of faith and virtue in her, to leave all that was dear to her in this world to become a member of their church; which he prays God simply to requite. The Chaldee paraphrast makes her say here, "That she was come from a strange people, who were made unworthy to be admitted into the congregation of the Lord:" but he answers to her, "Our wise men say, That the men of Moab only, not the women, are excluded from our society," &c. (see what I have noted upon Deut. xxiii. 5).

Under whose wings thou art come to trust.] To seek for protection, and commit thyself unto his care and good providence; which was a pious confidence so

pleasing to God, that the Chaldee paraphrast makes Boaz say, "In this thy righteousness thou shalt be delivered from the judgment of hell, and thy portion shall be with Sarah, Rebekah, Leah, and Rachel;" that is, she should have an eternal recompense. This phrase, of trusting under the wings of the Divine Majesty, is often used by the Psalmist, Ps. xvii. 8, xxxvi. 7, lvii. 1, lxi. 4, lxii. 7, xci. 4. All which places speak of the *shadow*, or *covert* of his wings, which seem to be a metaphor taken from the cherubims, who spread their wings from one side of the holy place unto the other, upon which the Divine Majesty sat; which protection and safeguard was represented in the cloud which covered the Israelites in the wilderness (Numb. xiv. 14).

Ver. 13. *Let me find favour in thy sight, my lord.*] She humbly begs the continuance of his good opinion of her (though she acknowledges herself, in the next words, to be very unworthy of it), for it had given the greatest consolation to her in her desolate condition.

Though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens.] So obscure she means, being a stranger, and of a country under an ill character among them, that she was not equal to one of his meanest servant maids.

Ver. 14. *At mealtime come thou hither.*] He enlarges his favour to her, and orders her at the time of repast to come and eat among his servants. I cannot devise how the ancient Jews came to apply these words to the kingdom of the Messiah, and to his suffering condition here in this world; but so it is, that the Mid-rasch, upon this place, makes these words, "Come thou hither," to signify as much, as "come to thy kingdom;" and the "morsel dipped in vinegar," to denote "the reproaches and torments of the Messiah;" which is an argument that they expected such a king, as should be exposed to such sufferings as our blessed Saviour endured, who saith in the Psalmist, "They gave me vinegar to drink" (lxix. 21), which, perhaps, was the original of this application of Boaz's words to the Messiah, whose coming they longed for, and found it foretold in more places than we are aware of.

Eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar.] Under the name of *bread* is comprehended all the provision which was made for the reapers, with which they had vinegar for sauce, it being very cooling and refreshing in hot seasons, as the time of harvest was. So Pliny observes, lib. xxiii. cap. 1. "Aceto summa vis est in refrigerando;" which cooling quality is taken notice of by Rasi, and others, upon this place.

She sat beside the reapers.] With the women, that is, who reaped.

He reached her parched corn.] This seems to signify, that Boaz himself ate with them, or stood by

thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left.

15 And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not:

16 And let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not.

17 So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned: and it was about an ephah of barley.

18 ¶ And she took it up, and went into the city: and her mother in law saw what she had gleaned: and she brought forth, and gave to her that she had reserved after she was sufficed.

19 And her mother in law said unto her, Where hast thou gleaned to day? and where wroughtest thou? blessed be he that did take

knowledge of thee. And she shewed her mother in law with whom she had wrought, and said, The man's name with whom I wrought to day is Boaz.

20 And Naomi said unto her daughter in law, Blessed be he of the Lord, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto her, The man is near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen.

21 And Ruth the Moabitess said, He said unto me also, Thou shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have ended all my harvest.

22 And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter in law, It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they meet thee not in any other field.

23 So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest; and dwelt with her mother in law.

them, to see that they were well provided; and took a particular care of her, unto whom he reached some parched corn, which was a usual and no mean food in those countries, as appears from 2 Sam. xvii. 28. But it may be understood of the servant set over the reapers (ver. 5), or some of them, who, observing her modesty, that she did not carve for herself, reached to her some of the provision made for them.

She did eat, and was sufficed, and left.] There was such plenty (Boaz being a great and a good man), that more was set before them than they could eat; at least, she left some of that which was carved for her. This meal, I suppose, was after the heat of the day was over, in the afternoon; for then they dined, but their best meal was a supper.

Ver. 15.] For that looked something like filching, to come among the sheaves. But Josephus takes the sense to be, that she should be permitted, if she pleased, to cut down corn herself for her own use, which is not likely.

Ver. 16.] As if she was too bold, in gathering what belonged not to her.

Ver. 17.] It seems they did not in those days carry home their gleanings as they gathered them in the ears, but beat the corn out with a rod; and freeing it from the chaff, carried it away pure, with less trouble than otherwise it would have given them. An ephah is commonly taken to be about a bushel of our measure. See my notes on Exod. xvi. 36, where it appears, that an ephah contained ten omers, and that an omer was sufficient for one person's food for a whole day; therefore Ruth now had gathered as much as would keep her and her mother five days.

Ver. 18. *Her mother in law saw what she had gleaned.*]

That is, wondered at the quantity. *Gave to her that she had reserved*] Josephus thinks this is spoken of Naomi, that set before her daughter-in-law some remainders of the victuals that her neighbours had brought her in Ruth's absence; but it rather signifies Ruth's care of her mother-in-law, whom she had in mind, when she was feasted with the reapers with more than she could eat (ver. 14), and therefore brought what she left home for her refreshment.

Ver. 19. *Blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee.*] For she concluded, that without the special favour of some person to her, it had not been possible for her to have made such a day's work.

The man's name—is Boaz.] Whose near relation to them Ruth did not yet know.

Ver. 20. *Blessed be he of the Lord.*] Or rather, "Let him be most blessed;" for *lamed* prefixed to Jehovah increases the sense, as in Gen. x. 9 (see there).

Who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead.] Continued to be kind to the relicts of Elimelech and his son, as he had been to them when they were alive.

One of our next kinsmen.] In the Hebrew, *one of our goels*, to whom of right it belonged to redeem the land, and raise up the name of his dead brother, by marrying his widow, according to the command, Lev. xxv. 25; Deut. xxv. 5 (see upon the fourth chapter of this book, ver. 5).

Ver. 21. *Thou shalt keep fast by my young men*] Though the word *nearim* be of the masculine gender yet it signifies all young people, and particularly the maidens, to whom he bid her keep close (ver. 8). And so both the LXX. and the Chaldee here expound it; and so Naomi, it appears by the next verse, understood it.

Until they have ended all my harvest.] Not only the barley-harvest, in which they were now employed, but the wheat-harvest, which followed it (see ver. 23).

Ver. 22.] She advises her to accept his kindness, and not to be found gleaned in any other field, where she might not be so welcome; and besides, it would look like a distrust of his kindness, if not a despisal of it, should she not do as she was invited.

Ver. 23. *Unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest.*] Which continued many days; and in all that time she found, no doubt, the same kind entertainment, which is not here repeated.

Dwelt with her mother in law.] Constantly came home to her at night, after she had done her labour. Or the meaning is, when harvest was ended, she did not gad abroad, but kept her mother company at home; for so the Hebrew, "she sat with her mother-in-law."

CHAPTER III.

1 *By Naomi's instruction, 5 Ruth lieth at Boaz's feet. 8 Boaz acknowledgeth the right of a kinsman. 14 He sendeth her away with six measures of barley.*

1 THEN Naomi her mother in law said unto her, My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee?

2 And now *is* not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast? Behold, he winnoweth barley to night in the threshing-floor.

3 Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor: *but* make not thyself known unto the man, until he shall have done eating and drinking.

4 And it shall be, when he lieth down, that thou shalt mark the place where we shall lie, and thou shalt go in, and uncover his feet, and

lay thee down; and he will tell thee what thou shalt do.

5 And she said unto her, All that thou sayest unto me I will do.

6 ¶ And she went down unto the floor, and did according to all that her mother in law bade her.

7 And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn: and she came softly, and uncovered his feet, and laid her down.

8 ¶ And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself: and, behold, a woman lay at his feet.

CHAP. III.

Ver. 1.] A settlement in a house of her own with a good husband. That she might live more comfortably than she could do with her. The Chaldee understands it, as if she confirmed it with an oath, that she would give herself no rest till she had married Ruth.

Ver. 2.] She puts her in mind of what she had told her before (ii. 20). The corn being gathered, thrashed or trodden out, it was next of all winnowed, to separate it from the chaff: and this was commonly done in the evening, when the heat of the day was over, and cool breezes began to rise (see Gen. iii. 8).

Ver. 3. *Wash thyself—and anoint thee.*] Frequent bathings were necessary in those countries, where they continue to this day, for cleanliness; and anointing for smoothing their skin, and making them appear more amiable.

Put thy raiment upon thee.] Her best clothes, as the Vulgar expresses it; or her ornaments, as the Chaldee.

Get thee down to the floor.] To some place near it, where she might see, and observe what was done.

Make not thyself known unto the man.] She would have her conceal herself, so that Boaz might not see her: nor, as some understand it, any man else.

Until he shall have done eating and drinking.] Upon such occasions they made feasts for the labourers in the harvest.

Ver. 4. *Thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie.*] To sleep, after the feast was done, and the guests were gone.

Thou shalt go in.] To the thrashing-floor, where he lay down, as we read ver. 7.

Uncover his feet, and lay thee down.] She was not to lie by his side, for that had been immodest; but at his feet, in the posture of an humble supplicant.

He will tell thee what thou shalt do.] Either he presently understood her meaning, when she told him who she was, or she explained it unto him: and Naomi did not doubt he would comply with her desires, and put her into a legal way of accomplishing them.

Ver. 5. *All that thou sayest unto me I will do.*] She put a great confidence in her mother's prudence and piety, and trusted God would give good success to her design; which seemed not very modest, but had no other intentions than what was agreeable to the law of God, and accordingly prospered.

Ver. 6.] Concealed herself, but observed when he came into the thrashing-floor, and where he lay down to sleep.

Ver. 7. *When Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry.*] This is a sign he had made a great feast, that he and his reapers, and perhaps other neighbours, might rejoice together; and (as the Targum understands it) praise God for his goodness in giving them plenty, after the famine that had been in the land. For so the words there are, "His heart rejoiced, and he blessed God, who had heard his prayer, and removed the famine from the land of Israel."

He went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn.] Such was the plain way of living in those ancient times, that the most wealthy persons looked after their own business, both in the field and at home; which made Boaz not go to his house, but lie perhaps upon the straw in the floor where his corn had been winnowed, to secure it from thieves, till it could be laid up in his barns. These thrashing-floors were covered at top to keep off rain, but lay open on all sides, that the wind might come in freely for the winnowing of the corn; which being done, I suppose they were shut up at night with doors fitted to them, that if any body lay there he might be kept warm; and the corn, as I said, be secured from the danger of robbers.

She came softly, and uncovered his feet, and laid her down.] Before the doors were shut up, she came in so softly, that none perceived her, and when he was asleep, lay down at his feet, not naked, as it is supposed she was, but in her clothes, which we do not find she put off; for she had no intention of lying with him, but only of giving him an opportunity to consider what the law required of him. This, indeed, looks like a dangerous practice, which her mother-in-law puts her upon, exposing both her and him to great temptations, and therefore many have condemned it as a very perilous adventure; but the known piety both of Boaz and Ruth, who were not now in their youthful years (at least Boaz was of a great age), made Naomi confident no sin would be committed by them.

Ver. 8. *At midnight, that the man was afraid.*] It is a sign he went to bed sober, though merry, in that he waked so soon, and was not drowsy, but apprehensive of something extraordinary; for going to sleep alone, he perceived another in bed with him. Or, all this is to be ascribed to a Divine motion, which secretly suggested such thoughts to Naomi, and awaked Boaz at a time when men used to sleep most soundly.

Turned himself.] Being much troubled, he turned himself about to feel who or what it was. The Hebrew word *jilaphet*, which we translate *turned him*

9 And he said, Who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman.

10 And he said, Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter: for thou hast shewed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich.

11 And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman.

12 And now it is true that I am thy near

self, is variously interpreted, and hath an unusual signification put upon it by the Targum, and the Gemara Sanhedrin (cap. 2, n. 4), where the modesty and easiness of Boaz is highly extolled, and compared with that of Joseph.

A woman lay at his feet.] He perceived by her clothes, and (when she spake) by her voice that it was a woman.

Ver. 9. *Who art thou?*] He had no thoughts of abusing her, as the Targum observes, but only inquires who she was, and what her business was there.

I am Ruth thine handmaid.] She humbly acknowledges her meanness, and then acquaints him with her business.

Spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid;] In the Hebrew, "Spread thy wing;" which is a phrase importing taking a person into one's protection and tuition; and here not a common one, but such as was matrimonial. Therefore the Chaldee plainly renders it, "Let thy name be called upon thy handmaid, by taking me for thy wife." See of this phrase upon Deut. xx. 30. From hence, at this day, when two persons are married among the Jews, the man throws the skirt of his *talith* over his spouse, and covers her head with it, as Buxtorf observes in his Synagoga Judaica, cap. 39.

For thou art a near kinsman.] This is the reason of her address to him; which may be rendered, as we translate it in the margin, "one that hath right to redeem;" for so the word *gool* signifies (see the foregoing chapter, ver. 20).

Ver. 10. *Blessed be thou of the Lord,*] He was so far from being incensed at her boldness, that he wishes her all happiness.

Thou hast shewed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning,] He doth not condemn her as immodest, but commends her true kindness both to her mother and to her husband, which appeared now more than before, by her endeavours to preserve his name and family.

Thou followedst not young men,] This is a high commendation, that she did not seek a husband to satisfy her lust, but to preserve the memory of him who was dead.

Whether poor or rich.] That is, of any sort.

Ver. 11. *Fear not;*] He would not have her think he had an ill opinion of her because she took this course, or be in doubt whether her motion was acceptable to him; or that, being a stranger and poor, he would despise her.

I will do to thee all that thou requirest:] That is, take her to be his wife.

For all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman.] She had behaved herself so as to gain a general report of extraordinary virtue, as the Hebrew word *chajil* imports; which signifies one that doth things strenuously. The words we translate,

kinsman: howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I.

13 Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, that if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman's part: but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee, as the Lord liveth: lie down until the morning.

14 ¶ And she lay at his feet until the morning: and she rose up before one could know another. And he said, Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor.

15 Also he said, Bring the vail that thou hast

"all the city of my people," in the Hebrew are, "all the gate of my people:" by which we rightly understand, all that entered in at the gate; that is, the whole city. But the *gate* being the place where justice was wont to be administered, the Chaldee paraphrast interprets it, "It is manifest unto all that sit at the gate of the great Sanhedrin of my people, that thou art a just woman," &c. This shows that Boaz was truly a very excellent person, "who thought great virtue to be a great portion."

Ver. 12.] This, I suppose, was well enough known to Naomi; but she understood his disposition so well that she thought it would be in vain to make any application unto him.

Ver. 13. *Well; let him do the kinsman's part:*] He resolved to make no longer delay than was absolutely necessary; but promises in the morning she should have right done to herself, and to her deceased husband, either by the next kinsman, or by himself. Some of the Jews take the word *Tob*, which signifies *good*, and we rightly translate *well*, to have been the name of the other kinsman, who was called *Tob*: and indeed, it is likely, this was a name among that people, from whence by the addition of *iah* to it (which was very common) came *Tobiah*. Rasi saith he was the brother of Elimelech; but there is no reason to believe this: for, when it had been proper to mention his name in the next chapter, ver. 1, we only read that Boaz called him *Peloni almoni* (*Ho, such a one*), which were words used when they called any one indifferently.

But if he will not—then will I do the part of a kinsman] He confirms his promise to her with an oath, that, if the other person refused, he would marry her.

Lie down until morning.] Having given her this security, and thereby quieted her mind, he bids her take a little bodily rest: which was very needful, having been, no doubt, full of restless and anxious thoughts, what would become of her all the former part of the night.

Ver. 14. *And she lay at his feet*] In the same place where she lay down at first; having no other design, but only humbly to implore his justice and kindness unto her deceased husband.

She rose up before one could know another.] That is, before it was light; so that if any body had seen her, they could not have known who she was.

Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor.] Some think he spake this to his servants; but they were not yet stirring: and if they were, they could not discover whether she was man or woman. It was spoken therefore to her, whom he would have to be careful both of her own fame and of his; for, as Josephus here notes, "Great caution is to be used to prevent such rumours, especially when there is some ground for them," και μαλιον' επι γυναικισι.

Ver. 15. *Bring the vail that thou hast upon thee, and*

upon thee, and hold it. And when she held it, he measured six *measures* of barley, and laid it on her: and she went into the city.

16 And when she came to her mother in law, she said, Who *art* thou, my daughter? And she told her all that the man had done to her.

hold it.] The Hebrew word *mitpa'ath* is variously interpreted, it signifying any kind of covering. The LXX. translate it *καπεριζωμα*, by which they seem to have meant that which we call an *apron*, or a *kirtle*, which is bound about one. The Vulgar *pallium*; but it is by us most properly rendered a *veil*; which modest women were wont to throw over their heads, to cover their faces.

He measured six measures of barley.] He would not let her go away without some token of his love to her; and nothing was more ready at hand in the thrashing-floor than the corn that lay there. It is not certain how much this *measure* contained, but, no doubt, in the whole, he gave her as much as she could well carry; and was so kind also, as himself to lay it upon her shoulder. Some fancy that this load was too heavy for her, but barley is far lighter than wheat: and the Chaldee paraphrast here saith, "Strength was given her from before the Lord to bear it." And then adds, "Immediately there was a prophecy, that from her should proceed six righteous persons;" each of which should be blessed with *six benedictions*; "David, Daniel, his three companions, and the king Messiah."

She went into the city.] The Chaldee saith, *Boaz went into the city*; and the Hebrew favours this interpretation. For the word for *went* is in the masculine gender, as in the next verse it is in the feminine.

Ver. 16. *Who art thou, my daughter?*] It was so early in the morning when she returned home, that Naomi could not well discern who it was that desired the gate might be opened; but perceived it was a woman, whom she calls her daughter, as they used to do in civility, it appears, by Boaz's language, ver. 10.

17 And she said, These six *measures* of barley gave he me; for he said to me, Go not empty unto thy mother in law.

18 Then said she, Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day.

But the Vulgar takes it quite otherwise, that she asked her, "What hast thou done, my daughter?" That is, how hast thou succeeded? And, indeed, the answer favours this; and the Hebrew words will bear it, if *mi* be interpreted not *who*, but *what*.

She told her all] How kindly he had treated her; and what promises he had made her.

Ver. 17. *These six measures of barley gave he me;*] Then she showed the present he had made her.

Go not empty unto thy mother in law.] Without some token of my affection. Some imagine barley (which is not so valuable with us as wheat) was too mean a thing to bestow upon her. But they do not consider, that in those countries it was a better sort of corn than it is in these parts of the world; for bread was commonly made of it, and that not only by the poor, but the better sort; of which we find examples, both in the Old Testament and in the New. See 2 Sam. xvii. 28; 2 Kings iv. 42. And in the gospel we read of barley-loaves, wherewith Christ fed the multitude; particularly John vi. 9. And, indeed, Pliny saith this was the most ancient food (*antiquissimum in cibis hordeum*, lib. xviii. Nat. Hist. cap. 7).

Ver. 18. *Sit still, my daughter,*] She bids her trouble herself no farther, for she had done enough.

Until thou know how the matter will fall:] But wait and expect, till she saw the issue: which the Targum expresses piously in this manner, "Till thou knowest how this matter will be determined from heaven, and wonderfully disposed."

The man will not be in rest until he have finished the thing] She knew him so well to be a man of his word, that he would immediately go about the business, according to his promise (ver. 14).

CHAPTER IV.

1 Boaz calleth into judgment the next kinsman. 6 He refuseth the redemption according to the manner in Israel. 9 Boaz buyeth the inheritance. 11 He marrieth Ruth. 13 She beareth Obed the grandfather of David. 13 The generation of Pharez.

I THEN went Boaz up to the gate, and sat him down there: and, behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by; unto whom he said, Ho,

such a one! turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside, and sat down.

2 And he took ten men of the elders of the

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 1. *Then went Boaz up to the gate,*] Where there was a great concourse of people; and where the judges sat. So the Chaldee paraphrast, "He went to the gate of the house of judgment, where the Sanhedrin sat" (see my note upon Deut. xvi. 18).

Sat him down there:] Among the elders, as the fore-named paraphrast will have it: but that is not likely, for he called the other kinsman to come and sit down by him.

Ho, such a one!] See iii. 12. When they could not think of a man's name, or did not think fit to name it, they used these words, *Peloni almoni*; which Daniel contracts into one word, *Palmoni* (viii. 13), and is the same with the Greek *ὁ δέρινα*.

He turned aside,] Supposing Boaz had some business with him, he did not go on his way, but turned

aside to speak with him. This was about noon (as Josephus saith), when greater multitudes were wont to be assembled in such public places, than at other times of the day.

Ver. 2. *He took ten men,*] He would have a sufficient number of witnesses of what he did; which, as Maimonides observes, was very necessary in the espousal of a person to one's wife. For, saith he, if it had been enough to do it privately, many would have taken a harlot into their houses for a time, and pretended she was their wife; therefore it was ordained, that, after any man had espoused a woman, he should marry her publicly, after the example of Boaz, of whom we read, *he took ten men*, &c. (More Nevochim, par. iii. cap. 49).

Of the elders of the city,] How many elders there were in every city, is not certain; insomuch that Bertram conjectures, there were as many as there were

city, and said, Sit ye down here. And they sat down.

3 And he said unto the kinsman, Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech's:

4 And I thought to advertise thee, saying, Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it: but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know; for there is none to redeem it beside thee; and I am after thee. And he said, I will redeem it.

captains of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and tens, in every city. Josephus, indeed, saith, there were seven (lib. iv. Antiq. cap. 6), which perhaps was the determinate number in his time. But anciently, one would think, there were more, because here Boaz mentions *ten elders* (who were the same with judges) in the city of Bethlehem, which made Bertram (De Republ. Judaica, cap. 9) the more confident, that, as the captains of thousands, &c., in every city, were the elders of that city, so there were as many in every city of the one as of the other. As for what the Talmudists say, that there were three judges in pecuniary causes, and three-and-twenty in capital, it must be long, if it be true, to later times.

They sat down.] To hear the cause he intended to bring before them,

Ver. 3.] He calls him their *brother*, because he was near of kin to them. And he mentions Naomi's return out of the country of Moab, to intimate, that her poverty constrained her to sell her estate, which her husband left her. That interest she might part withal, to supply her necessities, but it could not take away the right of the redemption: for, as Mr. Selden observes in his book De Successionibus, cap. 16, both Elimelech the father, and Mahlon the son (unto both which Boaz was of kin), gave this patrimony to their wives before they died (for otherwise they could not have had the possession of it): or rather, the former gave his interest to Naomi, and the latter his to Ruth; which, how it was done, Maimonides shows in his treatise De Donationibus, cap. 6.

Ver. 4. *Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders*] Before those that sat in the gate of the house of judgment, and before these elders, as the Targum expounds it; that is, the ten elders before mentioned, that the bargain might be firmly made, and the estate legally passed over to him.

That I may know.] i. e. Understand thy mind in this matter.

There is none to redeem it beside thee;] i. e. No other kinsman remaining of that family but they two.

I will redeem it.] For it is likely it lay convenient for him.

Ver. 5. *What day thou buyest the field of—Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth*] For they both had an interest in it; but Boaz prudently conceals the name of Ruth, till he had consented to buy the land, and then tells him whom he must take along with it.

Raise up the name of the dead] According to the law mentioned Deut. xxv. 5, &c., as it is commonly interpreted. But it was rather (in Mr. Selden's opinion) the fulfilling of the law mentioned Lev. xxv. 24, 25, lib. De Successionibus ad Leges Hebr. cap. 15, where he observes, that this phrase, "to raise up the name of the dead" (which is mentioned also, ver. 10), is quite different from that mentioned in Deuteronomy; being no more, as R. Solomon notes (upon iii. 9), than if he had said, that the name of "her dead husband may be had in remembrance, so that

5 Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.

6 ¶ And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem it.

7 Now this was the manner in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing, for to confirm all things; a man plucked

when she came into that field, men might say, This is the wife of Mahlon." There is a long discourse also in Abarinel, upon Deut. xxv., to prove, that this doth not belong to that law, of a man's raising up seed to his brother, (see Buxtorf, De Sponsal. et Divortis, sect. 27). But if it do, Grotius thinks that law only obliged *ἀπαύριοι*, "brethren by the same father" to marry the brother's widow; but custom, in process of time, obliged the next of kin to do it (see upon Matt. xxii. 24).

Ver. 6. *I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance.*] He had a wife and children already, which made him afraid to marry a poor woman with a small parcel of land, which would not provide for the children he might have by her, without diminishing his own inheritance of which he was possessed. To which the Chaldee paraphrast adds, that it might have made great contentions in his family: for thus he makes him speak, "I cannot redeem it (viz. on that condition), for I have a wife already; and it is not fit for me to bring another into my house, for fear brawling and quarrelling arise in it, and lest I hurt my own inheritance." In like manner the Midrasch, upon this book, makes him discourse. But Rasi interprets the words, as if the meaning was, that he "should bring a blot upon his posterity," by marrying a Moabitish woman (which he thought was forbidden by the law), for children are called a heritage, Ps. cxviii. 3. But in this he acknowledges the man was mistaken, as many of their ancient doctors were, for the law did not forbid the marrying a woman of that country. But the plainest sense is (as Mr. Selden observes), that many inconveniences might arise in his family by this marriage, not only by the disagreement of his wives, but by the difficulty of providing for so many children as she might bring him, and of giving them good education, and by distracting his inheritance, and suchlike things; which he prudently considered as good reasons of his refusal (see lib. i. Uxor. Heb. cap. 9).

Redeem thou my right to thyself.] Which is thus paraphrased by the Targum, "Do thou therefore redeem it, because thou hast no wife, which hinders me from redeeming."

Ver. 7. *This was the manner in former time*] There was no law, that we can find, about the following rite, but only custom, which had long prevailed; when men redeemed lands that had been alienated, or gave possession of them to another person.

To confirm all things.] To make the bargain valid.

A man plucked off his shoe, &c.] A sufficient evidence that he transferred all his right unto that person to whom he delivered his shoe. It is not easy to give an account of the original of this custom; but the reason of it is plain enough, it being a natural signification that he resigned his interest in the land by giving him his shoe, wherewith he used to walk in it, to the end that he might enter into it, and take possession of it himself.

off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbour: and this was a testimony in Israel.

8 Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy it for thee. So he drew off his shoe.

9 ¶ And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi.

10 Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from

among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: ye are witnesses this day.

11 And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, *We are witnesses.* The Lord make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel: and do thou worthily in Ephrath, and be famous in Beth-lehem:

12 And let thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which the Lord shall give thee of this young woman.

13 ¶ So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his

The Targum, instead of his shoe, hath the *right-hand glove*; it being the custom, perhaps, in his time, to give that in room of the shoe. For it is less troublesome to pull off a glove than a shoe, and deliver it to another, though it hath the same signification; as now the Jews deliver a handkerchief to the same purpose. So R. Solomon Jarchi affirms, "We acquire, or buy, now by a handkerchief, or veil, instead of a shoe."

Ver. 8. *Buy it for thee.*] After the accustomed manner.

So he drew off his shoe.] And gave it to Boaz, in token that he parted with all his right to him. The Jewish doctors, indeed, differ very much about this matter; for some say he that parted with his right to redeem the land pulled off his shoe, and gave it to him that bought it; but others, that he who bought it gave his shoe to him that sold it. The truth is, the text may be either way understood, but it seems to me most reasonable to think, that he who parted with his right parted with his shoe also. See Selden, lib. vi. De Jure Nat. et Gent. juxta Disciplin. Hebr. cap. 5, where he observes again, how different this was from the rites used when one renounced his brother's wife. And Abarbanel looks upon this as a demonstration, that the plucking off the shoe here mentioned, is not the same with that in Deut. xxv. For Ruth doth not here appear to loose his shoe (as the brother's wife is here ordered to do, ver. 9), much less did she come to spit in his face, of which there is not one word in this ceremony; which he shows wholly belongs to the sale of lands, or to their redemption, and bringing them back again into the family to which they belonged. This appears from the following words, where mention is made of nothing but of a purchase of Elimelech's estate.

Ver. 9.] She had the first right in the land after the death of her husband, and her two sons after her; which she entirely parted withal by this contract unto Boaz, to whom the other kinsman had passed over his right of redemption, by the political ceremony of plucking off the shoe.

Ver. 10. *Ruth—have I purchased to be my wife.*] He had her by the right of the same purchase, and did not succeed into the right of a brother, mentioned in Deut. xxv.; for he was not brother to Elimelech, but only a remote kinsman of the same family, as Abarbanel there observes, who could not enjoy the land while she lived, unless he would take her with it; to whom it belonged as long as she lived, and was to go to her issue when she died.

To raise up the name of the dead] That the parcel of land which he bought might still be called by the name of Mahlon, whose wife Boaz married.

That the name of the dead be not cut off—from the gate of his place.] That his name hereby might be remembered, not only in his own family, but in all the city of Beth-lehem; for by "the gate of his

place," is meant all the people that entered in at the gate.

Ye are witnesses this day.] Both that he bought the land, and Ruth together with it, at such a time.

Ver. 11. *We are witnesses.*] After this open declaration, there was no need of any instrument in writing to confirm the purchase.

The Lord make the woman—like Rachel and like Leah.] Such a solemn benediction of those who were going to be married was very ancient, as we learn from Gen. xxiv. 60, and the Jews continue it to this day, which, they say, was always in the presence of ten grave persons at the least (as Mr. Selden observes, lib. ii. Uxor. Hebr. cap. 12), conformable to this example of Boaz (ver. 2), and the eldest of them pronounced the benediction, which was a ratification of what was agreed: so our Mr. Thorndike excellently observes, that the benediction which we Christians use in marriage is a sign of the allowance of the church presupposed, at this benediction of Boaz and Ruth presupposeth the act to be allowed by the elders, or consistory, who sat in the gate of Beth-lehem. See Rites of the Church in a Christian State, p. 241. In the Review of which he observes, that this seems to be confirmed by the opinion of Epiphanius, who saith, Our Lord was invited to the marriage of Cana in Galilee, that, as a prophet, he might bless the marriage; which, it is certain, the church hath always practised, to signify that the marriage was approved to be made according to the laws of God. And therefore Conradus Pellicanus (an eminent man at the beginning of the Reformation) here well notes, that "prayers and benedictions are never to be omitted in marriage."

Like Rachel and like Leah.] That is, very fruitful.

Which two did build the house of Israel: Were blessed with a numerous posterity. They do not mention the two handmaids, because these were Jacob's principal wives (and Rachel chosen first, as she is here placed), whose servants bare children, not for themselves, but their mistresses (see Gen. xxx. 3).

Ephrath, and—Beth-lehem.] These two are but different names of the same place, where Boaz and Ruth also lived, who seems now to have been present, as Josephus represents her, and who they prayed might be a great example of all virtue in that city.

Ver. 12.] Both Boaz, and all the Beth-lehemites, derived their origin from Pharez, whose family was very illustrious in Israel; and therefore they could not have wished Boaz a greater blessing than to have as noble an issue as he was to Judah.

Ver. 13. *So Boaz took Ruth,*] Carried her home to his own house, with all the solemnity, it is likely, which was usual in such cases.

She was his wife.] And all other rites, which were observed in those days, being performed, they were completely made man and wife.

wife: and when he went in unto her, the Lord gave her conception, and she bare a son.

14 And the women said unto Naomi, Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel.

15 And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age: for thy daughter in law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath born him.

16 And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it.

She bare a son.] A year after their marriage, as Josephus saith.

Ver. 14.] After Ruth's delivery. The Hebrew name of *goel* (which we translate *kinsman*) properly belonged to Boaz, and not to his son who was now born: and yet the child seems to be here meant, which made the Arabic translator render it, "hath not left thee without an heir," who being to succeed his father, what he had done might be ascribed to his son. They hoped God would make him an eminent person among them.

Ver. 15. *A restorer of thy life,]* Such a comfort, as to make her, in some sort, young again.

A nourisher of thine old age, &c.] And in old age take care of her, and support her. For they hoped he would inherit his mother's virtues, and particularly her affection to Naomi, which was so surpassing, that it made her a greater blessing to her than a great many sons of her own body would have been; for they would scarce have been able, out of so small a fortune, to maintain themselves; whereas this being the son of a rich father, could afford her also a plentiful maintenance.

Ver. 16.] Brought it up with a most tender affection: for his mother gave him suck: and then Naomi took him from her, and educated him as her own child.

Ver. 17. *Her neighbours gave it a name,]* It did not belong to the neighbours, but to the father or mother, to name the child; but they advised Naomi to call it by a name suitable to their foregoing discourse (see Luke i. 39, &c.).

There is a son born to Naomi,] Unto whom they had promised such great comfort from this child, that it moved them to desire it might have the following name.

Obed,] That is, one who should be very serviceable unto her; for *Obed* signifies δουλεύω, a "servant," as Josephus interprets it. By which name, saith he, Naomi called the child κατά συμβουλίαν γυναικῶν, "by the advice and counsel of the women," ἐπὶ γρηγορομίᾳ αὐτῆς παραγόμενον, "as one appointed to take care of her old age." The Targum thus paraphrases upon this name, "Who served the Lord of the world with a perfect heart;" a piece of which service consisted in giving due honour unto parents. Some make it a question, why this child was not called Mahlon, according to the law which seems to require it. But this has been answered already, that what Boaz did was not in obedience to the law in Deut. xxv., for he was not the brother of Mahlon (in which case the child must have borne Mahlon's name), but only a remote kinsman.

Jesse, the father of David,] For whose sake this whole book seems to have been written, that it might be certainly known from whom he was descended, the Messiah being to spring from him; which is the reason why the following genealogy is annexed for the conclusion of this book.

Ver. 18. *Generations of Pharez,]* He begins no

17 And the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

18 ¶ Now these are the generations of Pharez: Pharez begat Hezron,

19 And Hezron begat Ram, and Ram begat Amminadab,

20 And Amminadab begat Nahshon, and Nahshon begat Salmon,

higher, because every one knew that Pharez was the grandson of Jacob, and he the son of Isaac, &c.

Pharez begat Hezron,] In the land of Canaan, before they went down into Egypt, as we read Gen. xvi. 12.

Ver. 19. *Hezron begat Ram,]* So he is called in 1 Chron. ii. 6, but in the New Testament Aram. (Matt. i. 3; Luke iii. 33).

Ram begat Amminadab,] These two were horn in the land of Egypt, where Amminadab also begat Nahshon.

Ver. 20. *Amminadab begat Nahshon,]* Who was prince of the children of Judah when they came out of Egypt, as the author of the book of Chronicles observes (1 Chron. ii. 10), which is confirmed by Moses, in his words, Numb. i. 7, vii. 12, x. 14, where we find, that in the second year after their coming out of Egypt he was the principal person in his tribe.

Nahshon begat Salmon,] Who was born in the wilderness, in all probability, and was called also Salma (1 Chron. ii. 11).

Ver. 21. *Salmon begat Boaz,]* Of Rahab, whom he took to be his wife after the taking of Jericho (Matt. i. 5).

Boaz begat Obed,] Here the Targum makes Boaz the same with Ibzan, Judg. xii. 8, (which is altogether improbable), in whose days he saith the famine, spoken of in this book, happened; from which they were delivered by the prayers of Boaz.

Ver. 22. *Obed begat Jesse,]* Who was also called Nahash, as some think, and is expressly affirmed by the Targum, because Zeruiah and Abigail are said to be David's sisters, 1 Chron. ii. 16, and Abigail is said to be the daughter of Nahash, 2 Sam. xvii. 25. But David's mother perhaps had a former husband, whose name was Nahash, by whom she had these daughters.

Jesse begat David,] Unto whose time there being but four generations, and Salmon, the first of the four, married Rahab, after their entrance into Canaan; from thence to the fourth year of king Solomon there being four hundred and forty years (as appears from 1 Kings vi. 2), it must necessarily follow, that unless we suppose some other coming between (for which we have no good warrant, these four persons, Salmon, Boaz, Obed, and Jesse, begat a child in their old age. And, indeed, Boaz supposes himself to be no young man when he spoke those words to Ruth, iii. 10. And Jesse was counted an old man when David his son was a youth (1 Sam. xvii. 12), and therefore that account which primate Usher hath given of this matter, in his Chronologia Sacra, par. i. cap. 12, seems very reasonable, that taking out of that number of four hundred and forty the seventy years that David lived, and the first four years of Solomon's reign, then, from their coming into the land of Canaan to the nativity of David, there remain three hundred sixty and six, as Aben Ezra observes in the conclusion of this book. Now these years may be thus commodiously distributed, if we suppose Rahab

21 And Salmon begat Boaz, and Boaz begat Obed,

22 And Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David.

to have borne Boaz in the forty-second year after they entered Canaan; and if we assign a hundred and two years before he begat Obed, and a hundred and eleven to Obed before he begat Jesse, and as many to Jesse before he begat David, which make the just sum of three hundred sixty and six. And this is nothing strange; for long after this time we read of very old men who might be capable to beget children at the age now mentioned, particularly Jehoiada the high-priest, who lived a hundred and thirty years (2 Chron. xxiv. 15). And in our days, Thomas Parr lived a hundred and fifty-two years, and begat a child when he was a hundred and five years old, as the same primæ there observes, and produces a great many other examples of persons who lived to a great age, very vigorous. And if we could believe the Jewish doctors, they tell us in Juthasm, that Ruth lived to the time of Solomon, and sat with Bathsheba, when he caused a seat to be set for her at his

right hand (1 Kings ii. 19). I shall only add, that Bonfrerius hath largely confirmed this opinion of these persons begetting the children here mentioned in their old age, and confuted those who explain this otherwise, by supposing three Boazes, and other devices, in his commentary upon the first verse of this book. Only he (and Serrarius also, who before him was of the same mind) has made a different distribution of the three hundred and sixty-six years before mentioned, by supposing other years of their age wherein these four persons begat their sons, which is not at all material.

I shall end all with the Targum's paraphrase on the last words of this book; which are *Jesse begat David king of Israel*. Which some Latin copies following, from thence Cardinal Cajetan concludes, this book was written not only after the birth of David, but after he was made king of Israel; that is, after he was anointed by Samuel to be king of Israel.

THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL,

OTHERWISE CALLED, THE FIRST BOOK OF THE KINGS.

THE two books which bear the name of SAMUEL, are thought by the Talmudists, in Bava Bathra, to have been composed in part by himself (that is, the first twenty-four chapters of the first book) and the rest by Gad and Nathan the prophets. And so Procopius Gazæus saith, that this book is called by the Syrians the Prophecy of Samuel. This opinion the Talmudists found upon the 1 Chron. xxix. 29, where it is said, "Now the acts of David, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer." By which words it is evident, that Samuel did write a book, and that it contained some of the acts of David, which, it is very probable, are these that we read in this book. Besides which there were two other books, written by two other prophets, who continued his history to the end of his life. It must be confessed, indeed, that three distinct books are mentioned in that place of the Chronicles; and we cannot be sure that we have in those two books all that was contained in those three; but only an extract of the substance of them, which perhaps might be made by some following prophet, and divided into two books, which were called by the name of Samuel, because he was the most eminent person of the three, and his acts are here recorded in the first place. Certain it is, this work was extant before the book of the Kings was written; for mention is there made of what we read in this history (1 Kings ii. 27). And in the book of the Chronicles several things are repeated, which we find here, in the very same words. It is highly probable, also, that Samuel having undertaken to write the history of the Judges (to which as an appendix he added the book of Ruth), would not leave it imperfect; but added in this book what concerned Eli and himself, who were the last judges of that nation. See the preface to the book of Judges.

CHAPTER I.

1 *Elkanah a Levite, having two wives, worshippeth yearly at Shiloh. 4 He cherisheth Hannah, though barren, and provoked by Penimah. 9 Hannah in grief prayeth for a child. 12 Eli first rebuking her, afterwards blesseth her. 19 Hannah having born Samuel, stayeth at home till he be weaned. 24 She presenteth him, according to her vow, to the LORD.*

I Now there was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim, of mount Ephraim, and his name was El-

kanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephrathite.

CHAP. I.

Ver. 1. *There was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim,]* Either he was born at this place, or lived

there (perhaps both), which is called Ramah, ver. 19, of this chapter; and here Ramathaim (in the dual number, as the grammarians speak), because it was

2 And he had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah: and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

3 And this man went up out of his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the LORD of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the LORD, were there.

4 ¶ And when the time was that Elkanah

built upon two hills, which made it appear like a double city. The title of Zophim seems to be added to it, because it being a high place, there was a watch-tower in it; where, upon occasion, men were set to observe who approached from all parts round about. Or, as St. Jerome, and others think, because here was a school of the prophets, who were wont to seat themselves in such places as were remote from company, and fit for contemplation; which made Elijah and Elisha frequent Mount Carmel. And thus the Chaldee paraphrase translates these words, "There was a man of Ramathaim, a disciple of the prophets." Who in the book of Ezekiel are called *watchmen*: and from hence some think came the Greek word *Σοφός*: which was the title of astronomers at the first, who from high places contemplated the stars.

[Of *mount Ephraim*,] This is added to distinguish this from other places, which had the name of Ramah, in other tribes; particularly in that of Benjamin, Josh. xviii. 25.

[His name was *Elkanah*, &c.] It appears by this genealogy, that Samuel was a Levite, of the family of the Kohathites; as we read 1 Chron. vi. 33, 34, &c. See Mr. Selden, in his book *De Succession*. in Pontif. lib. i. cap. 18, where he confutes those who fancy Samuel was a priest, yea, the high-priest, as Petavius himself imagined.

[*Son of Zuph, an Ephrathite*.] Ephrata is the same with Beth-lehem, which was in the tribe of Judah. Therefore Zuph is not called an Ephrathite, because he was descended from the Beth-lehemites (for he was a Levite), but because he dwelt in that place; as the Levites were dispersed through all the tribes. So Mr. Selden there speaks (from the Hebrew doctors, and the Targum); *Domicilii ratione, non sanguinis*; he is called an Ephrathite, "on the account of his habitation, not of his blood."

Ver. 2.] Hannah seems to have been his first wife, who proving barren, his earnest desire of children moved him to take another, as Abraham had by Sarah's consent; which was not in those times disallowed by God; who saith himself, that he had given to David many wives (2 Sam. xii. 8), which shows it was not then a sin in them to have more than one (see Grotius, in his book *De Jure Belli et Pacis*, lib. ii. cap. 5, sect. 9, 10).

Ver. 3. *This man went up out of his city*] For though Ramah stood high, yet Shiloh stood higher: and he first went down the hill from Ramah, before he could go up to the other.

Yearly to worship—in Shiloh,] Where the tabernacle now was, and where all sacrifices were to be offered, and nowhere else. Hither all the people were bound to resort, at the three great festivals (Deut. xvi. 16), and not to appear before the Lord empty. Accordingly Elkanah not only worshipped God, with prayers and thanksgivings, but offered such sacrifices as were suitable to the festival: and it is likely presented other gifts, according to his ability, as is there required, ver. 17.

[*Hophni and Phinehas,—were there*.] Ready to offer

offered, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions:

5 But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion; for he loved Hannah: but the LORD had shut up her womb.

6 And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb.

7 And as he did so year by year, when she went up to the house of the LORD, so she pro-

such sacrifices as were brought to the altar. Whose service Elkanah did not refuse to use, because they were notoriously profane; but revered their office, as still priests of the Lord, from whose impure hands he vouchsafed to accept the offerings of pious people.

Ver. 4. *When the time was that Elkanah offered, &c.*] His peace-offerings, which were wont to accompany others at the great festivals. For instance, at the passover, they offered not only the paschal lamb, but several other sacrifices, as I noted upon Deut. xvi. 7; all the seven days of unleavened bread having peculiar sacrifices belonging to them (see Numb. xxviii.). And so there were on the seven days of the feast of tabernacles (Numb. xxix.). Now, on some of these days, Elkanah offered such sacrifices as might make a feast for his family and friends, according to the law, Deut. xii. 12. The males only were bound to appear before God at these festivals; but devout persons were wont to bring their wives also with them, and their daughters as well as sons; especially when they dwelt so near the house of God as Elkanah did, whose habitation at Ramath was not above seven miles from Shiloh. It doth not appear that there was any peculiar court at the tabernacle (as there was afterward at the temple) for the women to worship in by themselves; but they came in with their husbands, and performed their duty close to them.

[*Portions*.] Of that part of the peace-offerings which belonged to him that offered them. Which was the whole, except the fat, which belonged to the Lord, and the breast and right shoulder which belonged to the priest (Lev. vii. 34). With the rest the sacrificer made a feast for himself, his family, and friends; giving to every one a portion of the sacrifice; whereby they had communion with the Lord, by partaking with him of his sacrifice, which had been offered to him at his altar.

Ver. 5. *A worthy portion*.] Or a double portion; in token of his extraordinary respect and kindness to her.

[*But the Lord had shut up her womb*.] Or, "though the Lord," &c. Her barrenness did not make him love her less, but rather more; because he would support and comfort her under that affliction.

Ver. 6.] It added to her affliction, that Peninnah set herself against her; and was wont to twit her with her barrenness, saying, when her husband sent her a more liberal portion of the holy things than she received, Though he be so kind to you, yet you bring him no children, as I do; which gave her great vexation.

Ver. 7.] She constantly took this occasion to upbraid her with her barrenness, when her husband expressed such extraordinary kindness to her. Her grief was so great, that it made her turn the festival into a fast. So Tertullian understands it, who (in his book *De Jejuniis*, cap. 7), saith, God rewarded her fasting and prayers with what she desired, vouchsafing, *inane cibo ventrem filio implere, et quidem propheta*, "to fill her belly empty of meat with a son, and he a prophet."

voked her; therefore she wept, and did not eat.

8 Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? *am* not I better to thee than ten sons?

9 ¶ So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the Lord.

10 And she *was* in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore.

Ver. 8.] In him we have an example of a most excellent husband, who patiently tolerated the insolent humour of Peninnah, and comforted dejected Hannah with words full of tender affection. Which was truly, in St. Peter's language, to dwell with his wives, *κατὰ γνώσιν*, "according to knowledge," as Victorinus Strigelius here observes. We cannot from the last words of this verse conclude (as some of the Hebrew doctors do) that Peninnah had ten sons (which was not such a pleasure to her as the affection he had for Hannah would have been), for they may signify, according to the common language of holy Scripture, only a great many sons.

Ver. 9. *Hannah rose up after they had eaten*] The kind words of Elkanah seem to have persuaded her to eat and drink cheerfully. In whom we have an example of an excellent wife; who, sensible of her husband's kindness, endeavoured to please him by complying with his desires, and avoiding all things that might be grievous to him.

Eli the priest] He was both the high-priest and also the judge at this time of the Israelites, being born in the end of Gideon's judicature, and died in the middle of the Philistines' tyranny over the Israelites, twenty years before the great victory Samuel got over them at Eben-ezer, as Sir John Marsham computes, who rightly observes, that whensoever his judicature began (which is not recorded) it consisted only in hearing and judging causes by his pontifical authority. For he wrought no deliverance for Israel that we read of: but was such a judge as Samuel's sons were (viii. 1), and as Samuel himself was after Saul began to reign. When all the days of his life he continued to go about the country and do justice, which he administered also when he came home at his own house (vii. 15, 17).

Sat upon a seat by a post] The Hebrew word is, "upon a throne;" it being a seat raised up to some height to make him conspicuous to all that entered into the house of God, where he sat at the door of it. The Jews, in Seder Olam, and in Jalkut, have a conceit that Eli was this very day, when Hannah came to pray, made judge of Israel: so that from hence they date the beginning of his judicature. But this is a weak conjecture, built merely on this phrase, "sat on his seat." Where, as Abarinell observes, he sat as the high-priest, and not as a judge. And this was no new thing, but according to custom, that he might preserve good order there; give his advice to those who had occasion to consult him; resolve their doubts, and give them his blessing. And he thinks that Samuel was born ten years or more before the judicature of Eli.

Of the temple of the Lord.] It is not unusual to call the tabernacle by the name of a temple: as the temple, when it was built, is called a tabernacle (see Jer. x. 20; Lam. ii. 6). Yet the Talmudists, from the Hebrew word *hachil* (which is here used), say, that when the tabernacle was removed from Gilgal to

11 And she vowed a vow, and said, O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.

12 And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the Lord, that Eli marked her mouth.

13 Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken.

Shiloh, the sides of it were built of stone, and covered at the top with curtains, having no solid roof. And from hence they fancy it is called *beth*, the "house of the Lord" (ver. 21), which Maimonides interprets "a house of stone." But there is no certainty of this. For such words as these have a larger sense. And indeed we are taught as much by the 1 Kings iii. 2, where it is expressly said, that there was "no house built unto the name of the Lord," until the days of Solomon: and 2 Sam. vii. 6, where Nathan speaks in God's name to David, in these words, "I have not dwelt in a house since I came out of Egypt" (see L'Emperour, in his preface to Codex Middoth). From the first words of this verse, it appears that Hannah rose up to go to the temple at the time of the evening sacrifice, for it was after they had dined.

Ver. 10.] Her grief returned when she was alone, and thought of her barrenness: which made her pray with great vehemence, and many tears, for a child.

Ver. 11. *She vowed a vow.*] As was usual, when they earnestly longed to obtain what they sought with prayers and tears.

And said, &c.] These are three various expressions of the same thing: whereby she declares, though with great humility, how much she was concerned, to obtain her request, of being delivered from her barrenness; for that is the meaning of "looking upon her affliction, and remembering her" (see Gen. viii. 1; Exod. iii. 7, 16). She thrice calls herself his handmaid, out of a profound sense of her meanness and his majesty; and desires a man-child, because only such could wait upon the Lord in the service of the tabernacle; as she intended her son should do, if God bestowed one upon her.

All the days of his life.] The Levites were not bound to serve at the tabernacle until they were twenty-five years old; and not after they were fifty: but she devoted him to the ministry there from his childhood, as long as he lived.

Nor razor come upon his head.] She vowed he should be a Nazarite; part of whose description this is (Numb. vi. 5). And so the best of the Jewish doctors interpret it; for the exposition of the Chaldee paraphrast is very forced: but from hence the opinion of the Talmudists is confuted, who say (in the Mischna, in the title Sota, cap. 3), that a man might devote his child to be a Nazarite before he was of age; but a woman could not. Nor doth any of them take notice of this example of Hannah; which hath made some think, that possibly they looked upon this as done by an extraordinary motion, and therefore not to be a rule to others; especially since she did it before her child was born (see J. Wagenseil, in his learned notes upon that book, p. 448).

Ver. 12.] The inward anguish of her soul, it is probable, made the motions of her mouth and her countenance very different from what is usual.

Ver. 13.] Hearing her say nothing, but only seeing her lips move a long time; with such gestures, it is

14 And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee.

15 And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD.

16 Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto.

17 Then Eli answered, and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him.

18 And she said, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad.

19 ¶ And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the LORD, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her.

likely, of her body, hands, and eyes, as argued a very great commotion; he took her to be disordered with the wine she had drunk liberally at the forenamed feast. For it is apt to make one talk much, and the great agony wherein she was might something distort her face.

Ver. 14.] He seems to bid her go to bed and sleep; and then come and pray to God.

Ver. 15. *Wine nor strong drink.*] Of the difference between wine and strong drink, see Numb. vi. 3, 5. Great affliction of spirit makes one distaste meat and drink.

Poured out my soul] A usual expression for sincere and fervent prayer.

Ver. 16. *A daughter of Belial;*] This is a phrase signifying the most lewd persons, that regarded neither God nor men (see Deut. xiii. 13).

Out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken] The accusation against her being very foul, she purged herself from it very earnestly; but in a modest manner, and with due respect to the office which Eli held in the church.

Ver. 17.] Her sober and respectful answer convinced the old man of his error; and moved him to dismiss her with his blessing, and a solemn prayer to God that he would grant her request.

Ver. 18.] For which she returned him most humble thanks, and desired the continuance of his prayers. She departed from the temple with such satisfaction and assurance her own prayers and his would be heard, that there remained no more any token of sorrow and grief; but she ate her meat, and looked cheerfully.

Ver. 19.] I suppose she acquainted Elkanah with her prayer, and with Eli's blessing: and it is likely that he now made a solemn vow to God if he would be pleased to fulfil her petition (see ver. 21).

The Lord remembered her.] According to her prayer (ver. 11).

Ver. 20. *When the time was come about*] The usual time that women go with child before they be delivered.

Called his name Samuel.] Sometimes fathers, and sometimes mothers, gave the name to their children (see upon Gen. iv. 26).

Because I have asked him of the Lord.] This was the reason of his name: which she gave him, that as well as she might keep in mind the interest God had in him; from whom she obtained him by ardent prayers. For *Saulmeel* (which is contracted into

20 Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of the LORD.

21 And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and his vow.

22 But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide for ever.

23 And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only the LORD establish his word. So the woman abode, and gave her son suck until she weaned him.

24 ¶ And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought

Samuel) signifies "asked of God," as we translate this word in the margin of our Bibles. He was born (as Sir John Marsham computes with great probability) in the time when the Philistines domineered over Israel for forty years together (see Judges x. 7, xii. 1), but in what year cannot certainly be determined.

Ver. 21. *Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer—the yearly sacrifice.*] At the feast of the passover, or some other of the three great festivals. He is a great example of piety; who carried his whole family to worship God with him at those solemn times which the law enjoined.

His vow.] Which it is likely he made, either when he saw his wife was with child, or, perhaps, before, when she told him what hope she had her prayer would be heard, and he worshipped God (ver. 19).

Ver. 22.] She was not bound by the law to go up with her husband: and, therefore, though she was wont to go, she resolved, as became a prudent woman, to stay at home till the child was strong enough, not only to accompany her, but to be left at the house of the Lord, and be capable of being instructed in the service of God.

Ver. 23. *Do what seemeth thee good;*] Interpreters here note the sweet agreement that ought to be (according to the example of this happy couple) between husband and wife.

The Lord establish his word.] We do not read of any thing the Lord had spoken about this child; unless Elkanah looked upon what Eli had said as spoken by God, because he was God's high-priest. Or the Hebrew word may be translated "the Lord establish his work;" i. e. perfect what he hath begun, by making the child grow till he was fit for his service. For the word *dabar* signifies any matter or thing as well as word.

So the woman abode.] At home.

Gave her son suck.] She herself was his nurse, and suckled him after the example of Sarah (see upon Gen. xxi. 7). And, it is likely, continued to do so (out of her great affection to him) several years. Some think three; but it is not improbable six or seven, as Lyra conjectures. And so long I remember one to have suckled in the place where I was born.

Ver. 24.] As they were not to appear before the Lord empty; so, upon this occasion, they brought an ample offering to him; to testify their gratitude to the Divine Majesty. And it is highly probable, that one of these bullocks was wholly offered to God as a

him unto the house of the LORD in Shiloh: and the child *was young*.

25 And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli.

26 And she said, Oh my lord, *as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the LORD.*

ournt-offering, and the other two were peace-offerings; or, as some will have it, one a sin-offering, and the other a peace-offering. Which had a large measure of flour for a meat-offering, and of wine also attending it; that they might rejoice together before the LORD, when they feasted with him upon the peace-offering.

The child was young.] In the Hebrew the words are, *hanaar-naar*, the child was a child, i. e. wholly at their disposal.

Ver. 25.] They first performed their duty to God, by offering a whole burnt-offering to him; reserving the rest, I suppose, till they had acquainted Eli with God's goodness to them, that they might all rejoice together.

Ver. 26.] Many take these words, *as thy soul liveth*, for an oath; whereby she assures him, that, as certain as he was alive, she was the person whom he saw in that place praying, and took for a distempered woman. But others (particularly D. Kimchi) think there is nothing of an oath in them, they being only a form of well-wishing to him; as if she said, I wish thee a long life, that thou mayest educate my son.

27 For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him:

28 Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD there.

Ver. 27.] She had told him nothing of what she prayed for, when he reproved her, but only in general, that she was extremely afflicted for want of something, which she earnestly begged of God. But now she acquaints him with it, and with her vow she made, if God granted her desire; which she was now come to accomplish.

Ver. 28. *Lent him*] Or, *restored* him to the Lord (as the Targum expounds it), from whose gift she received him.

As long as he liveth, &c.] Or, as the words may be translated, "all the days that he shall be desired for the Lord," that is, as long as God should think fit to employ him in his own house; which was till he made him a judge (vii. 15). Then he was not fixed at Shiloh, but went about the country to Beth-el, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh; and then settled at his own house in Ramah, as we read there, ver. 17.

He worshipped the Lord there.] This shows that Elkanah was with Hannah, and gave his consent to this dedication of their child, to such service as God should think fit to employ him in: which he humbly prayed God to accept.

CHAPTER II.

1 *Hannah's song in thankfulness.* 12 *The sin of Eli's sons.* 18 *Samuel's ministry.* 20 *By Eli's blessing Hannah is more fruitful.* 22 *Eli reproveth his sons.* 27 *A prophecy against Eli's house.*

I AND Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the LORD, mine horn is exalted in the LORD; my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation.

2 *There is none holy as the LORD: for there*

is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God.

3 *Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogance come out of your mouth: for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.*

CHAP. II.

Ver. 1. *Hannah prayed.*] Hymns are wont to be comprehended under the name of *prayers* (Ps. lxxi. 20), to the composition of which holy souls were sometimes raised by Divine inspiration, in their devout meditations upon the extraordinary goodness of God to them. And, indeed, it was the most ancient way, as I have observed heretofore, of preserving the memory of things to posterity: poets being more ancient than historians, or orators, as Lactantius observes, lib. vii. Div. Instit. cap. 23. Nor were the western people less famous for this than the eastern: the Germans, for instance, having their most ancient annals in verse; as Hermannus Conringius hath shown out of a great many authors, in his preface to Corn. Tacitus, De Germanorum Moribus.

My heart rejoiceth] She was acted by the same spirit which moved St. James to give this direction, ch. 5, ver. 13. "Is any afflicted? let him pray (as she did, i. 10). Is any merry? let him sing psalms," as she now doth: for she was lately extremely sad and sorrowful, and could not eat; but now, by the goodness of God, is filled with joy; which made her burst out into this thanksgiving.

Mine horn is exalted] She who was bowed down and dejected, now lifts up her head and triumphs: for *exalting the horn* signifies the height of glory.

My mouth is enlarged over mine enemies;] She was now furnished with a full answer to Peninnah, who upbraided her with her sterility.

I rejoice in thy salvation.] All this joy and triumph arose from the goodness of God to her; who had delivered her from the reproach of barrenness: which raised her, as appears by the sequel, to the expectation of far greater things.

Ver. 2.] *The holiness of God* signifies his peerless perfections; as Mr. Mede hath shown in many parts of his works (see p. 11). Which perfections are peculiar to himself: for though the Scripture vouchsafeth sometimes unto the gentile *demons* the name of *gods*, yet it never calls them *holy ones*. See upon Deut. xxxii. 31.

Ver. 3. *So exceeding proudly;*] This was good advice to Peninnah, and suchlike persons; not to insult over others who are not so happy as themselves.

Let not arrogance] Or, as the Targum interprets it, "forbear reproaches." For so the Hebrew word *atat* signifies, "hard words."

The Lord is a God of knowledge,] None knows what he intends, who perhaps will exalt those who are now abased. Or, he knows how to bring to pass such things as men think to be impossible.

By him actions are weighed.] Or, "by him works are prepared:" even when there is no disposition in nature to them.

4 The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength.

5 They that were full have hired out themselves for bread; and they that were hungry ceased: so that the barren hath born seven; and she that hath many children is waxed feeble.

6 The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.

7 The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up.

8 He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set

them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them.

9 He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail.

10 The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed.

Ver. 4.] Now the great sense she had of God's power branches out itself into an humble acknowledgment of this glorious attribute, in divers instances. And, first, in vanquishing the most victorious: for bows were a principal part of warriors' weapons (Ps. xlv. 6), and their girdles being a principal part of the military habit, is elegantly translated to signify strength and warlike prowess. Whence Virgil calls feeble persons unmet for war, *discinctos, ungiurt*, as Servius observes (see Bochart, in Canaan, lib. ii. cap. 13). Whence the apostle, among the spiritual armour, exhorts the Ephesians to be girt about with truth (Eph. vi.). For to gird and to arm, to be girt and to be armed, are the same thing in Greek and Latin authors (see also Ps. xviii. 39, lxxv. 6).

Ver. 5. They that were hungry ceased.] To complain of hunger. This vicissitude of human affairs, especially the sudden turns there are sometimes, from a great height of prosperity to a very low condition, and on the contrary, are very wonderful, and seriously to be pondered; that no man may be proud, nor any man despair. The instances of these in history are to be found in a great many authors, besides what our own experience may furnish us withal.

The barren hath born seven;.] That is, many children. She reflects upon the great change which God had made in her own condition. And Procopius Gazæus notes, that here, Hymno prophetiam admiscet; "she mingles prophecy with her hymn of praise," and foretells the fecundity of the church: for the number seven denotes a multitude. The Jews fancy, that every time Hannah bare a child, two of Peninnah's children died. But this seems rather to have a general respect to those that have been fertile, and grow barren when God pleaseth.

Ver. 6.] The same thing is repeated in different words; and the sense is, the power of life and death is in the hands of God: whom he pleases he takes out of the world, and whom he pleases he continues in it; raising men up even from the grave, when they were dropping into it (see Deut. xxxii. 39; Ps. xxx. 3).

Ver. 7.] She acknowledgeth the power and wisdom of God, in making men of different conditions; some poor, and others rich; yea, in making the same men who were very poor to become very rich; and they who were mean and contemptible become great and eminent. Theodoret treats excellently of the wise providence of God, in not making men all alike; but some of a lower, some of a higher rank: Oration vi. against the heathens.

Ver. 8. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, &c.] Instances of this kind in the Holy Scriptures are Joseph and Daniel; the one a prisoner, the other a captive: but preferred to the highest dignity, by the kings of Egypt and Babylon. And in these later ages, Victorinus Strigelius observes a memorable instance of the truth of these words, in Matthias Corvinus, king of Hungary; who was brought out of

prison, and set on the throne, not by sedition, nor by civil war; but by the unanimous consent of all the estates of the realm, in grateful memory of the benefits they had received by his father, the great Hunniades.

For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, &c.] These words contain the reason of all that precedes in the five foregoing verses: for the very earth being founded, upheld, and supported by the Lord, no wonder that all the inhabitants of it are in his power, to dispose of them as he thinks good.

Ver. 9. He will keep the feet of his saints,] Pious affections in those days rose up, many times, to the height of prophecy; whereby God continued in that nation his true religion, in the midst of their idolatrous inclinations. Accordingly, here Hannah begins to predict the deliverances of the Israelites (who were God's holy ones, or saints, by being peculiarly separated to him and his service) from the hand of the Philistines, and other enemies: who she prophesies should stumble and fall, as men do in the dark, when the Israelites, by God's direction, succeeded in their enterprises.

For by strength shall no man prevail.] As appeared afterward in Goliath.

Ver. 10. Shall he thunder upon them:] As he did literally when Samuel fought with the Philistines (vii. 10), and when David also vanquished them (Ps. xviii. 13). Procopius Gazæus applies this to the assumption of Christ, with the mission of the Holy Ghost, and the happy success of the apostles' preaching, and to Christ's second coming.

Judge the ends of the earth;] As he did when he subdued the Philistines, who lived in the extremity of the country of Judea westward: and now sorely oppressed the Israelites.

Strength unto his king,] That is, to David. Of whom she prophesies; who was most properly God's king, whom he appointed in the room of Saul; who by his disobedience forfeited his kingdom and was rejected by God.

Exalt the horn of his anointed.] God commanded Saul to be anointed by Samuel, x. 1, but it was upon condition, which he not fulfilling, the same person was commanded to anoint David, xv. 29, xvi. 1. Upon which the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul and rested on David, xvi. 13, 14. Whom God so wonderfully protected, that all the subtlety and power of Saul could not destroy him: and when he came to the throne, God wonderfully exalted him, as she here speaks: by enlarging his dominion very far, and making him such a glorious prince (higher than the kings of the earth), that he was the most eminent type of the great King of all, our Lord Christ, to whom these words in the fullest sense belong. "For who doth not see (saith St. Austin, in his seventeenth book, De Civitate Dei, cap. 4), that the spirit of this woman (whose name was Anna, which signifies

11 And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house. And the child did minister unto the LORD before Eli the priest.

12 ¶ Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD.

13 And the priest's custom with the people was, that, when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a fleshhook of three teeth in his hand;

grace) prophesied of the Christian religion, the city of God, whose king and founder is Christ; and of the grace of God, from which the proud are estranged, that they may fall; but the humble are filled with it, that they may rise:" which is the chief import of this hymn. And indeed, this is the first time that the name of Messiah (or *Anointed*) is found in Scripture, there being no such word in all the foregoing books of Moses, Joshua, the Judges, or Ruth. And therefore it is the more to be remarked: this prophetess being the first that mentions the Messiah, in this song: with which the song of the blessed Virgin hath such a perfect resemblance, that one cannot but think Hannah had a respect to something higher than the quarrel between her and Peninnah, and the son which God had given her, or the great acts of David: for the words are too magnificent to be confined to so low a sense. And therefore Kimchi upon these words ingeniously acknowledges the king here mentioned is the Messiah, of whom Hannah spake either by prophecy or tradition. For there was a tradition among them, that there should a great king arise in Israel: and she seals up this song, with the mention of that king, who should save them from all their enemies.

It may be thus paraphrased;

1. Great is the goodness of God to me, which makes my heart leap for joy; great is the honour he hath done me: so that my mouth, which had nothing to answer when my enemy upbraided me, now boasts of the favour of God to me, who to my exceeding great joy hath bestowed a son upon me.

2. For the Lord is incomparable in all perfections, which none have but himself alone: whose excellences are so transcendent, that there is none in whom we can find so secure a sanctuary in all our troubles as we have in him.

3. Do not vaunt and brag therefore any more on this fashion, nor speak contemptuously of others: for as nothing can be hid from him, so he knows how to bring to pass the strangest things; nor can any man hinder it (let their pride, and confidence, and power, be ever so great), but his counsel shall stand.

4. The strength of armed forces is good for nothing if not prospered by him: who brings down those who were mighty conquerors; and advances those who were their miserable slaves.

5. The rich have been seen to fall into such decay, as to want their necessary food: and poor starved wretches have come to great plenty. As likewise barren women, as I, have had a numerous offspring, and they that had many children lost them all.

6. No man can keep himself alive when God calls him away from hence: and he unexpectedly restores men to life, when they were in the very jaws of death.

7. It is according as he orders, that some men are rich, others poor; and the very same men who now are in a low condition, he raises up to greatness and splendour; and, on the contrary, abaseth those that walk in pride.

8. They that are in the most sordid plight he advances, when he pleases, to the most glorious state;

14 And he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the fleshhook brought up the priest took for himself. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither.

15 Also before they burnt the fat, the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw.

16 And if any man said unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat presently, and then take

for what can hinder him from shaking the very foundations of the earth, and overturning all things, which are upheld and supported only by his almighty power?

9. The best way therefore is, by piety, to secure the favour of God: who, by preserving all his faithful servants from falling, will fill their mouths with his praises: but confound the wicked, who now boast themselves, when with amazement they are thrown down into a miserable condition. For let not any man be so vain as to imagine, that by his strength he can maintain himself in his high station; or keep down good men from rising up to glory.

10. They that oppose God shall be broken in pieces; he will strike a terror into them, and make them fall flat before him. For it is he that is the judge of the world; and there is no corner of it where men can hide themselves from his sentence. He will advance the king whom he shall choose, even the Lord Christ; and make him great in spite of all opposers; who shall not be able to hinder his exaltation, or the growth and increase of his kingdom.

Ver. 11. *Elkanah went to Ramah*] When the festival was ended.

The child did minister] As soon as he was capable. *Before Eli*] According as he appointed him.

Ver. 12.] Very wicked men (see Deut. xiii. 13), being impious, covetous, guilty of violence, and filthy lusts. They were not professed atheists; but they minded not the Divine service, nor took any care to do God honour; being ignorant (as Kimchi expounds it) of his law.

Ver. 13.] The person who brought the peace offerings to be offered at the altar having the largest share in these sacrifices, there were certain rooms, when the temple was built, both in the court of the women, and of the men, wherein they had liberty to boil the flesh, in order to feast with God at his own house: which Christians afterward imitated in their "feasts of charity." The like rooms there were at the tabernacle, in the outward court of it (see L'Empercur, in his Annot. upon Codex Middoth, cap. 2, sect. 6, p. 80, 81).

Ver. 14. *Pan, or kettle.*] There were several sorts of vessels for this use; according as the flesh to be boiled was little or much.

All that the fleshhook brought up the priest took] This was a new custom, which they profanely introduced, for, not content with the right shoulder and the breast, which were theirs by the law (Lev. vii. 32), they would take what they pleased of the rest, that belonged to the people: at least, so much as a fork with three teeth brought up, when they struck it into the pot where the flesh was boiling.

Unto all the Israelites] This aggravated their crime, that they made a constant practice of it; and did not only on some occasions commit such wickedness.

Ver. 15. *Before they burnt the fat,*] Which entirely belonged unto God (Lev. ii. 16, vii. 23, 25).

Give flesh to roast for the priest;] This was a high contempt of God, to demand their part before God had his. For the noblest guests at feasts were always served first. The flesh-hook did not always bring up

as much as thy soul desireth; then he would answer him, *Nay*; but thou shalt give it me now: and if not, I will take it by force.

17 Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD: for men abhorred the offering of the LORD.

18 ¶ But Samuel ministered before the LORD, being a child, girded with a linen ephod.

19 Moreover his mother made him a little coat, and brought it to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice.

20 ¶ And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, and said, The LORD give thee seed of this woman

the best; therefore, as soon as the sacrifice was cut up, they came and took the choicest pieces.

Ver. 16.] This argues the very height of imperious impiety, that such submissive language should not prevail with them to have so much respect to God, as to let him have his portion in the first place: though they offered the priest more than his share, after God was served. None know to what pitch of wickedness a man may arrive, when once the sense of God is extinguished, and gone out of his mind.

Ver. 17. *The sin of the young men was very great*] Having many grievous aggravations. Nothing brings religion so much into the contempt of the people, as the open profaneness of those who are the ministers of it.

Ver. 18. *Samuel ministered—being a child,*] Though very young, yet he carefully performed such offices at the tabernacle as he was capable to discharge: and did not follow the bad example of his familiars and domestics, as we may suppose Hophni and Phinehas were.

Girded with a linen ephod.] We do not read anywhere of any peculiar garments appointed for the Levites in their ministrations, but only for the priests; and this was none of them, as appears from Exod. xxviii. 40, 41. And therefore the ephod which the priests are said to wear in ch. xxii. of this book, ver. 18, were quite different from the ephod ordered in Exod. xxviii. for Aaron the high-priest alone: which had a curious girdle belonging to it, and the breastplate with precious stones inseparable from it; and was wrought with gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet (Exod. xxviii. 6). But the ephod which the priests, or any other persons are said to wear, is (for distinction's sake) always called *ephod bad*, an "ephod made of fine linen:" which was not a sacred but an honorary vestment (as I may call it), being a short garment hanging upon the shoulders down to the middle of the back, but without any girdle or curious work in it; which having some likeness to that of the high-priest's, was used by the inferior priests to make them more respected as special ministers of God; and by other great persons upon some solemn occasion, as David did (2 Sam. vi. 24), and Eli (seeing such a great appearance of God in him), ordered Samuel to do; though it was not a habit appertaining to the Levites, much less to him who was not of age, according to the exact rules of the law, to serve in the tabernacle. Thus Kimchi and Ralbag understand it. And the LXX. in 2 Sam. vi. 15, translate it *επιολην ἕλαλον*, an "eximious garment" (see Jo. Braunius De Vest. Sacerd. lib. ii. cap. 6, p. 602).

It seems no improbable conjecture of Fortunatus Seacchus, that from hence was derived the *latus clavus* among the Romans, which was a vestment proper to their senators and presidents. It was first brought from the Etruscans, by Tullus Hostilius when he conquer-

ed them: whose ancient language agrees so much with the Hebrew, that one may well think they had many things from them (see Myrothec. cap. iii. 43).

Ver. 19.] The ephod being used, I suppose, only in the service of God, it was provided at the public charge. But for his ordinary wearing, Hannah took care, at her charge, to provide him a coat, and other things, it is likely, suitable to it, that she might still express her piety in contributing to his maintenance at the house of God. And it is very probable, that this little coat was woven with her own hands; as the ancient tradition is, that Christ's seamless coat was woven by the blessed Virgin. And so in Joma the doctors say (cap. 3), that a priest might use a garment in his ministry, which was made by his mother. (see Braunius, lib. i. cap. 17).

Ver. 20.] He gave them this benediction by a Divine suggestion; and thereby verified what she uttered in her prophetic song (ver. 5). Their affection to their son did not make them stay there, and neglect their domestic affairs.

Ver. 21. *The Lord visited Hannah, so that she conceived.*] None are losers by what they lend unto the Lord.

Ver. 22. *Now Eli was very old,*] Which made him

listless and inactive. Yet wanted not information of all the forementioned enormous practices of his sons. Whose impiety and luxury proceeded so far, as to move them to debauch those women who came to worship God. Of the word *assembled*, see Exod. xxviii. 8. Unto which may be added, that the Hebrew word (*tzaba*) signifies not only a great many gathered together, but also a *station*: that is, stated times of attendance, which devout women observed for fasting and prayer. For that was their business at the temple; unto which they resorted at certain times for these ends.

At the door] These words sound as if they committed this lewdness in the presence of all the people. But such bestiality would not have been suffered: and therefore this refers to their *assembling* at the door of the tabernacle: from whence they led them to some private room about the tabernacle (as there were many afterward about the temple), where they defiled them.

Ver. 23. *Why do ye such things? &c.*] Before mentioned, ver. 14—16, 22. Their wickedness was so notorious, that there was a general complaint of it; which should have moved him to greater severity, than merely to reprove and chide them with such gentleness and lenity, as these and the following words

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I hear: ye make the LORD's people transgress.

25 If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall intreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the LORD would slay them.

26 And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the LORD, and also with men.

27 ¶ And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Did I plainly appear unto the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house?

28 And did I choose him out of all the tribes

of Israel to be my priest, to offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? and did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel?

29 Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation; and honourest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people?

30 Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.

import. Which proceeded partly from the coldness of old age; partly from his too great indulgence to his children; and partly (as Corn. Bonavent. Bertram conjectures) from his being more intent upon the defence of their civil liberties, than the restoring ecclesiastical discipline.

Ver. 24.] By making them neglect and despise the service of God (ver. 17), and tempting them to lewdness (ver. 22). This is the language of a tender father, not of a zealous judge: who ought to have passed a public censure upon them, for their public crimes, by turning them out of their office, or some sharp punishment; which his office gave him authority and power to inflict upon such infamous offenders.

Ver. 25.] If one neighbour do an injury to another, the business may be composed by the judge; who interposing his authority, either takes up the difference or sees the person satisfied who was offended. But if one injure the judge himself (which was the present case), who shall take the confidence to speak in his behalf? Was it ever heard that any one interceded for a man to his prince, when he intended to kill the prince himself? Eli argued well; but he should not have referred their punishment unto God, when it was in his power to punish them himself. The latter words may be rendered out of the Hebrew. "But they would not hearken to the voice of their father; therefore, the Lord resolved to slay them." But, according to our translation, the sense is right enough: for when men have long sinned grievously against many admonitions (which it may be supposed their father had given them), whereby they become incurable; God deprives them of that prudent consideration and discretion, which would save them from destruction. So Rasi upon these words, "The sentence of judgment was already sealed against them."

Ver. 26. The words in the Hebrew are, *he went on*, or grew great and tall, and *was good*, that is, acceptable "both to God and men." The meaning is, he made a great progress in wisdom and goodness, as well as increased in stature: so that God was well pleased with him, and he was well esteemed by the people. The same is said of our Saviour, Luke ii. 52, where Theophylact thus glosses, *Τοῦτίστι, καὶ τῶ Θεῷ εὐάρεστα ἤπαρτε, καὶ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἡναγέρᾳ*; i. e. "He did those things that were well-pleasing to God, and were praised by men."

Ver. 27. *There came a man of God*] That is a prophet who was divinely inspired to deliver the following message to him. Some say this was Phinehas, others Elkanah; without any ground.

Thus saith the Lord,] This is the constant language of prophets.

Did I plainly appear,] In the Hebrew "manifestly

reveal myself." Unto Aaron, who was the head of the family of priests (see Exod. iv. 27).

When they were in Egypt.] In miserable bondage. As much as to say, Have I conferred such favours upon you, and do you thus requite me? It is the way of the prophets, when they call men to repentance, to aggravate their sins by an enumeration of God's great benefits unto them (see Isaiah i. 2, &c. and Mic. vi. 3—5).

Ver. 28. *Did I choose him—to be my priest.*] The highest dignity in the nation.

To offer upon mine altar, &c.] These were the several parts of the priest's office: and the last contains the greatest of them all, which belonged only to the high-priest; who alone appeared before God to consult him by *urim* and *thummim*, when he wore the golden ephod, with the breastplate annexed to it, for they were inseparable (Exod. xxviii. 6, 12, 29). There were none of the sacrifices offered at the altar of which the priest had not some share (see Numb. xviii. 8—10, &c.). For even of the burnt-offerings, which were wholly consumed on the altar. The skin was, by an express law, given to the priest (Lev. vii. 8).

Ver. 29. *Wherefore kick ye*] As refractory oxen were wont to do, when they were pricked with a goad, to stir them up to work at the plough: which signifies the highest irreverence and contempt of God's authority (see Bochart, in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 29, latter end).

Honourest thy sons above me, &c.] By suffering them to continue in the priest's office, and profanely to feast themselves with the best of the sacrifices, before God was served.

Ver. 30. *But now the Lord saith, Be it far from me;*] God revokes the decree he had made in favour of him and his family, of being high-priest throughout all generations. Which office was first settled upon Eleazar, the eldest son of Aaron, and upon his posterity; for the very same promise is made to Phinehas the son of Eleazar (Numb. xxv. 15), which is here said to be made to Eli, who was descended from Ithamar, the youngest son of Aaron: unto whom the high-priesthood was translated from the family of Eleazar, for some sin or other: as now it was resolved it should be translated back again from the family of Ithamar, to that of Eleazar; because of the horrid sins of the sons of Eli. For what cause Phinehas, or his posterity (for there are various opinions about the time), lost the priesthood, and how they recovered it in the time of David, see Mr. Selden, lib. i. De Success. ad Pontificat. cap. 2, 3, and Constant. L'Empereur, in his annot. on Bertram de Repub. Jud. p. 411. Some think, that after Phinehas, those three persons mentioned in 1 Chron. vi. 50, 61,

31 Behold, the days come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house.

32 And thou shalt see an enemy in my habitation, in all the wealth which God shall give Israel: and there shall not be an old man in thine house for ever.

33 And the man of thine, whom I shall not cut off from mine altar, shall be to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart: and all

the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age.

34 And this shall be a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them.

35 And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever.

36 And it shall come to pass, that every one

Abishua, Bukki, and Uzzi, succeeded in the priesthood; and then came in Eli: but of this there is no certainty. Procopius Gazaens here observes, that this verse, *Latenter totius Judaici sacerdotii finem innuit*; "doth secretly intimate the abolishing of the whole Jewish priesthood." For this promise, saith he, "Thy house, and the house of thy father, shall walk before me for ever," was not made to Ithamar, but to Aaron; and, therefore, he shows here what should befall the whole tribe. Such conditional decrees are frequent in Scripture; particularly in Jer. xviii. 7—10.

They that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.] A remarkable instance of which we have in the records of the Christian church: for Eusebius tells us, in the time of that persecution which he mentions in the eighth book of his Ecclesiastical History, some of the pastors of the church, who had not governed the flock of Christ as they ought to have done, were condemned to be keepers of camels, and of the emperor's horses (a punishment among the Romans in those days, as Valesius observes), ἡ θεία καταπίεσις δειχθῆναι, &c. "The Divine justice judging them worthy of no better employment" (cap. 12, De Martyribus Palestinae).

Ver. 31. *I will cut off thine arm.*] Our arm being the instrument whereby we perform all things; this threatening signifies, that not long hence God would utterly take away all power and authority from him, and from his family; both as he was a priest, and as he was a judge.

There shall not be an old man in thine house.] But his posterity should die, as it follows (ver. 33), "in the flower of their age," which was accounted a great judgment in that nation. So Manasseh ben Israel, who observes, in his book De Termino Vitae, p. 87, that the Gemara upon Jebamoth mentions a certain family in Jerusalem, none of which commonly lived above eighteen years. Of which they inquiring the reason of R. Johanan ben Zachæi, he bade them search, if they were not of the family of Eli, upon which God had passed this sentence, that they should die in the "flower of their age;" and it was discovered that they sprang from him.

Ver. 32.] The marginal translation seems most literal, "Thou shalt see the affliction of the tabernacle." As he did, for he saw the tabernacle deprived of the ark, which was the glory of it; and lived to hear the ark taken by the Philistines (iv. 4, 11). But his family was not thrown out of the priesthood till the days of Solomon. The Hebrew words may be translated, "After all the good God hath done to Israel." He repeats the foregoing threatening, to show the certainty of it. But some by an *old man* understand an *elder*. So the Talmudists in the Gemara of the Sanhedrin, cap. 1, where they make the meaning to be, that if any of his family did live long, they should never come to honour. For so they tell the story; that R. Johanan missing of some preferment that was designed and endeavoured for him, and taking it very

heavily, the doctors that were his relations prayed him not to be troubled; For we are (said they) of the family of Eli, of whom it is said, "there shall be no old man of thy house for ever;" that is, none be promoted to any dignity.

Ver. 33. *The man of thine, &c.*] It was not a favour to let any of them live, but a punishment to those who were grieved to see the high-priesthood taken from their family, and those that belonged to it reduced to great poverty. It is usual in Scripture, to say that of the parents, which properly belongs to their posterity.

Shall die in the flower of their age.] This doth not belong to all the posterity of Ithamar, but only to the family of Eli.

Ver. 34.] See iv. 11, 17.

Ver. 35. *I will raise me up a faithful servant.*] This seems to be meant of Zadok, who was anointed in the room of Abiathar (1 Chron. xxix. 22).

I will build him a sure house;] The high-priesthood continued in his line till the captivity of Babylon, as appears from Ezek. xl. 16, and a long time after it, as Josephus shows, lib. x. cap. 4, and our famous Selden, lib. i. De Success. in Pontif. cap. 5, 6, where he shows their perpetual succession till the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. But Procopius Gazaens here notes, that though this, according to the history, is meant of Zadok, who was put into the priesthood by Solomon, and in whose line it continued; yet it belongs to none, in the highest sense, but to our Lord Jesus Christ, who offered himself to the Father for us, and is our great high-priest for ever.

He shall walk before mine anointed for ever.] By the "anointed of God" here is meant the king; for whom the high-priest consulted God on great occasions: and therefore is said to walk before him; because he directed him in his proceedings, and showed him what he ought to do, in all difficult cases.

Ver. 36. *Every one that is left*] The remainder of his family, who were not cut off.

Shall come and crouch to him] The Hebrew word which we translate *crouch*, signifying to bow and to worship, the Vulgar understands these words, as if they were spoken not of their coming to beg of the high-priest, but to pray to God in so poor a condition, as not to be able to bring more than a farthing, or mite, to the treasury, and nothing but a bit of bread (not so much as a bird, much less a sheep or bullock) for a sin-offering. But the Chaldee takes the words as we do, for humbling himself to the priest before-mentioned, begging a small relief of his great poverty, to which he was reduced. The Hebrew word for a piece of silver is *agorah*, which signifies a minute-piece of silver, in the very derivation of the word, as many think. So the meaning is, he should humbly beg, though ever so small a relief.

Put me—into one of the priests' offices.] Begging of the high-priest that he might enjoy the meanest pension that was allowed to those priests who were prohibited to officiate. For so the words may be

that is left in thine house shall come and crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread,

and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread.

translated, "Somewhat belonging to the priesthood" (see 2 Kings xxiii. 9; Ezek. xlv. 13). This seems to have been fulfilled in the days of Abiathar, who for treason, was not only put out of his office, but sent to live upon his own farm in the country; and not suffered to live upon the portion given to priests at the temple (1 Kings ii. 26, 27). By

this means his posterity fell into extreme want; in which the just judgment of God may be observed; that the children of those who were so wanton, that they would not be content unless they had the choicest parts of the sacrifice for their portion, should fall into so low a condition, as to beg their bread.

CHAPTER III.

1 How the word of the Lord was first revealed to Samuel. 11 God telleth Samuel the destruction of Eli's house. 15 Samuel, though loth, telleth Eli the vision. 19 Samuel groweth in credit.

I AND the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; *there was no open vision.*

2 And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, *that he could not see;*

3 And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down *to sleep;*

4 That the LORD called Samuel: and he answered, *Here am I.*

5 And he ran unto Eli, and said, *Here am I; for thou calledst me.* And he said, *I called not: lie down again.* And he went and lay down.

6 And the LORD called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, *Here am I; for thou didst call me.* And he answered, *I called not, my son; lie down again.*

7 Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD,

CHAP. III.

Ver. 1.] Performed such services at the tabernacle as Eli directed, being now about twelve years old, as Josephus thinks. God did very rarely in those days reveal his mind to any person (see ver. 21). Here *vision* includes all the ways whereby God revealed himself to men. Which he did then so seldom, that whatsoever revelation there might be privately to some pious persons, there was none then publicly acknowledged to be a prophet, unto whom the people might resort to know the mind of God. Which was the cause that Samuel, being twice called by God to attend unto him, thought it had been Eli who called him: for they were so unacquainted in these days with the prophetic spirit, that we read of no more than two prophets in all the days of the Judges (iv. 4, vi. 8).

Ver. 2. *At that time,*] After the man of God mentioned in the foregoing chapter (ver. 27) had been with Eli; perhaps that very night after he had delivered his message.

When Eli was laid down] To sleep. In the court of the tabernacle, where there were divers rooms for several uses of the priests; as there were afterward at the temple.

He could not see] Clearly to do his duty, after it grew duskish; which made him, it is likely, go to bed betimes, and leave directions with Samuel what to do, until it was time for him to repose himself. And this might be the reason that Samuel ran so hastily to him, when he thought he called for him, that he might know what he wanted, men of his age, and dim-sighted, being less able to help themselves.

Ver. 3. *Ere the lamp of God went out*] The lamp in the great shaft of the golden candlestick, which bent towards the most holy place (called the western lamp), never went out; but some other of them did go out when it was morning (see upon Exod. xxvii. 20, 21). The meaning therefore is, that, ere it was day, the Lord called Samuel (see Dr. Lightfoot of the Temple, ch. 14, sect. 4).

Samuel was laid down to sleep] In the court of the Levites, as the Targum explains it; or in some other

place near to Eli, that he might be ready to assist him on any occasion. The words seem to import, that he had watched most of the night (for so some were to do, Ps. cxxxiv. 1), and towards morning went to repose himself. For thus the words run in the Hebrew, and in the LXX. and Vulgar: "Before the lamp of God went out, and Samuel lay down to sleep in the temple of the Lord," &c. Insomuch, that Victorinus Strigleius translates the words thus, "And Samuel went to lie down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was, before the lamp of God went out."

Ver. 4. *The Lord called Samuel*:] Out of the most holy place. So the Targum: "A voice was heard out of the temple of the Lord."

Here am I:] It is likely Eli lay nearer the tabernacle than Samuel did, and yet heard nothing: but the voice passing him by, was directed to Samuel, who alone heard it. These words, "Here am I," are a form of speech, signifying attention to what was said, and readiness to do what should be commanded.

Ver. 5. *Here am I*:] He thought Eli had some ministry wherein to employ him, and therefore started up presently, and ran to know what his pleasure was. Which shows the great readiness and promptness of his obedience, which made him come, yea, run at his first call.

Lie down again.] He thought he might dream.

Ver. 6.] He was sure there was nobody yet come to the temple, it being night and the doors shut, and therefore concluded it could be none but Eli that called him: and it is probable the voice was like that of Eli's.

Ver. 7. *Did not yet know the Lord*.] He had not yet learned to "know discipline from before the Lord," as the Targum interprets it; that is, how God was wont to teach and instruct men in his will; which the next words explain.

Neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him.] He was unacquainted with the way wherein God made known his mind unto the prophets, because he had never spoken to him before: so that he did not know how to distinguish between the voice

neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him.

8 And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here *am* I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child.

9 Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10 And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.

11 ¶ And the LORD said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle.

12 In that day I will perform against Eli all

things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end.

13 For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.

14 And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever.

15 ¶ And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel feared to show Eli the vision.

16 Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son. And he answered, Here *am* I.

17 And he said, What *is* the thing that the LORD hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide *any* thing from me of all the things that he said unto thee.

18 And Samuel told him every whit, and hid

of God and of a man. Maimonides expounds it, He did not understand that the Lord was wont to speak with a soft, whispering voice; which was therefore called *Bath-col*.

Ver. 8.] This repetition of the voice so oft, awakened Eli to think that this was no fancy of the child's; and, therefore, since he knew that he did not call him, he concluded the Lord did; and by this means he was disposed to give credit to what Samuel should tell him, as an oracle of God.

Ver. 9. *Thou shalt say, Speak, Lord;*] He tells him, in effect, that it was the voice of God which he heard; and instructs him how to behave himself, when he called again; and to answer, that he was ready to perform whatever he commanded.

Samuel went and lay down;] Which was not far, as I said, from the place where Eli lay.

Ver. 10. *The Lord came, and stood;*] This word *stood* (Kimehi thinks) denoteth some glorious appearance of God to him; because this is the same word which is used in Numb. xxii. 22, 23, 31, where the angel is said to stand to oppose Balaam's proceedings. And so the Targum: "The Lord was revealed, and stood and called," &c.

As at other times, Samuel, Samuel;] Only he repeats his name, to move the greater attention.

Speak; for thy servant heareth.] He omits the name of the Lord in his answer, which Eli directed him to make: either out of fear, or uncertainty, whether it was the Lord that spake to him, or not.

Ver. 11. *Every one that heareth it shall tingle.*] Which in our language we express thus: "It shall stun all that hear it:" as a man is, when a clap of terrible thunder strikes his ears, which even deafens him, so that he can hear nothing else. This was fulfilled, when the doleful news came that the ark was taken, and both Eli's sons slain, and he fell down and brake his neck, &c.

Ver. 12. *All things which I have spoken*] By the man of God in the foregoing chapter. He doth not mean that he would begin and make an end at once; but that he would persevere in his punishments, and not desist when he began, till all his threatenings were fulfilled, viz., in the death of Eli, and of his sons; and the slaughter of eighty-five priests of this family by Doeg, and the thrusting Abiathar (who escaped that slaughter) out of his office, and so depriving that family of its dignity and honour.

Ver. 13. *For the iniquity which he knoweth;*] For he could not be ignorant of the crimes committed so

publicly; and of which there was such a general complaint.

His sons made themselves vile;] Or, they made light of God and of his people; having no regard to either of them. Or, they made the service of God vile in the eyes of the people; as the words may be translated, and as the LXX. understand them.

He restrained them not.] He did not "frown upon them," as it is in the Hebrew. Which doth not signify, that he showed no sign of displeasure against their wickedness (for he did chide them, though too gently, for it), but he did not severely reprove them; and when that would not restrain them, turn them out of their office, or suspend them until they were reformed. For which cause God passed this severe sentence upon the whole family; that they should lose the dignity of the high-priesthood, and be made as vile and contemptible as they had rendered God's service.

Ver. 14.] By *iniquity* is meant the punishment of iniquity; which he threatens should not be removed, or mitigated, by any sort of sacrifices, or oblations, that could be brought to the altar; but only (as the Gemara upon Rosch Hashanah ventures to say) "by the law, and by the retributions of the saints." By the law, they mean not merely the study of the law, but the practice of it, by observing God's commands; and by retributions of the saints, works of charity, bounty, and liberality, beyond what the Divine law required (see Dr. Windet, De Vita functorum Statu, p. 193).

Ver. 15. *Opened the doors*] This was one of the works of the Levites, to open and shut the door of the court of the Lord's house.

Samuel feared to shew Eli] Having no command from God to do it; and being loath to grieve the old man by telling him bad news.

Ver. 16.] The old man being so solemnly threatened by the late message from God to him, was afraid he was concerned in what the Lord had now said to Samuel.

Ver. 17.] He adjures him to declare to him all that he had heard, and conceal nothing; which obliged him to satisfy his desire, as Micaiah and our blessed Saviour did in the like case.

Ver. 18.] This sentence being denounced by a child, who had his dependence upon Eli, far from any secular cunning, being unable to discern between the voice of the Lord and the voice of his tutor, till he instructed him, was a great deal more terrible to Eli

nothing from him. And he said, *It is the LORD*: let him do what seemeth him good.

19 ¶ And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.

20 And all Israel from Dan even to Beer-

than the message of the prophet had been, and wrought a greater effect upon him. For he humbly acknowledged the justice of God, and submitted to his sentence (as many of the fathers think) with a truly penitent heart. For now he knew (as our Dr. Jackson observes), that the sentence was irreversible, being confirmed by an oath (ver. 14), and the humility and modesty of Eli's answer, persuaded that excellent person, that the fearful sentence denounced against him extended no further, than to the irreversible deposition of him and his family from the priesthood, unto a poor and mean estate, wherein they were to live hereafter (Consecration of the Son of God, ch. 18. parag. 5).

Ver. 19. *The Lord was with him.*] There were manifest tokens that God favoured him, as he did Joseph (Gen. xxxi. 2). The Targum hath it, *Memra*, "the Word of the Lord was his help:" or he revealed more and more of his mind to him: so that Israel knew God intended him for the office mentioned in the next verse.

Did let none of his words fall] A metaphor from

sheba knew that Samuel *was established to be a prophet of the LORD.*

21 And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh: for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

arrows shot out of a bow, which hit the mark. And they may refer either to the words of Samuel, or of God; which is the same. This proved him to be a prophet, or a man divinely inspired.

Ver. 20. *From Dan even to Beer-sheba*] The whole country of Judea (see Judg. xx. 1).

Was established to be a prophet] Settled to be a constant prophet, who supplied the want of *urim* and *thummim*, when the ark was taken from them.

Ver. 21.] Having begun to appear in Shiloh, he continued this great favour: for he revealed himself to Samuel, not by dreams and visions, but by speaking to him in an audible voice, as he had done, ver. 4, &c. And indeed he seems to have been the first prophet that was raised up to be a public instructor and governor of God's people. Others there have been before him; but not with so high an authority, and public approbation. And therefore St. Peter saith (Acts iii.), "All the prophets from Samuel spake of those days:" as if he was the first eminent prophet whom the Lord raised up to them after Moses.

CHAPTER IV.

1 *The Israelites are overcome by the Philistines at Eben-ezer.* 3 *They fetch the ark unto the terror of the Philistines.* 10 *They are smitten again, the ark taken, Hophni and Phinehas are slain.* 12 *Eli at the news, falling backward, breaketh his neck.* 19 *Phinehas' wife, discouraged in her travail with I-chabod, dieth.*

I AND the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside Eben-ezer: and the Philistines pitched in Aphek.

2. And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel: and when they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines: and

they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men.

3 ¶ And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us to day before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of Shiloh unto us, that, when it

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 1.] *The word of Samuel came to all Israel.*] The revelation of God's mind and will, which had been very scarce among them in former days (iii. 1) now grew very plentiful: for, as Samuel himself was ready to instruct every one that came to him, so he set up colleges of the prophets (as we read in the following parts of this book), who in time were settled in divers parts of the country, for the better preserving and spreading the knowledge of God among the people (x. 5, xix. 18—20, &c.). Which made Abarinel discourse in this manner, upon the foregoing words: "In the days of Eli the word of the Lord was scarce, and vision was seldom: but when Samuel appeared, not only he prophesied frequently, but many of the Israelites, by his means, were endued with the same spirit, according to these words, 'And the Lord appeared more frequently in Shiloh (so he understands them), because the Lord was revealed to Samuel in Shiloh.' Which signifies that the influence of the spirit which descended upon Samuel in Shiloh, reached unto others, because of its abundance, who were disposed to receive it: so that they also prophesied."

Israel went out against the Philistines] This was in Vol. II.—16

the middle of that forty years' dominion that the Philistines had over the Israelites, mentioned Judg. xiii. 1, unto which they were encouraged, perhaps, by the death of the lords of the Philistines; and the great slaughter which Samson had made of them at his death (Judg. xvi. 27, 30).

Eben-ezer.] This place was called when this book was written; and so denominated from the famous battle which Samuel fought with the Philistines, twenty years after this (vii. 12).

Aphek.] In a place in the tribe of Judah, as we read Josh. xv. 53, upon the confines of the Philistines' country. But see xxix. 1 of this book.

Ver. 2.] Though Samuel was established a prophet, and it was so publicly known, that all Israel came to consult with him (as the foregoing verse seems to import), yet the elders did not take his advice about this war; as Ralbag thinks. Whose opinion is more probable than theirs, who think they did advise with him, and that he bade them fight, on purpose that the sentence upon Eli's sons might be fulfilled.

Ver. 3. *Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us*] They thought the justice of their cause was sufficient to entitle them to the favour of God, though they themselves were wicked. Thus Brutus cried when he fell, "O Jupiter! what is the cause of so great cala-

cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies.

4 So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth between the cherubims: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.

5 And when the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp, all Israel shouted a great shout, so that the earth rang again.

6 And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, What meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of the Lord was come into the camp.

7 And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they

said Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore.

8 Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? these are the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness.

9 Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you: quit yourselves like men, and fight.

10 ¶ And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen.

11 And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.

12 ¶ And there ran a man of Benjamin out of

mighty?" not reflecting upon his horrible exactions in Cyprus; and his great ingratitude to Cæsar, whom he slew in the senate.

Let us fetch the ark, &c.] This was as foolish as the other, to confide in God's help, when they lived in open disobedience to him.

Ver. 4. *So the people sent to Shiloh, &c.]* This being done without any warrant from God, provoked him rather than procured his presence with them. But they seem to have done it in imitation of Joshua marching with the ark against Jericho; for which he had a Divine authority, but they had none. Strigelius, therefore, well applies to this the observation of Polybius, that "many not studying to imitate the lives of excellent men, but only some of their extraordinary actions, have done nothing but expose their own folly to the world."

Between the cherubims:] Or, "upon the cherubims," as the Chaldee, the LXX. and the Vulgar here translate it. But Lud. De Dieu is not satisfied with this sense; for he thinks the Divine Majesty did not sit upon the wings of the cherubims, but under them; in the space between them and the ark, which was his footstool; and therefore he translates these words, "who inhabiteth the cherubims;" which were as a canopy over the Shechinah. But I have followed the ancient translation, in my notes upon Exod. xxv. 22.

Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark] Which they were ordered to bring out of its place (into which the Levites might not enter), and to accompany it unto the army.

Ver. 5.] As if they had already gotten the victory. It was so loud that it might be heard a great way off (see 1 Kings i. 40, and what I have noted there).

Ver. 6.] They sent to get intelligence, or were informed of it by some deserters.

Ver. 7. *God is come into the camp.]* The symbol of God's presence, which perhaps they imagined the Israelites worshipped as their God. In all their battles that they or their neighbours had fought with the Israelites, they never heard of such a thing as this; which they thought must produce some extraordinary effect.

Ver. 8. *These mighty Gods?]* They fought with men before, but now with God, before whom none could stand. The Hebrew words *Adirim Elohim*, which we translate "mighty Gods," are translated by Theodoret "the strong God;" which agrees with what goes before, "God is come into the camp;" and with the Targum, "Who shall deliver us out of the hand of the Word of the Lord," &c.

These are the Gods, &c.] Or, this is the God. They seem not to have perfectly understood the sacred story, but thought all those plagues which are there spoken of had fallen on the Egyptians while the Israelites were in the wilderness: where they were when their last plague befell them, by their being drowned in the Red Sea: but Jonathan thus paraphrases it; "Who smote the Egyptians with all manner of plagues; and did wonders for his people in the desert."

Ver. 9.] These words were spoken by their great commanders, as the foregoing words in all likelihood were; who understood what had been done in foreign countries. When they were recovered out of the fright which seized on them at first, they considered, that notwithstanding the power of their God, they had made the Israelites subject to them, and also overthrown them in a late battle; and therefore their present danger should only raise their courage, and make them fight more valiantly.

Ver. 10.] They gave battle to the Israelites, who were so routed, that they did not flee to their camp with an intent to renew the fight (as they did before, ver. 3), but dispersed themselves to their own home. And hitherto many of them dwelt in tents, as I observed before (see Josh. xxii. 14; Judg. vii. 8, xx. 8). There fell but four thousand in the former battle, before the ark came among them (ver. 2), so little did the bare presence of the ark profit wicked men, that it rather did them hurt.

Ver. 11.] It is likely that (as Josephus saith) Eli parted with the ark from the tabernacle very unwillingly; but when he could not help it, he charged his sons, who went along with it, to lose their lives rather than lose it.

Ver. 12. *There ran a man]* Some of the Jews have a fancy that this man was Saul: for no other reason, that I can find, but because he was of that tribe, and a proper man, who it is likely could run swiftly. How far Shiloh was from Aphek, or from Eben-ezer (both which were in the tribe of Judah, as Shiloh was in Ephraim), near to which this battle was fought, is not certain; but not so distant but that a man might run the same day from the one to another.

With his clothes rent, &c.] According to the manner of those who bewailed any great calamity (Josh. vii. 6; Job ii. 12; Ezek. xxvii. 30). From which last places, it appears it was a custom among other nations. And is most lively expressed by Virgil in Æneid xii. ver. 609—611, where Latinus is represented as rending his clothes and throwing dust upon his gray hairs, when he lamented his private and the public

the army, and came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head.

13 And when he came, lo, Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside watching: for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city, and told it, all the city cried out.

14 And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, What *meaneth* the noise of this tumult? And the man came in hastily, and told Eli.

15 Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were dim, that he could not see.

16 And the man said unto Eli, *I am* he that came out of the army, and I fled to day out of the army. And he said, What is there done, my son?

17 And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken.

losses. Tiraquellus hath heaped up a great many examples of this, in his annotations on Alex. ab Alexandro, lib. iii. cap. 7.

Ver. 13. *Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside*] He had caused a seat, I suppose, to be set for him by the side of the gate that entered into the city (ver. 18), that he might hearken after news; being extremely concerned, above all things, for the ark of the covenant of God.

When the man came into the city,] He passed by Eli, and said not a word to him, though he saw him sitting there; because he was loath he should be surprised with such sad tidings. Or perhaps he came into this city at some other gate.

All the city cried out.] Looking upon themselves as put out of the Divine protection, because they had lost the symbol of his presence, and the book of the covenant, the blessings of which they could no longer claim.

Ver. 14.] They about him had not the heart to resolve his question, but brought the man speedily to acquaint him with the truth.

Ver. 15.] He was not able to discern the sadness that was in the people's countenances, but only heard their shrieks and lamentations.

Ver. 16.] The man represents himself as an eyewitness of what had passed, that he might gain the more credit to what he said: and adds, that he brought the freshest news. He asked if they had fought, and with what success.

Ver. 17.] He hid nothing from him; but reserved the worst news till the last.

Ver. 18. *The side of the gate,*] At the entrance of the city, where his chair was set. Though he was too indulgent a father, yet he was highly commendable in this, that he was not so much affected with the loss of his sons and the slaughter of the people, as with the loss of the ark of God. For he kept up his courage, and did not fall, till he heard that mentioned. The more public any concern is, the more it is laid to heart by men of worthy spirits. Such a one was Eli, with whom God was angry upon his sons' account; otherwise he was adorned with many virtues, as Procopius Gazæus observes. Being oppressed

18 And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.

19 ¶ And his daughter in law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, *near* to be delivered: and when she heard the tidings that the ark of God was taken, and that her father in law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and travailed; for her pains came upon her.

20 And about the time of her death the women that stood by her said unto her, Fear not; for thou hast born a son. But she answered not, neither did she regard it.

21 And she named the child I-chabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law and her husband.

22 And she said, The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken.

with grief he swooned away; and being both very old and very unwieldy, his fall was the more dangerous, and the vertebrae of his neck the more easily displaced.

He had judged Israel forty years.] This aggravated the calamity of his family, that having been so long in the highest station, it fell into great afflictions in a moment (see upon chapter the first, ver. 9). The Jews observe, in Seder Olam Rabba, cap. 13, that on the day he died God forsook the tabernacle in Shiloh, having delivered his strength into captivity, &c. (Ps. lxxviii. 60, 61).

Ver. 19.] The great anguish of her mind brought on her labour: and, as Josephus thinks, two months before her time. Which doth not well agree with what is said in the beginning of this verse, that she was "near to be delivered." The Hebrew word which we translate "bowed herself," signifies she "fell on her knees." For so the manner was in those countries; which Ludolphus confirms in his Ethiopic History, and his commentary upon it (lib. i. cap. 14. n. 101).

Ver. 20. *The women that stood by her*] Assisted at her labour.

Thou hast born a son.] The mention of which they thought would have revived her; according to what we read in the gospel of St. John, xvi. 21.

She answered not,] Being so overcome with sorrow and grief, that she minded nothing that was said or done about her.

Ver. 21.] Only having a little recovered her spirits, she lamented this chiefly, that God was gone from them: for so the word *glory* frequently signifies in Scripture (Ps. cvi. 20; Jer. ii. 11). The Hebrew word *u* also signifies the same with *u* not, as Ludolphus observes in his commentary upon his Ethiopic History (lib. i. cap. xvi. 106). And so Bochartus here translates *Ichabod* by *inglorious*, or without glory: that is, saith he, without the true God (par. i. Hieroz. lib. ii. cap. 34).

Ver. 22. *The glory is departed*] She seems to have expired with these words; which she repeats again, because this chiefly lay at her heart; and the concerns of religion do in all pious spirits.

CHAPTER V.

1 *The Philistines having brought the ark into Ashdod, set it in the house of Dagon. 3 Dagon is smitten down and cut in pieces, and they of Ashdod smitten with emerods. 8 So God dealeth with them of Gath, when it was brought thither: 10 and so with them of Ekron, when it was brought thither.*

1 AND the Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it from Eben-ezer unto Ashdod.

2 When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon.

3 ¶ And when they of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the earth before the ark of the Lord. And they took Dagon, and set him in his place again.

4 And when they arose early on the morrow morning, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord; and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold; only the stump of Dagon was left to him.

5 Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that come into Dagon's house, tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod unto this day.

CHAP. V.

Ver. 1. *The Philistines took the ark*] Why God suffered the ark of his presence to fall into the hands of those uncircumcised people, Abarbinel gives four or five reasons. The Israelites were such great sinners, that they were unworthy of his presence among them. The idolatry of Mical remained to this day in the land; therefore he fulfilled his threatening (Lev. xxvi. 19, 31). The sin also of the priests highly provoked him to deliver up the ark, which was in their hands when they were killed. And the Israelites greatly offended in carrying the ark into the battle, without asking counsel of God: who resolved to demonstrate his power even among the enemies of Israel.

From Eben-ezer] Where the Israelites were encamped before the battle (iv. 1), and whither it is possible they fled to save the ark, when their army was overthrown.

Unto Ashdod.] One of the five cities of the Philistines, where some of the Anakims were left subdued by Joshua (Josh. xi. 22), and was in future times the principal city of the country called Azotus. And perhaps it was so now; which might be the reason the ark was carried thither, rather than to any other city; being situated also in the middle of the five principalities, and having a famous temple in it (mentioned in the next verse), whither all the country resorted.

Ver. 2.] The heathen were wont to offer part of the spoil that they took in war unto their gods: and what could there be more acceptable than this to Dagon, who seemed to have triumphed over the God of Israel? Thus we read, in after ages, how conquerors triumphed not only over the people whom they vanquished, but over their gods also. As Isaiah represented Bel and Nebo carried captive, when Babylon was taken (xvi. 1, 2). And Jeremiah saith the same of Chemosh, the god of Moab, and Malcolm, the god of Ammon (xlviii. 7, xlix. 3, and see Dan. xi. 8). Thus the Romans did very frequently, as Bochartus shows in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 34. Yet there are some who imagine, that their setting the ark by Dagon (on the side of him) signified that they intended to do some honour to it, as having the presence of God in it. Concerning Dagon, see what I have noted upon Judg. xvi. 23, and Mr. Selden, Syntag. ii. De Diis Syris, cap. 3, where he confutes those who think Dagon hath his name from *dagan*, which signifies *corn* (as if he were the inventor of it), and confirms the opinion of those who think he had his name from *dag*, which signifies *a fish*; fishes and pigeons being sacred to him. Some take this idol to have been the same among the Syrians with Triton

among the Europeans, or with Neptune, or (as Scaliger will have it) with Venus, who was worshipped under the name of Atergatis and Adargatis; which are only the corruption of the Hebrew words *Addir-daga*, i. e. "magnificent fish," as Mr. Selden there observes; though Bochart thinks this was a different god from Dagon (par. i. Hieroz. lib. i. cap. 6).

Ver. 3. *Arose early*] To go to pray at the temple.

Dagon was fallen] In a posture of the most humble adoration: which was prostration; acknowledging the God of Israel to be above all gods. In this some of the Jews think there was a miracle in a miracle, as they speak: for whereas the ark was set by Dagon (i. e. on one side of him) when Dagon fell, it was not right forward, but he was turned about with his face towards the ark (see Buxtorf, De Arca Fœderis, p. 171).

Set him in his place] Looking upon it as a mischance.

Ver. 4. *Dagon was fallen*] Which showed his former fall was not by chance, but by the power of God, before whom he could not stand. It is likely Dagon stood on high, upon some pedestal or altar; from whence he was not only thrown down, but his head and his hands thrown out of the door with the greatest contempt: being cut off upon the threshold of the temple. A token (as most interpreters think) that this idol was void of wisdom and power, his head and his hands (which are the seat of those qualities) being gone. Some have a fancy that Dagon had feet also upon his tail: from whence the LXX. it is likely, here add, that both his feet were cut off also: which hath no ground at all in the Hebrew text (see Selden, in the forenamed book; and Vossius De Idolol. lib. ii. cap. 16).

Only the stump of Dagon was left to him.] In the Hebrew the words are, "only Dagon was left to him:" that is, saith Kimchi, nothing but the form of a fish remained; all that resembled a man being broken off. Thus the Lord showed there was no god beside him: his ark, though taken captive and carried into a strange land (as St. Chrysostom discourses, Orat. v. adversus Judæos), throwing down their idol twice, and thereby demonstrating, that the Israelites were not overthrown for want of any power in their God to defend them, but for the iniquity of those that worshipped him.

Ver. 5.] Out of reverence to it; looking upon it (as Abarbinel glosses) as a holy thing, by the touch of Dagon's head and hands. So foolishly did they pervert the meaning of God, that, instead of thinking Dagon to be no god, they honoured the very threshold of his temple as if it had some divinity in it. For it is an idle conceit which the Jews have in Jalkut, that forsaking Dagon they worshipped his *threshold*

6 But the hand of the Lord was heavy upon them of Ashdod, and he destroyed them, and smote them with emerods, *even* Ashdod and the coasts thereof.

7 And when the men of Ashdod saw that it was so, they said, The ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us: for his hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our god.

8 They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines unto them, and said, What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel? And they answered, Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried about unto Gath. And they carried the ark of the God of Israel about *thither*.

(see Buxtorf, in his Hist. Arca, cap. 19, p. 172). This superstition continued for some ages, as Bochartus gathers from Zeph. i. 9, where God saith he will punish those "that leap on the threshold," after the manner of the Philistines, as he expounds it, after the Targum, par. i. Hierozoic. lib. ii. cap. 36.

From those words, "unto this day," Hobbes and suchlike writers frame an argument, that this book was not written by Samuel; not considering that these things happened when Samuel was but a youth, and that this was written when he was old; so that there was a considerable space of time between them.

Ver. 6. *The hand of the Lord was heavy upon them*.] Since they were so blind as not to see his hand in throwing down their god, &c., he smote them with such sore plagues in their own bodies, as made them sensible of his power.

He destroyed them, &c.] With a pestilence, I suppose, of which many died (see ver. ult.). Not only the people of the city, but of the villages belonging to it, were smitten with this plague. About which interpreters differ very much: some taking this disease for a dysentery, which was so violent that it rotted their guts, and made them fall down and come out. Whereupon others think it was that which we call *procedentia ani*, the *falling of the fundament*; but most interpreters, both ancient and modern, take it as we do, for the *emerods*. For it was some disease in the hinder-parts, as appears from the words of the Psalmist, lxxviii. 66, as they are commonly understood. See my notes on Deut. xviii. 27, and Nic. Fuller, Miscell. lib. v. cap. 3, especially Bochartus, in his Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. i. cap. 36, where he gives a large account of the Hebrew word *apholim*, which is used only here and in the forenamed place of Deuteronomy.

At the end of this verse, the Vulgar and the LXX. also add, that a great number of mice started up out of the earth, and overrunning their fields, made great waste there. But, as Lyra well observes, this gloss in all likelihood being written in the margin, out of ch. vi. ver. 4, 5, it crept at last into the text, though it be neither in the Hebrew, nor the Chaldee, nor Syriac, nor Arabic (see Bochart, in his Hierozoic. par. i. lib. iii. cap. 34).

Ver. 7.] Now their eyes were opened to see, that though they had vanquished the Israelites, they could not stand before the God of Israel. And it seems no unreasonable conjecture, that they speak here, and in the following verse, concerning the ark, with a note of distinction: calling it "the ark of the God of Israel" (ver. 8, 10, 11, vi. 3), and "the ark of the Lord" (vi. 8). For other nations had such arks, and for the same use, to put their mysteries in them: as in this were the tables of the covenant alone. Clemens Alexandrinus relates what trash and other filthy stuff was in the *μυστικὰ κιστά*, the "mystical coffer"

9 And it was so, that, after they had carried it about, the hand of the Lord was against the city with a very great destruction: and he smote the men of the city, both small and great, and they had emerods in their secret parts.

10 ¶ Therefore they sent the ark of God to Ekron. And it came to pass, as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people.

11 So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to his own place, that it slay us not,

of the heathen. From whose superstition, that the Israelites might be preserved, God, perhaps, appointed this ark to be made by Moses (see his *ἱστορικὸς λόγος*, p. 13, 14).

Ver. 8. *What shall we do with the ark*] They desired a general council might be held to consult what to do in this case; whether to keep the ark, or how to dispose of it.

They answered,] i. e. The lords of the Philistines (who in the language of that country were called *Sarnim*, the same with *Sarin* in the Hebrew) came to the following resolution.

Let the ark—be carried about unto Gath. And they carried the ark of the God of Israel about thither.] They seem to be possessed with a superstitious conceit, that there was something in the place which was offensive to him; and that he might be better pleased with another: just as Æneas and his people indicted their beds and their houses, of the disasters that befel them; and Cadmus forsook his own city,

— "tanquam fortuna locorum
Non sua se premeret."

as if the ill luck which hunted him had been the place's, not his own: as our Dr. Jackson observes, out of Ovid, in his Original of Unbelief, ch. 18, parag. 4. Gath was the next city to Ashdod, northward of it: in which some of the Anukims also remained (Josh. xi. 21).

Ver. 9.] A great many died of the pestilence, as they had done at Ashdod. They that did not die were sorely tormented by *emerods*; which was a disease they had never known before; as some understand the last words. Or, they had those the physicians call *blind emerods*: which do not swell outwardly, but lie hidden within; and are the most grievous and hard to be cured of all other.

Ver. 10. *They sent the ark of God to Ekron.*] The last city of the Philistines northward: where in aftertimes (if not now) the famous god called Baalzebub was worshipped (2 Kings i. 2).

They have brought about the ark,—to slay us and our people.] These seem to be the words of the governors of the city; who had learned, from the experience of the other great cities, that no place was secure from the stroke of the God of Israel.

Ver. 11. *So they sent and gathered together all the lords*] As they of Ashdod had done (ver. 6).

That it slay us not,] Destroy the whole city.

The hand of God was very heavy there.] Which made them desire it might be sent out of the country, and not to the other cities in the south, Gaza and Askelon.

Ver. 12.] This is the explication of the foregoing words: some were struck with the pestilence as soon as the ark came thither, and others lingered under intolerable pains, which made them cry out in an inexpressible manner: for this is an hyperbolic speech;

and our people: for there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there.

things that are exceeding great beyond expression, being said to reach up to heaven (Deut. i. 28). Thus Virgil, lib. ii. *Æneid.* in many places, ver. 223, 338, 488.

12 And the men that died not were smitten with the emeralds: and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

“Clamores simul horrendos ad sidera tollit.
Sublatus ad æthera clamor.
Ferit aurea sidera clamor.”

CHAPTER VI.

1 After seven months the Philistines take counsel how to send back the ark. 10 They bring it on a new cart with an offering unto Beth-shemesh. 19 The people are smitten for looking into the ark. 21 They send to them of Kirjath-jearim to fetch it.

1 AND the ark of the LORD was in the country of the Philistines seven months.

2 And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, What shall we do to the ark of the LORD? tell us wherewith we shall send it to his place.

3 And they said, If ye send away the ark of the God of Israel, send it not empty; but in any wise return him a trespass offering: then

ye shall be healed, and it shall be known to you why his hand is not removed from you.

4 Then said they, What shall be the trespass offering which we shall return to him? They answered, Five golden emerods, and five golden mice, according to the number of the lords of the Philistines: for one plague was on you all, and on your lords.

5 Wherefore ye shall make images of your

CHAP. VI.

Ver. 1.] The Hebrew word *sadeth*, which we translate *country*, signifying a *field* (as the LXX. here translate it, ἐν ἀγρῷ), Theodoret, and Procopius Gazaens, think, that the Philistines, being so plagued by the ark in their cities, sent it into the *open fields*: but were disappointed of their hope, of being freer from the hand of God there, than in their cities; for mice sprung up out of the ground, and wasted their corn and their fruits, as the LXX. here add, at the end of this verse, as they did in the foregoing chapter, ver. 6, καὶ ἐξέζεον ἡ γῆ ἀντὶ τῶν μύων, “and their land bubbled up mice.” But the Chaldee hath no such thing; and saith expressly, The ark was “in the cities of the Philistines seven months.”

Ver. 2. *Philistines*] i. e. The lords of the country. *Priests*] Who were best skilled in sacred rites and ceremonies.

Diviners.] Who were a kind of prophets, pretending to know the will of God, and to foretell future events. See Deut. xviii. 12, of this word *kosemim*, which we translate *diviners*. From whence Bochartus thinks the Roman word *Casmilli* is derived, being as much as *Kosme-el*, the “minister of God.”

Ark of the Lord?] They never called it the *ark of the Lord* till this time: but now were struck with some apprehension that the Lord was above all gods.

Tell us wherewith we shall send it] They did not call them to be resolved by them whether they should send it home or not (for upon that they seem to have been resolved already, ver. 11), but in what manner it should be sent, and whether accompanied with any presents to obtain his favour.

Ver. 3. *If ye send away the ark, &c.*] Against which resolution they had nothing to object, but rather approved it. They answer directly to the question, first in general, that it must not be sent back without some offering. Concerning the Hebrew word *asham*, which we translate “trespass-offering,” and how it differs from a sin-offering, see upon Lev. v. 15. It seems to be presented by the Philistines as an acknowledgment that they had offended the God of Israel, by bringing his ark from its proper place, for which they begged his pardon by this offering. Their plagues still continued (notwithstanding their resolu-

tion to send home the ark), but they hoped by this offering they would be removed; and the reason would appear why they were removed no sooner; for these diviners were not sure from whence these plagues came: but by this means they thought they should either be healed, or know the ark was not the cause of their sickness.

Ver. 4. *What shall be the trespass offering*] It is very observable what reverence they had to their priests and prophets, without whose advice they would do nothing: and therefore desire to be particularly informed what the trespass-offering should be, that they might not send one that was improper. All nations thought their gods were to be appeased when they were angry, by honorary gifts, as many have observed: particularly Bochartus, in his *Hieroicoicon*, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 36. And of that opinion they were in these ancient times. But wise men still gave it in charge, Ne quis impius oblati donis Deum placare audeat: that “no wicked man should presume to attempt to appease God by the offering of gifts,” as Cicero speaks, lib. ii. *De Legibus*.

Five golden emerods, and five golden mice, according to—the lords of the Philistines.] Who were five, and were to be at the charge of offering one for each of them. This also was a custom among the ancient heathens, to consecrate unto their gods such monuments of their deliverances, as represented the evils from which they were freed. As they dedicated to Isis and Neptune a table, which contained the express image of the shipwreck which they had escaped: and slaves and captives, when they had regained their liberty, offered their chains. Which Christians in the fifth century began to imitate, as Bochartus observes (in the forenamed place) out of Theodoret. Accordingly the Philistines, hoping shortly to be delivered from the *emero*ds and *mice*, wherewith they were sorely afflicted, sent the images of them unto that God from whom they expected deliverance. And this is still practised among the Indians, as Tavernier relates in his travels to that country, p. 92, where he saith, that when any pilgrim goes to a pagod for the cure of any disease, he brings the figure of the member affected; made either of gold, silver, or copper, according to his quality; which he offers to his god, and then falls a singing, as all others do after they have offered. Mr. Selden also hath observed, that *mice* were

emerods, and images of your mice that mar the land; and ye shall give glory unto the God of Israel: peradventure he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your land.

6 Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? when he had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and they departed?

7 Now therefore make a new cart, and take two milch kine, on which there hath come no yoke, and tie the kine to the cart, and bring their calves home from them:

8 And take the ark of the LORD, and lay it upon the cart; and put the jewels of gold, which ye return him for a trespass offering, in a coffer by the side thereof; and send it away, that it may go.

used among the ancient heathen for lustration and cleansing, De Diis Syris, Sytag. i. cap. 6.

[For one plague was on you all, and all your lords,] The plague of emerods upon their own bodies; and the plague of mice upon their land.

Ver. 5. *Make images of your emerods, and images of your mice*] By this it appears, that their country was infested by mice, which had eaten their corn in the field, and other fruits of the earth. Which is a plague which divers ancient authors mention, as sent upon several countries, by the anger of their gods: particularly upon a city in Mysia, and upon the country of Troas, as is observed by Huetius in his *Quæstiones Alnetanæ*, lib. ii. cap. 12, n. 12. And Bochart hath collected a great many more examples of such devastations in Spain, Italy, Thrace, &c., made by mice; which have the name of *achbar* in Hebrew (as he thinks), signifying "a destroyer of the field" (*Hieroz.* par. i. lib. iii. cap. 34).

Ye shall give glory unto the God of Israel:] That is, acknowledge him, by this present to him, to be the inflicter of these plagues, and to have power to remove them; begging his pardon, and seeking for healing from him. For thus this phrase signifies in the like case, Rev. xvi. 9, where St. John complains, that after many plagues men did not "repent, to give glory unto God:" that is, by repenting, acknowledging his sovereign authority, justice, holiness, &c.

[From off your gods, and—land.] For they had all suffered; their gods as well as themselves, and their land.

Ver. 6.] These words seem to import, that some of them were loath to send the ark away with such presents; and objected against it: which moved the priests and diviners, to bid them take heed, lest they brought upon themselves the fate of Pharaoh, and his people. With whose history these men were acquainted; and being discreet persons made a good use of the examples of former times: and believed as much as many of the Israelites did, or rather more. When it was too late, they consented to what was demanded. The Jews say in Jalkut, that the Philistines at first said among themselves, This is the God who smote the Egyptians with ten plagues: but they are all ended. Whereupon God said, "Do you imagine I have not one plague more? I will send such a one upon you as never was from the beginning of the world," &c. (see Buxtorf. *Hist. Arcæ Fœderis*, cap. 19). If they had any such thoughts, their priests pertinently enough put them in mind of the Egyptians; that they might not make themselves like them

9 And see, if it goeth up by the way of his own coast to Beth-shemesh, then he hath done us this great evil: but if not, then we shall know that it is not his hand that smote us; it was a chance that happened to us.

10 ¶ And the men did so; and took two milch kine, and tied them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home:

11 And they laid the ark of the LORD upon the cart, and the coffer with the mice of gold and the images of their emerods.

12 And the kine took the straight way to the way of Beth-shemesh, and went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left; and the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border of Beth-shemesh.

13 And they of Beth-shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley: and they

in hardness of heart; as God had made them like in their plagues.

Ver. 7. *Make a new cart, and take two milch kine,*] Both these were in honour of the ark; that they employed nothing about it which had served for any other use. And there was another reason also for the latter of these; that they might be the more certain they were led by the God of Israel, if they went directly unto his country: for kine unaccustomed to the yoke are wont to run back, and turn out of the way into which they are put.

Tie the kine to the cart, and bring their calves home from them:] This would make it still more wonderful, if they did not return to their calves, when they heard them bleat after them; which they naturally would have done, if a greater power had not drawn them a contrary way.

Ver. 8.] They had either heard, or by their present sufferings were made to fear, that it was dangerous to look into the ark; and therefore they did not open it, to put their present within it; but put it in a cofzer by the side of it. It is probable the word *argaz* (which we meet withal nowhere else), in the language of the Philistines, signifies either a *coffer*, or a *purse*, or a *wallet*, as Josephus translates it: and Bochartus thinks it likely, that these golden jewels were put into little bags, which hung on either side the ark.

Ver. 9. *See, if it goeth up by the way of his own coast*] Without any guide: and being set (as Josephus saith) in a place where three ways met.

Beth-shemesh,] A city in the tribe of Judah, in the confines of both countries.

A chance that happened] From some unknown cause.

Ver. 10.] The men of Ekron did all this, as the priests had directed.

Ver. 11, 12. *The kine took the straight way to—Beth-shemesh,*] Though they had no driver, nor visible director; and had such strong attractives to draw them back, and there were so many other ways in which they might have gone; yet they went directly towards Beth-shemesh, without the least deviation; lowing all the way after their calves, which had been taken from them: unto whom their natural affection would have inclined them to return, if by a higher hand they had not been led forward to the land of Judah.

The lords—went after them] To observe (as the priests advised, ver. 9), whether of themselves they would go thither.

Ver. 13. *Were reaping their wheat harvest*] Which

lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it.

14 And the cart came into the field of Joshua, a Beth-shemite, and stood there, where *there was a great stone*: and they clave the wood of the cart, and offered the kine a burnt offering unto the LORD.

15 And the Levites took down the ark of the LORD, and the coffer that *was* with it, wherein the jewels of gold *were*, and put them on the great stone: and the men of Beth-shemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices the same day unto the LORD.

16 And when the five lords of the Philistines had seen *it*, they returned to Ekron the same day.

being about Pentecost, it shows the ark was taken captive in the latter end of the foregoing year (compare this with ver. 1).

Rejoiced to see it.] Come back to them in such a wonderful manner, without any visible conductor.

Ver. 14. *The cart came into the field of Joshua, a Beth-shemite.*] This was another marvellous thing, that the kine went no further; being come into a territory of a city of the priests (for so Beth-shemesh was, see upon Josh. xxi. 16), who were to take care of the ark of God.

Where there was a great stone:] Which seems to have been the boundary of the two countries.

Offered the kine a burnt offering unto the Lord.] The great stone, I suppose, serving instead of an altar; whereon they offered a whole burnt-offering of praise and thanks to God for his goodness: for they thought in reason that this cart, and these kine, should never be converted to any common use, and therefore employed them in making this sacrifice. In which the priests did not sin, though cows were not, by the law, allowed to be offered to God, and no offering was to be made but in the place which God had chosen. For this was to be understood of ordinary offerings, not of such as an extraordinary occasion might require; and besides, the ark being here, God was so also (who as yet appointed no place for its future residence, now Shiloh was destroyed), and so their sacrifices, they thought, in reason, might be here acceptable to him. And they the rather chose to offer these cows to God, because they belonged to him, and therefore were to be his sacrifices; they having drawn his ark, and been particularly directed by him.

Ver. 15. *The Levites took down the ark*] It was not the business of the Levites to take down the ark; but of the priests: who after they had disposed it to be fit for the Levites to take it upon their shoulders, the Kohathites were to carry it (see Numb. iv. 15).

Put them on the great stone, &c.] Where, it is probable, they had before offered up the kine, instead of an altar. *The sacrifices* (which they are said to sacrifice) were *peace-offerings*; which they added to their whole burnt-sacrifices, that they might make a feast upon them; as an expression of their great joy to see the ark returned to them in such a miraculous manner.

Ver. 16. *When the five lords*] Who stood upon the borders of their country (ver. 12).

Had seen it,] Beheld all the forenamed wonders. *They returned to Ekron*] And reported, no doubt, what they had seen: which convinced them, that their plagues came from the God of Israel.

Ver. 17.] Each city of this country, I suppose, was at the charge of presenting one emerod. Which cities are not reckoned in the order wherein they lay; but Ashdod being the city to which the ark was first

17 And these *are* the golden emerods which the Philistines returned *for* a trespass offering unto the LORD; for Ashdod one, for Gaza one, for Askelon one, for Gath one, for Ekron one;

18 And the golden mice *according to* the number of all the cities of the Philistines *belonging to* the five lords, *both of* fenced cities, and of country villages, even unto the *great stone of* Abel, whereon they set down the ark of the LORD: *which stone remaineth* unto this day in the field of Joshua, the Beth-shemite.

19 ¶ And he smote the men of Beth-shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the LORD, even he smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men: and the people la-

brought, it is mentioned first. But from south to north they lay in this order; Gaza, Askelon, Ashdod (which as I said was in the middle of them), Gath, and Ekron.

Ver. 18.] As the golden emerods were made at the public charge of those cities, so were the mice also; unto the making of which the villages likewise contributed. For their fields being principally afflicted by the mice, as the cities were by the emerods; and they being all sharers, some way or other, in the public calamities, it was thought reasonable they should all join in this trespass-offering: which was an offering of the whole nation, as far as ever their coast extended, and that was to the great stone mentioned ver. 14, which is there called *Eben-gedolah*, the *great stone*; but here *Ebel-gedolah*, the *great weeping*, from the lamentations which were here made upon the following occasion, mentioned in the next verse.

Ver. 19. *He smote the men of Beth-shemesh, because they had looked into the ark*] Which God had forbidden, not only to the common people, but to the sons of Levi also (Numb. iv. 20). But their curiosity made them forget their duty: being desirous either to see whether the Philistines had taken out the tables of the covenant; or that they might have a view of such an ancient sacred monument, written by God's own hand. Out of this story, as Bochart ingeniously conjectures, the Greeks forged the fable of Bacchus; who was very angry with the Athenians, because they did not receive his mysteries with pomp, when they were brought out of Bœotia into Attica; and smote them with a sore disease in their secret parts. In his Canaan, lib. i. cap. 18, in the latter end.

He smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men:] This translation is made by an unaccountable transposition of the words: which in the Hebrew lie exactly thus, "He smote of the people, threescore and ten men, fifty thousand men." Which the Gemara, with Jarchi and Kimchi, and the Targum, expound, "He smote all the Sanhedrin, which were seventy men, and fifty thousand of the common people (see Selden, lib. ii. De Syndr. cap. 19, n. 3). But as it is a question whether there was any such Sanhedrin in these days, and it is certain there was not at Beth-shemesh; so it is not likely it was such a populous place, nor is there any particle to couple the last sum with the foregoing. Therefore Bochart's interpretation is far more reasonable, which is this, "He smote threescore and ten men; fifty out of a thousand men." God was so indulgent, that is, as not to slay all that were guilty, but only seventy of them; observing this proportion, that out of a thousand offenders, he smote only fifty persons; that is, a twentieth part. So that of fourteen hundred that deserved punishment, he smote only seventy men:.

mented, because the LORD had smitten *many* of the people with a great slaughter.

20 And the men of Beth-shemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God? and to whom shall he go up from us?

which is the twentieth part of that number. And this interpretation is very easy, only supplying the particle *mem* before *eleph*, making the sense to be "out of a thousand." And he instances in many places of Scripture, where this particle is manifestly wanting, to make out the true meaning. See his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 36, p. 370, where he shows that Josephus thus understood these words, lib. vi. Antiq. cap. 2, where he saith God smote *ἰβδουρχοντα τῶν ἐκ τῆς Βεθσαμης χιλιάδης*, "seventy of those of the village of Beth-shemesh." And thus Abarbanel also understands the first words, that he smote at Beth-shemesh only seventy men; the other number, he thinks, refers to those who were slain in the country of the Philistines; the story whereof is now finished. For the particle *beth*, he thinks, signifies as much as *with*, in this manner: "Together with the seventy of Beth-shemesh, he smote in all fifty thousand, because of the ark." But Bochartus's interpretation is most natural, which is highly applauded by another person of very great learning, Johan. Wagenselius, who, in his annotations upon the Gemara of Sota (cap. 7, sect. 15), saith, *Ipsa veritas militat*, "Truth itself defends this opinion" of Bochartus. And indeed it cannot be conceived, there should be so many as our translation supposes, to be slain at Beth-shemesh, and the coasts thereof, being but a village; or if there had, it is very improbable that God would smite so many at once: for there would have been none left to make lamentation. Therefore as the Romans decimated the soldiers that had offended; that is, put every tenth man to death; so God here punished half so many for this offence of looking into the ark.

The Lord had smitten many of the people with a great slaughter.] It was a great slaughter, considering

21 ¶ And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim, saying, The Philistines have brought again the ark of the LORD; come ye down, and fetch it up to you.

the smallness of this place; as Abarbanel glosses upon these words, who takes it, as Josephus doth, for a village. And it is not strange that some should be smitten with death; for it was always accounted, in all nations, a great profaneness for any one that was not initiated to look into their mysteries; to prevent which hereafter God made so many examples of his displeasure in this place. Instances of those among the heathen, who were struck blind, or upon whom some other calamity fell upon such account, the illustrious Spanhemius hath noted in his observations upon Callimachus's hymn in Lavacrum Palladis, ver. 34, yea, though they did it ignorantly, as he shows upon ver. 78, 82, p. 606 (see also Huetius, in his *Alnetanae Questiones*, lib. ii. cap. 12, p. 200).

Ver. 20.] They seem by this to be sensible of their rashness, and acknowledge the holiness of God to be such that they were not worthy of his Divine presence among them; but desire that some who could do him honour better than they, might take the ark into their care. But Abarbanel thinks they were only struck with a great fear, as the Philistines were when God plagued them; which made them send the ark from one place to another, as they of Beth-shemesh now sent to those of Kirjath-jearim, to come and fetch the ark to their city; fearing more of them should die, if it stayed with them at Beth-shemesh.

Ver. 21.] This was a city which stood upon a hill, and therefore they desired them to *come down* from thence. And being a strong place, there they thought the ark might be secure, in case of any new incursions of their enemies. See concerning this city, Josh. xv. 9, 10, where it is called also Kirjath-baal, xviii. 14, and Baalah, or Baal-judah, 2 Sam. vi. 2; 1 Chron. xiii. 6.

CHAPTER VII.

1 *They of Kirjath-jearim bring the ark into the house of Abinadab, and sanctify Eleazar his son to keep it.* 2 *After twenty years* 3 *the Israelites, by Samuel's means, solemnly repent at Mizpeh.* 7 *While Samuel prayeth and sacrificeth, the Lord discomfith the Philistines by thunder at Eben-ezer.* 13 *The Philistines are subdued.* 15 *Samuel peaceably and religiously judgeth Israel.*

I AND the men of Kirjath-jearim came, and fetched up the ark of the LORD, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanc-

tified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD.

2 And it came to pass, while the ark abode in

CHAP. VII.

Ver. 1. *The men of Kirjath-jearim—fetched up the ark*] They cheerfully received the message; and were so far from thinking themselves in danger by entertaining it, that they thought it a blessing, and kept it with them till the reign of David.

The house of Abinadab in the hill.] In the highest part, I suppose, of the city: as David afterward placed it upon Mount Zion.

And sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark] Which belonged to the Levites: therefore Abinadab was of that tribe, otherwise he could not have consecrated (i. e. set apart, or solemnly appointed) his son to "keep the ark," i. e. to attend it, and see that no rudeness was offered to it; as well as to keep a guard about it, to defend it from violence. If it be inquired why they did not carry the ark to Shiloh, its ancient seat, the answer is, that the Philistines had destroyed

that place; and the tabernacle, upon the death of Eli, was removed from thence unto Nob, where it remained till the death of Samuel. And after his death it was carried to Gibeon, where it remained fifty years, according to the account of the author of Seder Olam Rabba. All which time the ark was in Kirjath-jearim, till David brought it first to the house of Obed-edom and then to his own city. After which the tabernacle still remained at Gibeon till Solomon's temple was built, 1 Chron. xvi. 39, 2 Chron. i. 3, where we read, that, even after the death of his father, Solomon sacrificed at Gibeon, the tabernacle being there.

Ver. 2. *It was twenty years.*] This is not to be understood of the whole time that the ark remained here; for it continued, as I said before, in this place, till the time of David (2 Chron. vi. 3), which was about forty-six years; therefore it refers to the following words.

Kirjath-jearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord.

3 ¶ And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.

4 Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the Lord only.

And all the house of Israel lamented] Or, rather (as Dr. Lightfoot translates them), "Then all the house of Israel," &c. Their idolatry had taken such deep root in them, that neither the loss of the ark, nor the slaughter of so many Israelites, wrought upon their hearts. But it was twenty years before they minded the ark, or took any notice of it. Then they were awakened to some sense of their duty, and began to seek the favour of God, and lament their apostasy from him (see his Annot. on this place, and upon Acts iii. 24, p. 758). And one reason why they did not regard the ark, was, perhaps, because it was now seated in the borders of the country of the Philistines of whom they were afraid. And this is the sense of Abarinel. For though others think, that from the day that the ark came to Kirjath-jearim, the Israelites began to lament their sins, and to turn to God; having heard of the miracles that had been done in the land of the Philistines, &c., yet he doth not approve of this opinion; but will have their lamentation to begin after the ark had been twenty years at this place where it remained many years more than twenty.

Ver. 3. *Samuel spake unto all—Israel,*] Who were assembled at some solemn festival; or were summoned by him to attend him; for after the death of Eli he began to judge Israel.

If ye do return unto the Lord] By this it appears, that his reproofs and instructions, and the representation he had made of their sin, and of their danger, had touched their hearts, and made them begin to lament themselves, and seek his favour; whereupon he exhorts them to give this following proof of their sincerity.

Put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth] By the *strange gods* I take Baalim to be meant; which are frequently joined with Ashtaroth, as they are in the very next verse to this, where their obedience to this exhortation is reported (and see upon Judg. ii. 12, 13, 17, iii. 7, viii. 33).

Prepare your hearts] By serious resolutions.

Serve him only:] As it follows in the next verse.

He will deliver you out of the hand of the Thilistines.] Who had now oppressed them, less or more, for the space of forty years.

Ver. 4.] There was now, I suppose, a general reformation made in the worship of God.

Ver. 5. *Gather all Israel to Mizpeh,*] A place where they had been wont anciently to assemble upon great occasions (see upon Judg. xx. 1).

I will pray for you] To accept of their repentance, and pardon their sins, and establish them in their good resolution to serve the Lord alone; and to deliver them out of the hand of the Philistines. For all which he could have prayed alone by himself; but he thought their public prayer would be more effectual.

Ver. 6. *Drew water, and poured it out before the*

5 And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the Lord.

6 And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the Lord, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the Lord. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh.

7 And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines.

8 And the children of Israel said to Samuel,

Lord, and fasted] This being a day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer, as appears by the latter part of these words, interpreters commonly expound the former part of them, as belonging to the same matter. And some think, as the Targum doth, that by *pouring out water*, is to be understood the tears of contrition, which were drawn from the bottom of their hearts, and fell from their eyes before the Lord. Others think they washed their bodies in water, signifying the purification of their souls from the filthiness of sin. And others (which Bochartus himself thinks more probable), that this water was poured on the ground, in token of the expiation of their sin, which they desired and hoped might be remembered no more: as water poured on the ground could no more be seen. Unto which they think a place in Job alludes (xi. 16), but we nowhere find any such rite as this among the Jews, either in ancient or later times. And the conjecture of Fortunatus Scacchus seems more ingenious, that an altar being to be erected to offer sacrifice, they poured out water to cleanse the ground, that it might not be set up in an impure place (Myrothec. Elæochrysm. Saer. ii. cap. 31). But after all, I think the interpretation which Constant. L'Empereur hath given of these words (in his Annot. on Codex Middoth, cap.-2), is far more reasonable; which is, that they "poured out water" in token of joy, after they had fasted and confessed their sins (for he translates the words, Postquam jejunarunt, "after they had fasted on that day"), as they were wont to do in the feast of tabernacles, unto which he refers those words in Isa. xii. 3, in which the prophet foretells the joy that should be in the days of the Messiah, by saying, "Ye shall draw waters with joy out of the wells of salvation:" alluding to a known rite among the Israelites in the feast of tabernacles, unto which our Saviour is thought to allude, John vii. 37, 38. And there is the greater reason for this interpretation, because Samuel had just before promised them, that the Lord would deliver them from the Philistines, if they heartily repented: which made them rejoice in hope of it, because they did not sincerely turn to him.

Samuel judged—Israel in Mizpeh.] When they were reconciled to God, he reconciled them one to another, by determining their differences and doing right where any one was wronged: or he declared the law to them whereby they were to be judged; and, perhaps, punished some gross idolaters, or other great offenders.

Ver. 7.] Being ignorant of the true reasons of this meeting, the Philistines imagined the Israelites assembled to consult about war, and so resolved to be beforehand with them, and surprise them.

They were afraid of the Philistines.] Being unarmed, I suppose, or not prepared to give them battle.

Ver. 8.] According to the promise made to them (ver. 3).

Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines.

9 ¶ And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the LORD: and Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD heard him.

10 And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel.

11 And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under Beth-car.

12 Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.

13 ¶ So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Israel: and the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

14 And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the coasts thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

15 And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.

Ver. 9. *A sucking lamb.*] For after a lamb was eight days old, it was fit to be sacrificed unto God (Exod. xxii. 30; Lev. xvii. 27). The Hebrew word *tale* is the name for the youngest sheep, as *ajil* is for the eldest, and *chebes* for one between both.

Offered it] Whereby he supplicated the Divine mercy, as the son of Sirach explains it (Ecclus. xlvi. 16). "He called upon the mighty Lord, when his enemies pressed him on every side, *ἐν προσφορᾷ*, "by the oblation of a sucking lamb."

The Lord heard him.] Which is a demonstration, that though he was not a priest, nor this place appointed for sacrifice, yet, as a prophet, he had authority from God to build an altar anywhere, and to make his supplication in this manner. Thus other holy men, Gideon and Manoah, were warranted to offer extraordinary sacrifices, in places which God had not before appointed. And it is probable that God answered Samuel, as he did Manoah, by fire consuming the sacrifice, in testimony of God's acceptance (Judg. xiii. 20). And thus we read of an altar he built in another place, ver. 17, as Elijah did in following times.

Ver. 10. *As Samuel was offering up*] Before it was consumed.

The Philistines drew near to battle] Hoping to find them unprepared. The son of Sirach saith, they of Tyre joined with the Philistines in this action (Ecclus. xlvi. 17).

The Lord thundered with a great thunder] They were affrighted, like men out of their wits, with thunder and lightning; which killed many of them before the Israelites could come up to fight them. For, together with this horrible tempest, Josephus saith there was an earthquake, and that the earth opened in several places, and swallowed up some of them, who, like blind men, ran into those gaps.

Ver. 11. *Israel went out of Mizpeh.*] Having Samuel to lead them, as their captain, according to Josephus.

Under Beth-car.] A place in the confines of the tribe of Judah. This victory was the more wonderful, because we do not find the Israelites came appointed with any weapons to Mizpeh; but, as far as can be gathered by the relation of the fight, they smote them with their own weapons; which the Philistines threw away when they fled, and which were found among those that were slain by the lightning.

Ver. 12. *Samuel took a stone, and set it, &c.*] So Jacob and Joshua had done, as monuments of God's mercy to them, and their obligations to him.

Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.] That is, thus far have gotten the better: for they were not utterly

destroyed, but driven quite out of their coasts, as it follows in the next verse.

Ver. 13.] He put an end to the forty years' tyranny of the Philistines, mentioned, Judg. xiii. 1 (see my notes there, and upon ver. 5, of that chapter, and Judg. xv. 20). As in this battle he gave them such an overthrow, that they were quite driven out of the country of Israel; so, during Samuel's government, until Saul was made king, we never read that they attempted with an army to invade them; but then they did (xiii. 19).

Ver. 14.] They not only expelled the Philistines, but recovered also several places of which the Philistines had possessed themselves, during their dominion over them. Ekron was in the tribe of Judah (Josh. xv. 45), which the Philistines now forsook out of fear, as some think: or were driven out of it for the present, though it was not long before they got possession of it again.

There was peace between Israel and the Amorites.] Not by compact and covenant; but by the inclination of both sides, they abstained from all hostile actions. The Amorites were not the only remainders of the old inhabitants of Canaan; but being the most powerful among them, they had long given name to the rest (Gen. xv. 16). And now the Philistines were thus subdued, none of them, who used to infest the Israelites, durst stir to give them any molestation, but sat quiet and still.

Ver. 15.] From these words Mr. Hobbes and his followers draw an argument that this was written by somebody after the death of Samuel. Which is a very weak proof: for the sense may be no more than this: that Samuel was so diligent in the discharge of his office, that he gave himself no rest, but sat to judge causes every day.

Ver. 15.] *Ἐν πάσι τοῖς ἡγιασμένοις τοῖς τόποις*, "in all these sanctified places," as the LXX. translate these last words (though there be no such thing in the Hebrew), because, as Mr. Mede conjectures, here were *proseuchas*, i. e. *places of prayer*, in those ancient days. But we may more certainly gather from hence, that there was no such high court then established (which they call the Sanhedrin in following ages) to judge all causes; at least, not such inferior courts as were appointed by the law in Deut. xvi. 18, as the high court is in Deut. xviii. 8. For if there had, there would have been no need of Samuel's riding circuit every year about the country to do justice, as other judges had done (Judg. v. 10, x. 4, xii. 14).

Ver. 17.] The power of the judges was greatest in war: but when it was over, they still retained such an authority, that all difficult causes (at least) were brought before them. They were consulted also in all political affairs: and, that they might know where

16 And he went from year to year in circuit to Beth-el, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places.

17 And his return *was* to Ramah; for there *was* his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto the Lord.

to resort to Samuel, when he had ended his circuit, he kept his constant station at Ramah. There being no declaration yet made where God would have the ark to be fixed, after the destruction of Shiloh, he built an altar where he himself constantly resided.

Because it was fit, when they consulted about any public business, concerning the good of the commonwealth of Israel, that there should be a public invocation of God's direction and blessing; which was done by sacrifice, as appears from ver. 9.

CHAPTER VIII.

1 *By occasion of the ill government of Samuel's sons, the Israelites ask a king.* 6 *Samuel praying in grief, is comforted by God:* 10 *He telleth the manner of a king.* 19 *God willeth Samuel to yield unto the importunity of the people.*

1 AND it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel.

2 Now the name of his firstborn was Joel; and the name of his second, Abiah: *they were judges in Beer-sheba.*

3 And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment.

4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah,

5 And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.

6 ¶ But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the Lord.

7 And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

CHAP. VIII.

Ver. 1.] The Jews in Seder Olam Rabba, and other books, make Samuel to have lived no more than fifty-two years; when he could not be said to be old. Therefore Abarbanel forsakes the doctors in this, and shows their proofs of it to be very weak; and thinks that he rather lived until he was seventy, if not eighty years old. But less than seventy, he affirms, none of the prophets or good men lived. When he could not well sustain all the labour, he took his sons to assist him: both when he went his circuit, and in hearing causes at home. Or, perhaps, when he was old, he went circuit no more; but settled them in a convenient place (as it follows in the next verse) where people might have justice done them, either by him or by them.

Ver. 2.] As his constant residence was at Ramah, so he ordered theirs to be at Beer-sheba. Whereby, as Corn. Bertram observes (cap. 9, De Repub. Jud.), the country was divided into two parts, for the greater convenience of the people; that the causes of all those who dwelt between Dan and Mount Ephraim, might be brought to be judged by Samuel at Ramah; and the causes of those between Mount Ephraim and Beer-sheba, might be judged by his sons.

Ver. 3.] Covetousness made them take bribes (contrary to the law, Exod. xviii. 8), and they made them "pervert judgment" (see Exod. xxiii. 21; Deut. xvi. 19). Procopius Gazæus here asks this question: Why God did not punish Samuel as he did Eli, for the wickedness of his sons? Unto which he answers, that Samuel's sons were not so bad as Eli's: for taking bribes privately, was not like openly profaning the tabernacle, and making the worship of God contemptible. And, besides, it is possible Samuel might be ignorant of this corruption in his sons: who did not live near him, but he in Ramah, and they at Beer-sheba.

Ver. 4.] All the great men who were dissatisfied with the management of affairs came to Ramah: which was one of the places where Samuel judged

the people, and determined their controversies (vii. 16, 17). The weakness of Samuel's body, and the ill disposition of his sons' minds, they make their pretence of demanding what they had long desired to have. The Gemara of the Sanhedrin, cap. 2, sect. 6, according to the tradition of R. Eliezer, saith, the elders were in the right in "desiring a king to judge them:" for according to the opinion of some of their doctors, this was one of the three things God commanded to be done, when they came into Canaan, that they should make them a king. The only error was, which arose, they say, from the perverseness of the vulgar people, that they desired a king like "all the nations." But these are mere fancies; for God gave no such command, as their best authors, Bechai, Nachman, Ralbag, and others, acknowledge. But their own pride and vanity suggested these desires to them, that they might not want that outward pomp and show which was among their neighbours. Fear also of a potent enemy, who was about to invade them, might make them think a king necessary to lead them on successfully to encounter him (ver. 20, and xii. 12). But above all, this proceeded from their insensibility of the great honour they enjoyed above all mankind, in being under the peculiar government of God: for whom they had so little regard, that he saith (ver. 7), they *despised him*; that is, made nothing of such a king as they could not see. But that he had the supreme power over them was apparent, in that when they prayed Samuel to make them a king, immediately he prayed to God; showing it was not in his power to do it, but in God alone.

Ver. 6.] To give him direction what to do in this case; but thus far the elders were in the right, that they came to the prophet to ask a king: for none, as I said, could make one, but the Lord alone, who was their sovereign.

Ver. 7.] These are the words of an angry sovereign (Hos. xiii. 11), being as much as to say, Let them have their will. Which he indulged to them, partly to punish them, and partly to preserve them

8 According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee.

9 Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.

from apostasy from their religion. For being as violently set upon having a king, after the manner of the Egyptians, as they had been to follow their gods, they might have thrown off the law itself, and conformed entirely to the customs of other nations, if they had not been humoured: for they were so set upon it, as appears from ver. 19, that after the prophet had represented to them, how much they would lose by having their desires granted, they persisted in them, saying, "Nay, but we will have a king," &c. Which expresses a resolution to have one whatsoever became of them. The latter words show that Samuel took it very heavily, that they should be dissatisfied with his government: but God tells him, he himself had more reason to be angry: for, in truth, they had thrown off his authority, who was their king (as Samuel tells them afterward, xii. 12): and therefore was highly offended they should desire any other. Which the Jewish doctors above mentioned (ver. 5) justly make an argument that God did not command them in the book of Deuteronomy to make them a king; because he was displeased when they desired to have one. For the supreme Governor of the world was their sovereign; who governed them by judges, whom he raised up and extraordinarily inspired, when he saw occasion: as he had before conducted them by Joshua and Moses, who never ordained any thing of moment without a special command for it from God: who reserved to himself the sole power of establishing laws, and appointing magistrates, and making war, as appears by the war against the Midianites, Num. xxxi. For there is no truth in their opinion, who imagine that the government of the Israelites, before they had a king, was an aristocracy. Josephus, indeed, seems to say so, in one or two places of his Antiquities: but, in his book against Apion (a very learned gentile), wherein he writes most accurately, he makes it a distinct sort of government, different from all other; which he truly calls by a new name, Θεοκρατία, "the government of God" (lib. ii.). For God exercised the supreme authority among them, by his express command. Which being without example, that it may not seem incredible to those who are wont to detract from the sacred history, it may be fit to observe (to use the words of Hermannus Conringius, in his animadversions on Machiavel's Principles, cap. 6), that the demons, who were worshipped as gods by the gentiles, attempted to imitate this, by setting up a like government. So that memorable history of the original of the commonwealth of the Cyrenians in Egypt, mentioned by Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, Pausanias, Justin, and others; and that history of the beginning of Heraclaea in Pontus, which Justin relates, lib. xvi. cap. 3. For this republic being raised by the express command of demons, was, upon that account, they say, exceeding flourishing. No less memorable is the republic of the Mexicans in America, erected by the command of their demon Vitzipultzi: who, above all others, endeavoured to imitate the miracles wrought by God for the Israelites. Many others, he there shows, pretended to this: though all was transacted by themselves.

10 ¶ And Samuel told all the words of the Lord unto the people that asked of him a king.

11 And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots.

12 And he will appoint him captains over

Ver. 8.] No wonder they desired another sort of ruler than Samuel, for they had chosen other gods. And this had been their wicked humour ever since they were delivered from the tyranny of Pharaoh.

Ver. 9.] Since they had no greater regard unto God and his minister; he resolved to let them exchange his government for such a one as the nations had, who often oppressed them. He continuing still their king, God was so very gracious as to order Samuel to lay before them at large, into what servitude they were going to throw themselves by casting off the government of judges set over them by God himself; and subjecting themselves to the power of such kings as ruled in other nations.

Ver. 10.] How ill God took it, looking upon it as a rejection of himself; who had hitherto governed them most graciously, and often delivered them from the heaviest oppressions. For he either stirred up some person, by an immediate signification of his will and pleasure, to be their judge; or, when there was none, he was ready to rule their proceedings himself, by *urim* and *thummin*, directing them what course to follow in the public concerns of the nation. These two things plainly demonstrated (as our Mr. Thordike hath well observed) that God was their king, whom they now cast off (see Review of the Rites of the Church, p. 68, 133).

Ver. 11. This will be the manner of the king] And, moreover, he declared what kind of government they chose instead of God's. There are various opinions about the *jus regium*, "the royal power," here mentioned. Which containing divers particulars that seem arbitrary and unjust, interpreters have chosen to expound the Hebrew word *mishpat*, not by *jus*, but by *mos* and *consuetudo*; that is, not by *right*, but by *manner* and *custom*. And so the words may be translated, as Joseph Scaliger observed long ago from many instances (Epist. xv.), particularly Gen. xl. 13, and in this book, xxvii. 11 (see Petavius also upon Epiphanius, Hæres. lv. n. 9). But there is no necessity of this, as Grotius rightly observes, and from him Conringius. For Samuel doth not speak of a just and honest right of a king to do these things (for his right is quite otherwise described in that part of Moses's law which concerns the king's duty), but such a right as the kings of the nations had then acquired: for they desired such a king as their neighbours had; who were all under the absolute dominion of their princes. Which Aristotle calls, δεσποτικήν ἀρχήν lib. v. polit. cap. 10. Οἱ περὶ τὴν Ἀσίαν ὑπομένουσι μὲν δεσποτικὴν ἀρχήν, οὐδὲν δυσχεραίνοντες, "They of Asia endure a despotic government, nothing at all complaining."

He will take your sons,] To attend him as the guards of his body, and in other offices. This shows that he speaks of an arbitrary power, which kings in those days used. And therefore Abarinel observes, that Samuel doth not say absolutely, "I will show you the manner or right of the king" (as if it were a right belonging to all kings), but "that shall reign over you;" that is, of such a king as you desire, who will administer affairs in this fashion.

For his chariots and—horsemen:] To look after

thousands, and captains over fifties; and *will set them* to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots.

13 And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers.

14 And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, *even the best of them*, and give them to his servants.

15 And he will take the tenth of your seed,

and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants.

16 And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and *put them* to his work.

17 He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants.

18 And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not hear you in that day.

19 ¶ Nevertheless the people refused to obey

his chariots and his horses. For so the word *paras* signifies (as Lud. De Dieu and Bochartus have observed), and these words should be thus translated, "For his chariots and his horses."

Some shall run before his chariots.] Be his footmen.

Ver. 12.] Others should be disposed of to military offices, higher or lower, as pleased him (xiv. 52), who were to be perfectly subject to him, and displaced by him when he thought good. Others should be made husbandmen, to plough his ground and reap his corn on his own terms; when, perhaps, their labour was necessary about their own fields. Others he would make artificers: which was not very agreeable to that nation, who were inclined from their beginning rather to look after the breed of cattle.

Ver. 13.] He would exercise, he shows, as arbitrary power over the women as over the men; whom he would make to serve in such employments as he thought fit, either for nothing, or such wages as he pleased to give them.

Ver. 14.] Bestow them on such of his courtiers as he thought good to raise to great estates. Which is not to be understood as if he should challenge a right to take their lands from them (for the contrary appears from the story of Ahab, who, without a very wicked contrivance could not possess himself of Naboth's vineyard), but that he should take the fruit of them when he thought it necessary, especially in time of war, to gratify his soldiers. To this case Abarbinel confines the sense of these words.

Ver. 15. *He will take the tenth of your seed and—vineyards.*] This was part of the *jus regium* in the eastern countries (see my notes upon Gen. xxviii. 22), to have the tenth part of the fruit of the land for the king's share: and if they contented themselves with this portion they were accounted good kings. As Cypselus, king of Corinth, is observed by Aristotle to have exacted no more of his subjects than the tenth of their fruits. Such capitations and taxes as Bodinus speaks (lib. vi. De Republ. cap. 2), which are usual now, being unknown in those days. This revenue being brought into his exchequer, he therewith paid his bedchamber-men, and other servants, their salaries. I call them *bedchamber-men*, because the Hebrew word (which we translate *officers*) signifies *eunuchs* (as the LXX. here translate it), who commonly attended them in their chambers. And it was the more grievous to have such men maintained out of this revenue, because they were strangers: for it was not lawful for the Jews to make any of their nation an eunuch. This revenue itself also proved a heavy burden upon the Jews, because this tenth part was exacted out of the remainder, after the tenth part had been paid to the Levites, as Kimchi and Abarbinel observe.

Ver. 16. *Your goodliest young men.*] The most beautiful and proper persons he could find.

Your asses, and put them to his work.] Either at the plough, or for carriage, or any other employment wherein they were necessary.

Ver. 17.] So subject to him, that if he pleased, they should be no better than his slaves. I know none that hath discoursed this whole matter so perspicuously and fully, as the late learned Puffendorf, whose words I shall translate, as I find them in his book, *De Rebus Gestis Philippi*. This people, saith he, had hitherto lived under governors raised up by Divine instinct, who had exacted no tribute of them, nor put them to any charges. With which government they being not contented, but desiring to have a king, like other nations, that should live in pomp and splendour, and keep standing forces about him, to be ready to resist any invasion; Samuel informs them what it was they desired, that they might consider, when they understood it, whether they would persist in their choice: if they would have a king magnificently attended, then he tells them, the king will take their sons, and put them in his chariots, &c. (ver. 11). If they would have him keep up constant forces, then he must appoint them for colonels and captains, and employ those in his wars who were wont to follow their family business (ver. 12). And since, after the manner of other kings, he must keep a stately court, they must be content that their daughters (ver. 13), should serve in several offices; which the king would think below the dignity of his wives and daughters. Many ministers also in several employments, both in war and peace, must have salaries to support them; which must be paid out of their fields and vineyards (ver. 14). For which services, he tells them, the king will exact the tenth of all belonging to them, that he may maintain his royal expenses. In one word, if you will have a king, he must be maintained, after a royal manner, out of your estates.

Ver. 18. *Ye shall cry out in that day, &c.*] This shows, that, in the foregoing verses, Samuel describes the uncontrollable power which the eastern princes exercised over their subjects; who were patiently to hear whatsoever their princes imposed upon them, without any power to help themselves. For, as Grotius observes, this *mishpat* doth not signify a true right, but such a fact as hath *effectum juris* (the effect of right), viz. an obligation of not resisting: which is the reason that Samuel adds these words: that the people, loaded with intolerable oppressions, should implore the help of God: because there was no human remedy left for their relief (see lib. i. De Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 4, sect. 3). This plainly confutes the fancy of the Jews concerning their Sanehdin, and their power to scourge princes: for, as Samuel consulted nobody in making a king, but God alone; so, when he was made, he got such a power, that it is ridiculous to think that high court could control him.

The Lord will not hear you] But leave them under this heavy yoke; because they would not hearken unto him, when he represented to them what would be the effect of that power which they desired him to set over them.

Ver. 19.] This description of the government of

the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us;

20 That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.

21 And Samuel heard all the words of the

the eastern kings did not deter them from persisting in their desires. But they peremptorily demanded a king, though Samuel told them that this demand was a throwing off the government of God. Who always heard their cry, when they were oppressed by their enemies; but now would leave them without any help, when they groaned under the oppression of their kings. Which obstinacy, as an excellent person of ours (Dr. Jackson) speaks, did prognosticate that incurable and desperate disease, which had its fatal crisis in their rejecting Christ: who was both priest and prophet, and their lawful king. In casting off whom they could not but cast off God, that he should not reign over them. And so a great admirer of his paraphraseth the seventh verse of this chapter: "Let it not grieve thy spirit that they grow weary of thee: but let them have their will, for so will they serve the Lord and thy Redeemer."

Ver. 20. *That we also may be like all the nations;* Strange blindness! that they could not see it was their singular felicity, that they were not like other nations: but had God for their governor, who never failed, in time of need, to raise up men of wonderful worth to be their deliverers. It was their vain-glorious humour, therefore, that made them think they were inferior to other nations, unless they saw a prince set over them shining in gold and jewels, living in a sumptuous palace, attended with guards richly clothed, appearing in great pomp and state, as they did in other countries; which they fancied would be for the glory of their land.

people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of the LORD.

22 And the LORD said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city.

Judge us,—and fight our battles.] There was anciently a respect to their military virtue, in the choice of their kings; the very word *rex*, among the Romans, having its original from their abilities to govern armies, and keep them in good order and discipline. Such were all those great men whom God had raised up, as there was occasion, to judge Israel. Who had been so successful when they fought for them, that they were always victorious; which they could not promise themselves their king would be; the very first of which was slain in battle.

Ver. 21.] As he had told all the words of the Lord unto the people (ver. 10).

Ver. 22. *Make them a king.]* Such as they desired, like those of other nations: for so it appears in the following history many of them were, as Samuel had predicted. Witness the words of the people to Rehoboam, concerning Solomon's government (1 Kings xii. 4). And the tyrannical words of Jezebel to Ahab about Naboth's vineyard (1 Kings xxi. 7). And all the violence of Manasseh, who shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem with it (2 Kings xxi. 16). And what David himself did, in the matter of Uriah, when he had defiled his wife (2 Sam. xi. 15, 16).

Samuel said unto the men of Israel, &c.] To the elders of the people, who had attended him about this matter. He bade them leave the business unto him; and God, he doubted not, would set a king over them.

CHAPTER IX.

1 *Saul despairing to find his father's asses, 6 by the counsel of his servant, 11 and direction of young maidens, 15 according to God's revelation, 18 cometh to Samuel. 19 Samuel entertaineth Saul at the feast. 25 Samuel, after secret communication, bringeth Saul on his way.*

1 Now there was a man of Benjamin, whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a mighty man of power.

2 And he had a son, whose name was Saul,

a choice young man, and a goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people.

3 And the asses of Kish Saul's father were

CHAP. IX.

Ver. 1.] In this genealogy there is no difficulty but one; which is, that in two places of the Chronicles it is said, that Ner begat Kish (1 Chron. viii. 37, ix. 39). But by *begetting* there must be meant, the giving him his breeding and education. For it is evident Ner was Kish's brother (1 Sam. xiv. 51). D. Kimchi will have it that he had two names, Abiel and Ner.

A mighty man of power.] This seems not to be meant of his wealth or interest in his country (for Saul himself saith he was of a mean family, ver. 21), but of his great strength, courage, and fortitude; which is therefore mentioned, because it hath been often observed, that *fortes creantur fortibus*.

Ver. 2.] They desired a king like the rest of the nations, who looked upon persons of an heroic stature and countenance to be marked out for empire. Whence the saying of Euripides εἶδος ἀξίον τυραννίδος and that of Curtius, "Quippe hominibus barbaris in corporum

majestate veneratio est." But no words are more memorable, to this purpose, than those of Pliny in the conclusion of his fourth chapter of his panegyric to Trajan, where he saith, the strength and tallness of his body, the nobleness of his aspect, the dignity of his mouth, the gracefulness of his speech, &c. Nonne longe lateque principem ostentant! "Do they not everywhere proclaim a prince!" This was a thing so carefully provided for in ancient times, to have a goodly race of kings, that the Lacedemonians set a fine upon their king Archidamus (as Plutarch tells us in the beginning of his book, περί παιδῶν ἀγαθῆς) for marrying a wife of a low stature; who was likely to bring them, οὐ βασιλέας ἀλλὰ βασιλέσσκους, "not kings but kinglings," to reign over them.

Ver. 3.] Wandered out of their pasture. It is no wonder that Saul was employed in this inquiry, for I suppose he had the charge of looking after his father's cattle; which was an employment the greatest men did not disdain in ancient time: as we learn from the

lost. And Kish said to Saul his son, Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses.

4 And he passed through mount Ephraim, and passed through the land of Shalisha, but they found *them* not: then they passed through the land of Shalim, and *there they were* not: and he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they found *them* not.

5 And when they were come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant that *was* with him, Come, and let us return; lest my father leave *caring* for the asses, and take thought for us.

6 And he said unto him, Behold now, *there is* in this city a man of God, and *he is* an honourable man; all that he saith cometh surely to pass: now let us go thither; peradventure he can shew us our way that we should go.

7 Then said Saul to his servant, But, behold, if we go, what shall we bring the man? for

history of Hercules and Paris, and others among the Greeks. And in Judea asses were a considerable part of their substance; for the greatest persons rode upon asses till the time of Solomon, when horses began to be multiplied (Judg. x. 4).

Ver. 4.] They searched, that is, all the mountainous country of the tribe of Ephraim, which lay next to Benjamin, after they had first gone through that tribe, as it here follows.

He passed through, &c.] Or, "they had passed through the land of Benjamin;" where hearing no tidings of them, they went into the next country, to see if they were strayed thither.

Ver. 5. *Land of Zuph.*] A territory in the tribe of Ephraim, where some of Samuel's ancestors had lived (i. 1), and Ramah, where Samuel now dwelt, seems to have been in it; as we may gather from the next verse.

Come, and let us return;] Being uncertain whither to go next, after they had sought so many places in vain.

Lest my father—take thought for us.] Be afraid that we are lost. The Hebrew word, as Dr. Hammond observes (upon Ps. xxxviii. 18), signifies solicitude of mind, mixed with grief and sorrow.

Ver. 6. *A man of God,*] A prophet.

An honourable man;] A person of great fame, and held in high esteem.

All that he saith cometh surely to pass.] Which procured him such honour.

Peradventure he can shew us our way] To find the asses.

Ver. 7.] This was a part of the honour they did to great men in those countries, to make them a present when they had occasion to address themselves to them. Particularly prophets were thus honoured; being *men of God*; before whom they were not to appear empty. Thus also they demonstrated their reverence to their king, in the next chapter of this book (ver. 27). Provision for their table was as acceptable a present as money: which appears from what Jeroboam's wife brought to Ahijah the prophet (1 Kings xiv. 3).

Ver. 8.] A small present, but as acceptable as the widow's mite; being all they had left in their travels.

Ver. 9. *Enquire of God.*] By consulting a prophet.

He that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer.] Though the word *nabi* (a prophet) had been anciently known, as appears by the books

of Moses; and used in Samuel's days, as appears from many places in this book; yet the more common word, which now prevailed, when Saul was anointed king (for in all languages words are in and out of fashion, in several times), was *roek* (a seer). But in following years, when Samuel wrote this book, *nabi* was become the more usual word in all men's mouths. This is a fair account of these words, from whence some argue, that Samuel was not the author of this book, nor Moses the author of the Pentateuch: where Abraham is called *nabi* (xx. 7); which shows that this was no new word in these days, as they would have this place understood. But it might be sufficient to answer unto this, that *nabi* did not signify, in ancient times, one that foretold things to come; but only one that was familiar with God, and was instructed in his will, that he might instruct others. But now, in Samuel's time, it came to be appropriated to the revealing future things, and foretelling what should come to pass, or revealing secrets which none could know but God.

8 And the servant answered Saul again, and said, Behold, I have here at hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver: *that will I give* to the man of God, to tell us our way.

9 (Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to enquire of God, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the seer: for *he that is now called a Prophet* was beforetime called a Seer.)

10 Then said Saul to his servant, Well said; come, let us go. So they went unto the city where the man of God was.

11 ¶ And as they went up the hill to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw water, and said unto them, Is the seer here?

12 And they answered them, and said, He is; behold, *he is* before you: make haste now, for he came to day to the city; for *there is* a sacrifice of the people to day in the high place:

of Moses; and used in Samuel's days, as appears from many places in this book; yet the more common word, which now prevailed, when Saul was anointed king (for in all languages words are in and out of fashion, in several times), was *roek* (a seer). But in following years, when Samuel wrote this book, *nabi* was become the more usual word in all men's mouths. This is a fair account of these words, from whence some argue, that Samuel was not the author of this book, nor Moses the author of the Pentateuch: where Abraham is called *nabi* (xx. 7); which shows that this was no new word in these days, as they would have this place understood. But it might be sufficient to answer unto this, that *nabi* did not signify, in ancient times, one that foretold things to come; but only one that was familiar with God, and was instructed in his will, that he might instruct others. But now, in Samuel's time, it came to be appropriated to the revealing future things, and foretelling what should come to pass, or revealing secrets which none could know but God.

Ver. 10. *So they went unto the city*] That is, to Ramah.

Ver. 11. *To draw water,*] At the fountain, which (as usual) was at the bottom of the hill.

Is the seer here?] Of which there might be some doubt; because some time he was wont to go circuit about the country.

Ver. 12. *He is; behold, he is before you.*] That is, they could not fail to find him, if they lost no time, but went speedily to the city, before he went to sacrifice; when it would not be proper to interrupt him. He either lived without the gate of the city; or returned from his country circuit.

There is a sacrifice—to day] Either at some solemn festival (the new moon some imagine), or upon some special occasion of prayer and thanksgiving to God: for the people of that city, or for all Israel.

In the high place.] All sacrifices were regularly to be offered before the ark, in the place which the Lord should choose. But while this choice stood suspended, because Shiloh was laid desolate, and no other place appointed; they sacrificed in other places, where neither the ark, nor the tabernacle was: the tabernacle being void of the ark, which was its principal furniture; and the ark being without a house for God to dwell in. What place, then, in this condition, could be more commodious, than those cities where the priests and Levites lived; to which the

13 As soon as ye be come into the city, ye shall straightway find him, before he go up to the high place to eat: for the people will not eat until he come, because he doth bless the sacrifice; and afterwards they eat that be bidden. Now therefore get you up; for about this time ye shall find him.

14 And they went up into the city: and when they were come into the city, behold, Samuel came out against them, for to go up to the high place.

15 ¶ Now the LORD had told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came, saying,

16 To morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me.

17 And when Samuel saw Saul, the LORD

said unto him, Behold the man whom I spake to thee of! this same shall reign over my people.

18 Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is.

19 And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I am the seer: go up before me unto the high place; for ye shall eat with me to day, and to morrow I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that is in thine heart.

20 And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found. And on whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not on thee, and on all thy father's house.

21 And Saul answered and said, Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou so to me?

22 And Samuel took Saul and his servant,

people went for instruction? and they chose the highest parts of these cities for this purpose. Corn. Bertram (cap. 11, De Repub. Jud.) imagines, that from this example high places came to be in use in after ages (unless we suppose them to be the relics of the Canaanites, or more ancient people), for this is the first time we read of a high place among the people of God. Yet we read before of the thing, though not of the name. See Judg. vi. 20, xiii. 19, and so early as Abraham's time we read (Gen. xxii.) he was directed to Mount Moriah to offer his son. The same learned man also thinks, that this was the beginning of synagogues and schools, as our Mr. Thorndike doth in his Religious Assembly, p. 29. For though, when the ark was settled, it became unlawful to offer sacrifices in high places; yet it was no offence to continue there for public prayer, and the praises of God, and the learning of the law. The Jewish doctors take this "high place" to have been some house, where, after they had sacrificed, they feasted when they had done. And so the Targum here translates these words, "the house of feasting."

Ver. 13. *Ye shall straightway find him.*] For on this day he appeared publicly.

Because he doth bless the sacrifice;] That is, the feast upon the sacrifice, which were peace-offerings; the greatest part whereof belonged to him that brought the sacrifice; wherewith he entertained his friends.

Afterwards they eat that be bidden.] The guests of him that offered the sacrifice; who, at this time, I suppose, was Samuel. For God having told him, that he should that day see the man whom he intended for their king, it is likely he appointed more sacrifices to be added unto those which were usually offered at such times, at his own charge. That there might be the greater feast, unto which he invited the people (ver. 24), that is, the principal of the people; and placed the guests (ver. 23), and carved at the table (ver. 23), which are all tokens that he was at the expense of the sacrifice, and made this feast for his friends.

Ver. 14.] Met them directly in his way to the feast: for so God in his providence had disposed things, as it follows in the next words.

Ver. 15.] In the Hebrew words are, "He revealed or uncovered the ear of Samuel;" as is noted in the margin. Now that was done in order to tell him something; and therefore the meaning is, God

told him a secret; using, in all likelihood, a whispering voice.

Ver. 16.] This shows still that all was done by God's direction. The Philistines had grievously oppressed them for forty years together; and though driven out of the country by Samuel, yet were ready to invade them again; as they did, it appears, by the following history. Though God would not hear their cry to relieve them from the oppression of their kings (viii. 18), yet he was so gracious as to make those kings instruments of their deliverance from the oppression of their cruel neighbours.

Ver. 17. *The Lord said unto him, &c.*] With such a low voice as he heard the day before (ver. 15). The word we translate *reign*, signifies something of coercion and restraint, as is observed in the margin; and denotes, he should rule them with an absolute, uncontrollable power, sternly and rigidly, after the manner of the eastern monarchs. Which was, as I said, a punishment for throwing off the kind and gentle government of God.

Ver. 18.] He came up to him, as he was going out of his house. It is an argument that Saul had led a very private life, since he had never seen Samuel, who went about into so many places to judge the people.

Ver. 19. *I am the seer.*] This seems to be spoken out of respect to him.

All that is in thine heart.] All that he desired to know. This shows it was a supper, not a dinner, to which he invited him: otherwise he might have dismissed him as well after dinner as the next morning. But the custom of that country was to make their entertainment in the evening, when business was over.

Ver. 20.] This satisfied him he was a prophet, that he knew what he came to him for, though he had not told him. He frees his mind from all care about the asses; that he might eat and drink the more cheerfully at the feast.

On whom is all the desire of Israel?] The meaning is, all Israel desire a king, and there is none fitter for it than thyself; whose family God is resolved to advance.

Ver. 21.] He thought no person more unfit for the dignity; both because the tribe of which he was had been lamentably impaired in the time of the Judges (ch. xx.), and his own family was very inconsiderable in this little tribe. He concluded therefore, that Samuel did but jest with him.

Ver. 22.] He convinced him he was in earnest, by

and brought them into the parlour, and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden, which *were* about thirty persons.

23 And Samuel said unto the cook, Bring the portion which I gave thee, of which I said unto thee, Set it by thee.

24 And the cook took up the shoulder, and *that* which *was* upon it, and set *it* before Saul. And Samuel said, Behold that which is left! set *it* before thee, and eat: for unto this time hath it been kept for thee since I said, I have invited the people. So Saul did eat with Samuel that day.

setting him uppermost at the table, in the most honourable place among the guests.

About thirty persons.] The principal persons, I suppose, of the city, who were witnesses of the extraordinary respect which he paid him.

Ver. 23.] The master of the feast distributed to every one their portion; or ordered what dish should be set before them: and Samuel had commanded the cook (before they sat down) not to set one dish upon the table, but keep it till he called for it.

Ver. 24. *The cook took up the shoulder, &c.*] The left shoulder and breast; for the right shoulder and the right breast belonged to the priest (Lev. vii. 33, 34). As the principal place was given him at the feast, so the principal dish also was set before him, to express still the great regard he had to his person.

Behold that which is left!] Reserved on purpose for his entertainment.

Set it before thee, and eat.] Let it stand, as it is set before thee, and eat of it as thy portion.

For unto this time hath it been kept for thee, &c.] The plain translation of these words, is that of Lud, De Dieu, "Eat, because till this appointed time it hath been reserved for thee, when I said, I have invited certain persons." That is, besides the thirty persons, he told the cook he had invited some others (which were Saul and his attendant) for whom he would have this shoulder to be reserved. For by in-

25 ¶ And when they were come down from the high place into the city, Samuel communed with Saul upon the top of the house.

26 And they arose early: and it came to pass about the spring of the day, that Samuel called Saul to the top of the house, saying, Up, that I may send thee away. And Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, abroad.

27 And as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (and he passed on,) but stand thou still awhile, that I may shew thee the word of God.

viting *the people*, he understands only these two persons; the word *people* sometimes signifying (as he shows) very few. He thinks, indeed, the feast was not made by Samuel, who brought along with him only these two guests: but that seems to me not to agree with the whole story.

Saul did eat with Samuel that day.] Who entertained him very nobly; for the left shoulder was always accounted the best part of the sacrifice: being the same with that which the priest had for his portion. And therefore set before the king, if he was present at the feast, and thence called by Josephus *μερίς βασιλική*, "the royal portion:" for the arm and shoulder, as Philo discourses, were the symbols of strength and fortitude.

Ver. 25.] Concerning his advancement to the royal dignity, and his administration of the government.

Ver. 26. *About the spring of the day,*] Before the people of the place were stirring.

Up, that I may send thee away.] According to his promise (ver. 19). For Samuel intended out of respect to him, to conduct him part of his way. But went without any of his usual attendants; that what he did, might, for the present, be kept a secret.

Ver. 27.] Which he would have none to hear but himself; because he now meant only to give him private satisfaction, that God had chosen him to be the king of his people; before whom afterwards he was publicly chosen by lot.

CHAPTER X.

1 Samuel anointeth Saul. 2 He confirmeth him by prediction of three signs. 9 Saul's heart is changed, and he prophesieth. 14 He concealeth the matter of the kingdom from his uncle. 17 Saul is chosen at Mizpeh by lot. 26 The different affections of his subjects.

1 THEN Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, *Is it*

not because the LORD hath anointed thee *to be* captain over his inheritance?

CHAP. X.

Ver. 1. *Then Samuel took a vial of oil,*] It was the business of a prophet to anoint a king, as Abarbinel observes upon Exod. xxx. Which he proves from this example of Samuel's anointing Saul, and afterward David; and Nathan's anointing Solomon, and the prophet (which the Hebrew doctors say was Jonah) anointing Jehu (2 Kings ix. 1, 6). This unction seems to have been in the open fields: but that it was done at a fountain, because Solomon was there anointed, cannot be proved (as the Hebrew doctors would have it) from that single instance; which will not make a general rule. Nor can it be proved, that this was sacred oil taken from the tabernacle, but rather common: for Samuel was no priest, and therefore could not meddle with that which was kept there; nor was he now near unto that place.

And poured it upon his head,] There is no order of God that we read of, for the anointing of kings: but it had been an ancient custom, two hundred years before this time, as appears from the parable of Jotham (see on Judg. ix. 8). And it was now used by Samuel, that their kings might be like the kings of other nations, as they desired. In aftertimes they were far superior to them, if we may believe the Hebrew doctors; who say the family of David had the privilege to be anointed with the same holy oil wherewith the high-priest was anointed. For though the law appropriated it unto him, yet there was a dispensation with the law, manifested by some prophet. For certain it is, that Solomon was anointed with oil taken from the tabernacle (1 Kings i. 39). Only, they say, there was a difference in the form of anointing: the king being anointed in the form of a crown en-

2 When thou art departed from me to day, then thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulchre in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say unto thee, The asses which thou wentest to seek are found: and, lo, thy father hath left the care of the asses, and sorroweth for you, saying, What shall I do for my son?

3 Then shalt thou go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the plain of Tabor, and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to Beth-el, one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine:

circling his head; but the high-priest in the form of a cross, by one line drawn with the oil running down his forehead, and by another drawn by the oil between his eyebrows; which they call in the form of the Greek letter *chi*, having no mind to mention the name of the cross (see Selden's *Titles of Honour*, p. 144. *De Success*, in *Pontific. lib. ii. cap. 9*, Schickard's *Jus Regium*, cap. 1, theor. 4).

And kissed him,] In token of subjection and reverence to him; according to the custom of ancient times (see *Gen. xli. 40*), and in those following (*Ps. ii. 12*). This the Jews call *neshikah shel gedolah*, "the kiss of greatness or majesty;" in our language, the kiss of homage.

Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee, &c.] That is, doubt not, but by authority from God thou art made the ruler of his people. This was a thing not easily to be believed, and therefore he gives him three or four signs, in the following verses, to confirm his faith. But it must not be imagined, that now he was inaugurated; for that was done afterward, according to this prophetic prediction: which was kept so private, that it showed he intended no more now, than to assure Saul he should be made king, and publicly installed their sovereign.

Ver. 2.] His foretelling Saul so exactly how many persons he should meet, and the place where, and what they should say to him, was an argument that he was a prophet; and therefore was to be believed in what he said to him from God concerning the kingdom. Rachel's sepulchre was in the way to Beth-lehem (*Gen. xxxv.*), which was in the tribe of Judah, but in the border of Benjamin.

Ver. 3. Beth-el,] This had been a religious place ever since the days of Jacob: as if, by God's appearance to him there, it had been consecrated for prayer and sacrifice: and the tabernacle being now without the ark, and the ark in no determined place, they sacrificed in high places (as Samuel we read did in the foregoing chapter), and particularly here at Beth-el; where Jeroboam afterward settled one of his calves. But Fortunatus Scacchus thinks it no improbable conjecture, that they had no altar, but sacrificed upon the bare ground (*Myrothec. Elæochrysm. Sacr. lib. ii. cap. 5*).

One carrying three kids, &c.] Intending to offer sacrifice of peace-offerings.

Ver. 4.] This may be looked upon as a third sign, or an appendix to the second. And it is the more remarkable, because this present which they made him, was a figure of that honour which the people did him, when he was declared their king. And if these loaves were two of the three which they were going to offer in sacrifice (as some think they were), the present was the more noble. But though this may be justified, by supposing them to be given to one that was faint with travelling, and which they might recruit at Beth-el; yet we may as well think, as Kimchi doth, that

4 And they will salute thee, and give thee two loaves of bread; which thou shalt receive of their hands.

5 After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines: and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy:

6 And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man.

they were two loaves which they brought along with them for their own use in their journey: which they freely imparted unto Saul; and Samuel bade him not refuse; but learn thereby, when he had abundance, to be kind to those who were in want.

Ver. 5. Hill of God,] So called, because they were wont to sacrifice here; or because here was a school of the prophets, who were called *men of God*. Some take this to be Gibeah, others Kirjath-jearim.

Where is the garrison of the Philistines:] This makes it probable the hill beforementioned was Geba, or Gibeah: for there they had a garrison (*xiii. 3*), which doth not contradict what was said *vii. 13*. For though the Philistines were subdued, and made no invasions upon the Israelites while Samuel lived; yet they might retain some strongholds, out of which they could not drive them.

Thou shalt meet a company of prophets] Here it seems was a college of prophets, settled for the instruction of youth in the knowledge of the law and of piety (who were called "the sons of the prophets"), where, though the Philistines also had a garrison, yet in this day they were better than many Christians (as Grotius observes), for they spared those places (when they conquered them) where learned men lived, and were dedicated to the study of religion (see *lib. iii. De Jure Belli et Pacis*, cap. 11, sect. 10).

Coming down from the high place] Perhaps they came from a sacrifice, which had been offered in the high place: and now praised God for his benefits, in the following manner.

With a psaltery, &c.] With a variety of instrumental music; among which the *nevel* (which we translate *psaltery*) was the chief: having its name, as the Jewish doctors fancy (in the *Midrasch*, upon *Ps. lxxxii.*), from hence—that it put down all other instruments of music, as much as a wise man doth a fool. Bartoloccius, in his *Kirjath-Sepher*, par. ii. fol. 185, &c., gives an account of this, and the rest of the instruments here mentioned. With which I do not think fit to trouble the reader; but only note, that this music was used in prophesying, because the minds of the prophets were thereby composed, and made apt to receive soft and good impressions, as Grotius here observes from many examples.

They shall prophesy:] Sing the praises of God, as the word *prophesy* sometimes signifies (*Exod. xv. 21*; *1 Chron. xxv. 3*). In what manner this was done, it is not so easy for us now to define or specify (as Mr. Mede speaks). But one of them seems to have been the precentor, to usher in the song or ditty; and the rest to have answered, *Tà ἀπορροισία, the extremes, or last words of the verse* (see him, book i. discourse *xvi. p. 78*).

Ver. 6. The Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee,] This was the highest assurance of all the rest, that Samuel anointed him by God's authority; who vouchsafed suddenly to inspire him with such thoughts and

7 And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, *that* thou do as occasion serve thee ; for God *is* with thee.

8 And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal : and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, *and* to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings ; seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and shew thee what thou shalt do.

9 ¶ And it was *so*, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart : and all those signs came to pass that day.

10 And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him ; and

affections that he became like one of them, viz., a psalmist : able in an instant to compose hymns in the praises of God, or to accompany them in their melodies, which he had never learnt. For he was not bred in the school of the prophets.

Turned into another man.] Endued with extraordinary prudence and courage, and such like qualities, as fitted him for the government and conduct of God's people.

Ver. 7.] As if he had said, I cannot give thee particular rules about every thing that is to be done by thee ; but doubt not to undertake the government of the people, for God's Spirit shall guide thee to do that which the present occasion requires. Be confident of good success in all thy undertakings, for God will be with thee when thou goest out against thine enemies. The Chaldee paraphrast understands the foregoing words as if he had said, "make all things belonging to a king," and then adds, "for the Word of the Lord will be thy help."

Ver. 8. *Gilgal.*] A place which had been famous for many great things done there, when they first came to Canaan : and lay conveniently for all the tribes beyond Jordan to meet, now they dwelt there. The following words look like another sign which he gave him of God's presence with him in future times, if he were obedient to his commands. For it cannot be understood of his going immediately to Gilgal, and staying there seven days ; for the people were first to be called together to Mizpeh, where he was made king (ver. 17), and after the defeat of the Ammonites he was confirmed in the kingdom at Gilgal (xi. 14, 15). And then the next year, a war breaking out with the Philistines, all the people met at Gilgal, and Saul with them ; waiting for Samuel to come, as he had appointed, to offer sacrifice ; which Saul, being impatient of staying so long for him, offered himself, &c. (xii. 4, 8, 9), and thereby forfeited God's favour ; whose prophet had assured him he would not fail to come to meet him here. But then these words must not be pointed as they are now, but as the Hebrew text will bear ; retaining the same words, and only altering the pause or point in this manner : "Thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal : and, behold, I will come unto thee to offer burnt-offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace-offerings, seven days." Here is to be a pause ; and then another sentence begins thus : *Thou shalt tarry till I come unto thee, &c.* As if he had said, See, in any case, that thou tarry till I come, and show thee what thou shalt do. Which Samuel, perhaps, knew not himself at present : but intended to ask counsel of God ; and being fully instructed in this great business, then come to consecrate him (as Dr. Jackson conjectures), and establish him in his kingdom, by a solemn sacrifice for seven days, such as Solomon used at the consecration of the temple (see his Third Sermon on Jer. xxvi. 19 ; and the very same he repeats in his

the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them.

11 And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said one to another, What *is* this *that* is come unto the son of Kish ? *Is* Saul also among the prophets ?

12 And one of the same place answered and said, But who *is* their father ? Therefore it became a proverb, *Is* Saul also among the prophets ?

13 And when he had made an end of prophesying, he came to the high place.

book of the Knowledge of Jesus Christ, ch. 17, paragraph. 4).

Ver. 9.] So great was the goodness of God, that he immediately fulfilled the last and chief of these signs : for he was no sooner gone from Samuel, but he felt another spirit come into him of wisdom and fortitude, to qualify him for the government of God's people. Which afterward God took away from him, because of his sins, xvi. 14 (see Ps. li. 12).

Ver. 10.] He mentions not the other signs particularly, because they were not of such general concernment unto others, but for his own satisfaction : where-as this of the prophets' meeting him, and his conversion into a prophet, was of great and universal concernment ; to make the people reverence him as their king, when they heard how God had honoured him with such an extraordinary gift from heaven.

Ver. 11.] It begat wonder in all those who knew his education, that he should on a sudden be inspired as they were, who were bred up in the school of the prophets : for though it was in the power of God alone to bestow the gift of prophecy upon men, yet commonly he endowed none with it but such as were trained up in those studies which might dispose them for it. For had it been usual to invest those with this spirit who had not been educated in such a course as might fit them to receive it, we cannot think it would have been so great a marvel now, as to give rise to this proverb. Which must not be understood, as Procopius Gazeus observes, as if Saul had perpetually the gift of prophecy ; but that he received such a spiritual gift, whereby he at present prophesied, and was endued with prudence also to govern the people of God. Thus the seventy elders who were to assist Moses, prophesied ; but not always. It is observed by Erasmus, that this became a proverb, when they saw, *aliquem indecenter alieno gregi admixtum*, "any man indecently mingled with company that were strangers to him." Or, when they saw a sudden change wrought in any person ; as Gregory Nazianzen applied it when he was chosen a bishop : "Saul prophesied so much beyond expectation, and when nobody thought of it, that the miracle became a proverb."

Ver. 12.] This wonder was presently satisfied by a prudent person among them, who bade them consider who it was that made prophets : not men, nor merely good education, but God alone ; who was the father of all the children of the prophets (i. e. of their disciples), to teach them by his Spirit. Which he could bestow when he pleased upon any man, and make him a prophet, without the help of any other master : which was the case of Amos, vii. 14. And that is the meaning of the word *father* in this place, which signifies the same with *master* or *teacher* (see upon Gen. iv. 20, 21).

Ver. 13.] Herein he differed from the prophets who met him, that he prophesied but for a short

14 ¶ And Saul's uncle said unto him and to his servant, Whither went ye? And he said, To seek the asses: and when we saw that *they were* no where, we came to Samuel.

15 And Saul's uncle said, Tell me, I pray thee, what Samuel said unto you.

16 And Saul said unto his uncle, He told us plainly that the asses were found. But of the matter of the kingdom, whereof Samuel spake, he told him not.

17 ¶ And Samuel called the people together unto the Lord to Mizpeh;

18 And said unto the children of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand

of all kingdoms, and of them that oppressed you:

19 And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, *Nay*, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes, and by your thousands.

20 And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken.

21 When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken: and when they sought him, he could not be found.

22 Therefore they enquired of the Lord fur-

time, this not being his office: and when he had done, he went up to the high place from whence they came down. Where was, I suppose, a place of worship, unto which he went up to give thanks to God for his gifts, and to pray to him to prosper him in the government he designed for him.

Ver. 14. *Saul's uncle*] Who met him here in the high place, or on his way home.

Whither went ye?] How came you to stay so long before your return?

Were no where,] In no place where they sought them.

We came to Samuel.] To be informed by him.

Ver. 15.] What discourse they had with him.

Ver. 16.] Lest he should seem to have been seeking so high a dignity: and because hitherto Samuel thought fit it should be kept a secret between them two.

Ver. 17. *Samuel called the people together*] How long after he departed from Samuel we are not told; but now resolved to declare God's choice of Saul to be their king more publicly.

To Mizpeh;] Which was a very famous place, where they used to meet upon great occasions (see ch. vii.), and God was pleased to be present (as hath been before observed) wheresoever there was a general assembly of his people for the common good (see upon Judg. xx. 1). Yet one cannot well imagine, that every person of the whole body of all Israel were called hither unto this convention; but by the *people* we are to understand all the elders and heads of their tribes, who governed and represented the rest; and accordingly that which follows is to be interpreted.

Ver. 18.] He commemorates the benefits they received from him ever since they were in Egypt; from whence he brought them; and suffered none of the kingdoms that lay in their way to Canaan to obstruct their passage: and since they came there delivered them from many heavy oppressions.

Ver. 19.] By raising up judges whensoever they cried to him for help: who never failed to conquer all their enemies. When he desired them to continue under his government they refused, and would not be denied what they asked. They would not any longer be governed by God, but have a king settled over them; to whom they might resort for help.

By your thousands.] Into which their tribes were divided. This was a wonderful obstinacy and stupidity, that, after God had given them time to consider what it was they desired, and what difference there was between his government and that of the kings round about them, they should not relent, but persist to the last in their resolution, and imagine that a king could save them, though God was not with him.

Ver. 20. *When Samuel had caused all the tribes to come near,*] Unto the place where the lots were to be drawn, in the presence of the heads of their tribes and families, who represented all the rest.

The tribe of Benjamin was taken.] This is a phrase used in the seventh of Joshua, about the discovery of him who had offended in the accursed thing; which all agree was by lots. And so Rasi and Rabag understand it here: though Kimchi imagines God told him by *urim* and *thummim*, out of what tribe and family their king should be taken. Which is not probable, because the ark was not now at Mizpeh: before which the high-priest was to stand, when he consulted the Divine Majesty by *urim* and *thummim*.

Ver. 21.] The holy writer shortens this account of casting lots, but it is pretty evident they were cast four times: in the first the tribe of Benjamin was taken; in the second the family of Matri in that tribe was taken: but there being several households in that family, it was cast a third time, that they might know in what house their king was, and that of Kish was taken: and in his house, by a new lottery, Saul was taken: and he took this course, as to prevent all dispute, so to give him the greater authority over them, as a person divinely appointed; according to what God had said, Deut. xix. 15. And it is very observable, that Plato himself acknowledges a government appointed by lots to be Θεοφιλες ἄρχη, "a government beloved of God" (lib. iv. De Legibus).

Here interpreters are wont to inquire, why their first king should be chosen out of the smallest tribe, sprung from the youngest son of Jacob, and out of the smallest family in this tribe: especially since Judah all along had the pre-eminence among his brethren, and the great King was promised to spring from him. To which this seems to be a reasonable satisfaction; that this king being extorted by their unprofitful importunities, and given them in anger (as I before observed), God was pleased to express his dislike of it by this choice: whereby he also intended to take them off from depending on their king (whose power was small) so much as on himself.

He could not be found.] Having withdrawn himself, either out of feebleness of spirit (as some think), or rather out of modesty he declined so high an authority, unless imposed upon him: or, perhaps, being affrighted when he heard Samuel still representing God as offended with them for asking a king, which was to reject his government.

Ver. 22. *The Lord answered,*] From hence Abarbanel argues, that God directed them, both by lot, and by *urim* and *thummim*. Which if it be true, then, though the ark was not there, yet they inquired of the Lord in the usual way, and he was pleased to

ther, if the man should yet come thither. And the LORD answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff.

23 And they ran and fetched him thence : and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward.

24 And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the LORD hath chosen, that *there is none like him among all the people ?* And all

the people shouted, and said, God save the king.

25 Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house.

26 ¶ And Saul also went home to Gibeah ; and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched.

give answers anywhere, in great and weighty cases. As Abiathar inquired of the Lord with the ephod for David, at Keilah and at Ziklag (xxiii. 9, xxx. 7).

Among the stuff.] Or, among the carriages. Here the Jews observe, that "whosoever flies dominion, him dominion follows." For when they told Saul he was chosen king, he said he was not fit for that office, and bade them inquire again by *urim* and *thummim* : which they make the meaning of the word *further*. And while they were going to make this inquiry, he went and hid himself, till the oracle discovered him (see Buxtorf, *Hist. Urim et Thummim*, cap. 3, p. 307).

Ver. 23.] A princely person, and of a majestic aspect : as Corn. Nepos describes Iphicrates in the account he gives of his life, cap. 3. *Fuit et animo magno et corpore, imperatoriaque forma, ut ipso aspectu cuivis injiceret admirationem sui*, "He was great both in mind and body, having a form so imperial, that his very aspect struck every one with admiration of him." And thus P. Cunæus observes, that not only barbarous people, but the most polite nations did, *Majestatem corporis venerari*, "look upon a majestic body with veneration," lib. i. *De Repub. Hebr.* p. 85. Which appears by what Homer saith of Agamemnon, *Iliad.* iii. ver. 166, and Virgil of Æneas and Turnus : the latter of which he describes just like Saul, lib. vii. ver. 782.

"Ipse inter primos prestanti corpore Turmus
Vertitur, arma tenens, et toto vertice supra est."

Ver. 24. *See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen,* &c.] Though the people were resolutely bent to have a king, yet they were sensible none could make one but God. And therefore they came, in the beginning of this business, to ask one of his prophets. But Samuel could not constitute one without Divine direction and appointment, as appears by the first verse of this chapter, where he saith, *the Lord hath anointed thee* ; and the lot whereby he was publicly chosen was cast *before the Lord* (ver. 19, 23). And accordingly here he tells them, *the Lord hath chosen him*. Thus afterward the Lord commanded David to be anointed (xvi. 1, 3), and among all his sons Solomon was particularly appointed by God to succeed him (1 Chron. xxix. 5).

None like him] Such was his stature and his aspect, that, as Josephus expresses it, *ἔξειχετε ἀνάντων καὶ τὸ ἕψος ἦν βασιλικώτατος*, "he excelled, and was most kindly in his height" (lib. vi. *Antiq.* cap. 5).

All the people shouted] All that were then present, except some profane fellows, who were so far from owning him for their king that they despised him.

God save the king.] In the Hebrew, "let the king live," that is, be prosperous. The same form of words was used in after-ages, when they made kings (1 Kings i. 34, 39 ; 2 Kings xi. 12 ; 2 Chron. xxiii. 11). All this being done at Mizpeh, when Samuel set up the great stone called Eben-ezer, it is not improbable that Saul was there declared their king.

Ver. 25.] The right of the king, which he had laid before the people, upon their first desire to have

one (viii. 11), he now wrote in a book, and laid up before the Lord : that it might be a witness against them, that all the evils which hereafter befell them, were drawn upon them by their own desires. For what Petrus Cunæus saith, that he wrote the words mentioned Deut. xvii. 16, &c., is altogether unlikely : they being laid up before the Lord long ago, when the law was put by the side of the ark (Deut. xxxi. 26). Josephus said a great deal better (lib. vi. *Antiq.* cap. 5). *Τὰ μέλλοντα συμβῆσθαι κατὰ γράφαι, &c.* "The prophet having written the evils that should befall them, he read them in the ears of the king, and then laid up the book in the tabernacle of God, to be a testimony unto future ages of what he had foretold." A duplicate of this writing, it is likely, he left with the elders of the people. The people were not dismissed by Saul, who would not presently take upon him to exercise his authority. For Samuel was there, who had been for many years their supreme governor. That is, sixteen years (as Sir J. Marsham computes) before the inauguration of Saul : and he lived eighteen years after, as Josephus saith, in the latter end of the sixth book of his *Antiquities* ; during which time he exercised the power of a judge.

Ver. 26. *Saul also went home to Gibeah :*] In this he still showed his humility : going to his own home, which was no princely palace.

With him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched.] A company of stout valiant men, of great resolution : whom God inclined to follow him, as his guard. Or, were moved, perhaps, by the authority of Samuel (who was a man of God) to go and attend him.

Ver. 27. *The children of Belial said,*] Some very lewd men (see upon Deut. xiii. 13), who hated all government : and being, it is probable, men of some rank and quality, were proud, and despised a person of such a small family.

How shall this man save us ?] They would not vouchsafe so much as to call him by his name ; but insolently contemned him, as one of no note, who had no power to deliver them.

Brought him no presents.] As the manner was to do unto their kings in the eastern countries, when they first tendered their service to them. Which was a token of their benevolence, subjection, and joy. Thus the Psalmist represents the people offering gifts to the Messiah, Ps. xlv. and lxxii. Jonathan thus expresses it in this place, They did not come to wish him a happy reign.

But he held his peace.] This was an act of great prudence : which declared he was endued with an extraordinary spirit ; which enabled him to dissemble his knowledge of the scorn they put upon him. For if he had taken notice of it, he must have punished it ; and it had not been safe to begin his reign with any thing of severity : therefore he wisely ordered himself, as if he did not observe their neglect. Corn. Bertram thinks, in his book *De Repub. Jud.* cap. 10, that these men refusing to be governed by Saul, he retired for a while, and led a private life : leaving

27 But the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him,

Samuel to administer all affairs, as he had done for many years. But whether that be true or not, it is evident Saul, in the beginning of his reign, was endowed with a spirit of singular wisdom and modera-

tion; and was none of those princes whom Dion Prusæus describes (*Orat. De Regno*, p. 5), *μαχαρίζοντες ἐξουσίαν μὲν ἀνάγκης*, "who bless and praise power, joined with folly and want of understanding."

CHAPTER XI.

1 *Nahash offereth them of Jabesh-gilead a reproachful condition.* 4 *They send messengers, and are delivered by Saul.* 13 *Saul thereby is confirmed, and his kingdom renewed.*

1 THEN Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against Jabesh-gilead: and all the men of Jabesh said unto Nahash, Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee.

2 And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, On this condition will I make a covenant with you, that I may thrust out all your right eyes, and lay it for a reproach upon all Israel.

3 And the elders of Jabesh said unto him, Give us seven days' respite, that we may send messengers unto all the coasts of Israel: and then, if there be no man to save us, we will come out to thee.

4 ¶ Then came the messengers to Gibeah of

Saul, and told the tidings in the ears of the people: and all the people lifted up their voices, and wept.

5 And, behold, Saul came after the herd out of the field; and Saul said, What aileth the people that they weep? And they told him the tidings of the men of Jabesh.

6 And the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly.

7 And he took a yoke of oxen, and hewed them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the coasts of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and

CHAP. XI.

Ver. 1. *Nahash the Ammonite*] He was either the king of the children of Ammon, or the captain of his host; who laid siege to Jabesh-gilead, as Josephus saith, about a month after Saul was chosen king: but had levied war against them before (xii. 12), which was the occasion of their desiring a king.

Came up—against Jabesh-gilead.] He renewed, it is likely, their old pretensions to this country: which they had made in the time of Jephthah. For Jabesh-gilead was in the tribe of Manasseh on the other side Jordan; bordering upon the Ammonites: who laid a claim to this country, which the Israelites took from Sihon and Og, as we read in Judg. xi.

We will serve thee.] Be his subjects, but not slaves, with whom no covenant was made.

Ver. 2.] He would not put out both their eyes, because that would have made them unserviceable to him; but only the right, which (as many learned men have observed) was most useful in war; the left eye being covered with their shields which they held in their left hand: so Procopius Gazæus, "the left eye is covered with the shield; with the right we see our enemies." The only reason he gives for such insolent treatment was, that all Israel might know what they were to expect, if he could prevail over them.

Ver. 3.] It may seem strange, that either they should submit so soon to such base conditions; or that Nahash should grant them so much respite, when he saw them so abject, and inclined to yield to him. But the reason of both is visible: for Saul they thought was not able to help them; having not yet taken upon him the government, but living privately (see ver. 5); and Nahash, it is like, was loath to drive them to desperation, by denying them this short space to expect relief, which he thought could not possibly come to them, though Saul should appear and endeavour to levy an army; for that he imagined could not be done in so few days.

Ver. 4. *Gibeah of Saul,*] So called, because Saul was there born, and bred, and dwelt.

And wept.] As men despairing of relief.

Ver. 5.] By this it appears (as I noted in the conclusion of the foregoing chapter), that some men, not only refusing to submit to him, but despising him, he went and lived retired, and led a rustic life; exercising no authority over the people; but leaving all to Samuel's management.

Ver. 6. But now he resolved, by an impulse he felt from heaven, to show that God had chosen him to be their king. Who, upon this occasion, gave him an extraordinary measure of courage, zeal, and military skill.

Ver. 7. *He took a yoke of oxen,*] Which he had newly brought out of the field (ver. 5).

And hewed them in pieces, &c.] He herein begins to give a proof of his resolution, by this terrible threatening; and by the representation he made of the execution he intended, if he was disobeyed. Whereby it appears, that the kings of Israel assumed such an absolute power as Samuel described ch. viii. One part of which consisted in making war, and raising soldiers, by their sole authority, and punishing those that did not come to the army at their summons. For we never read that they consulted the oracle before they went to war; nor that they are reproved by the prophets for that neglect. In like manner they made laws, which is the act of a sovereign. For though they could not alter the laws of Moses, but were to govern themselves by them; yet, in things not determined there, or were not clear and plain, they made what laws they thought good; as appears by David, and Solomon, and other of their best princes.

The fear of the Lord fell on the people,] They were not less affected with the cutting these oxen in pieces, than they had been with the using the Levite's concubine in like manner (Judg. xix. 19), as Bochartus notes: who observes something like this among heathen people (*Hierozoic. par. i. lib. ii. cap. 33*).

after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the fear of the Lord fell on the people, and they came out with one consent.

8 And when he numbered them in Bezek, the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand.

9 And they said unto the messengers that came, Thus shall ye say unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, To-morrow, by that time the sun be hot, ye shall have help. And the messengers came and shewed it to the men of Jabesh; and they were glad.

10 Therefore the men of Jabesh said, To-morrow we will come out unto you, and ye shall do with us all that seemeth good unto you.

11 And it was so on the morrow, that Saul put the people in three companies; and they came into the midst of the host in the morning

They came out with one consent.] God, who put courage into Saul, possessed the people also with a fear of offending him; now that he asserted his royal authority over them. For he names himself before Samuel (the kingly dignity being superior to the prophetic), but wisely mentions him also, that they who did not reverence himself as their king, might follow the prophet, whom all revered.

Ver. 8. *Bezek.*] Of this place, see upon Judg. i. 6. It is thought by some, that the Philistines invaded them in the west, as the Ammonites did in the east (just as they had done formerly in the time of Jephthah, Judg. x. 7, 8), which is the reason so few of Judah came in at this summons; being engaged elsewhere against another dangerous enemy. But they would not wholly neglect to come to his assistance in this other war, but showed their forwardness to obey him, as much as they were able. Bertram, also, Altinius (in his Shilo, lib. iii. cap. 11), and others, take it as an honour done to this tribe, which had the pre-eminence, that they were numbered by themselves. But Sir J. Marsham looks upon it as the beginning of a schism (Secl. ix.)

Ver. 9.] The morrow after their return, before noon.

Ver. 10. *Jabesh said.*] Unto Nahash the Ammonite.

To-morrow we will come out, &c.] In case, that is, relief did not come to them by that time: of which they pretended to have no hope. Most look upon this as spoken ironically and in mockery: but Grotius takes it for a stratagem, to make them secure: according to the opinion of those times, that they might delude an enemy by deceitful words: as Elisha did the Syrians, 2 Kings vi. 18, 19, &c. (see lib. iii. De Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 1, sect. 17.)

Ver. 11.] He set upon them, I suppose, on three sides, and the men of Jabesh issuing out of the other, they were so distracted that they could make little resistance: but the Israelites got into the midst of them very early, and made a great slaughter of them till noon.

They which remained were scattered.] This is added to show, with what a complete victory Saul began his reign: whereby God established his authority.

Ver. 12. *The people said unto Samuel.*] Who, it appears from hence, accompanied Saul in his expedition, to encourage him with hopes of good success. Great successes make great alterations in the affections of the people; who quietly saw Saul contemned a little while ago; but now would have inquiry made after those sons of Belial, who spake opprobriously of him (x. 27).

Ver. 13.] He prudently dissembled his knowledge

watch, and slew the Ammonites until the heat of the day: and it came to pass, that they which remained were scattered, so that two of them were not left together.

12 ¶ And the people said unto Samuel, Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to death.

13 And Saul said, There shall not a man be put to death this day: for to-day the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel.

14 Then said Samuel to the people, Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there.

15 And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before the Lord in Gilgal; and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before the Lord; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

of their despal of him, before the kingdom was confirmed to him: but this moderation, now that he was wonderfully victorious, argued greater wisdom and goodness. For nothing is more glorious than to be humble and meek in the height of power. Besides the policy he exercised in pardoning offenders (whereby he laid the strongest obligations upon them to be faithful to him), it was a piece of piety to imitate God, who had been so good to them all.

Ver. 14.] New kingdoms are not easily settled. And this place was famous upon many accounts, as Mizpeh was, where Samuel first declared him king. Particularly, Samuel was wont to judge the people here (vii. 16).

Ver. 15. *There they made Saul king.*] He had been anointed in Ramah; and chosen by lot in Mizpeh; but still some disdained to own him as their king: which made him content himself for a time (as I said before) with a private life. But now, after this signal token of God's presence with him, in the late victory, he was, by common consent, acknowledged by all the people as their king. Which is the meaning of these words, "they made Saul king;" for it is certain, it was neither they nor Samuel that could make a king; but God alone: who ordered Samuel to anoint him, and then made the lot to fall upon him; and now inclined the hearts of all the people to submit to his authority.

The LXX. here say, ἔχρισε Σαυὺλ, &c., that "Samuel here anointed Saul king over Israel." And Josephus (lib. vi. cap. 6), that he again anointed Saul, τῷ ἁγίῳ ἐλαίῳ, "with holy oil." But there is not a word of this anointing in the Hebrew text, nor in the Vulgar Latin: and the Targum very well expresses it, "they made Saul to reign," i. e. would not let him any longer lead a private life; but prayed him to take the government upon him according to God's ordinance, and promised subjection to him. Gilgal seems to have been chosen for this purpose, rather than any other place: because there was a sanctified piece of ground, as Abarbanel speaks, where when they entered into Canaan, the ark first stood: which now, perhaps, they brought hither, and offered sacrifice before it.

There they sacrificed—before the Lord.] Who was present, as I observed before (see Judg. xx. 1), in such great assemblies of the body of the people: with whom both they and their king made a covenant of obedience to him, by offering of the sacrifices.

Rejoiced greatly.] By feasting upon the peace-offerings: giving thanks to God for the great victory, and for settling the kingdom.

CHAPTER XII.

1 Samuel testifieth his integrity. 6 He reproveth the people of ingratitude. 16 He terrifieth them with thunder in harvest time. 20 He comforteth them in God's mercy.

1 AND Samuel said unto all Israel, Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made a king over you.

2 And now, behold, the king walketh before you: and I am old and grayheaded; and, behold, my sons are with you: and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day.

3 Behold, here I am: witness against me before the LORD, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you.

4 And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand.

5 And he said unto them, The LORD is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found ought in my hand. And they answered, He is witness.

6 ¶ And Samuel said unto the people, It is the LORD that advanced Moses and Aaron, and

that brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt.

7 Now therefore stand still, that I may reason with you before the LORD of all the righteous acts of the LORD, which he did to you and to your fathers.

8 When Jacob was come into Egypt, and your fathers cried unto the LORD, then the LORD sent Moses and Aaron, which brought forth your fathers out of Egypt, and made them dwell in this place.

9 And when they forgat the LORD their God, he sold them into the hand of Siserá, captain of the host of Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab, and they fought against them.

10 And they cried unto the LORD, and said, We have sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD, and have served Baalim and Ashtaroth: but now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and we will serve thee.

11 And the LORD sent Jerubbaal, and Bedan, and Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you

CHAP. XII.

Ver. 1. *Samuel said unto all Israel.*] In the presence of Saul, as appears from ver. 3, 5. This speech was made before they parted from Gilgal: where they had renewed the kingdom.

Ver. 2. *The king walketh before you.*] To rule and govern them (Numb. xxvii. 17).

I am old and grayheaded.] And therefore very willing to be discharged from the government of you.

My sons are with you.] Reduced also to the state of private persons; being the king's subjects, no less than you. He appeals to them whether he had not always discharged his duty faithfully, from the very beginning; when God had made him a prophet to instruct and guide them. For now they might freely accuse him, if they had any thing to allege against him; both he and his sons being now become subjects to a more sovereign authority.

Ver. 3.] He offers himself to be tried, and to give a public account of his administration: being ready to answer any thing that could be objected against him. He desires them to testify, if he had ruled after the manner of the eastern kings: under which government they chose to put themselves. If they knew of no open violence, he bids them mention any fraud or circumvention, of which he had been guilty. He challenges them to prove so much as the receiving any gift, in any cause that came before him; and he would make full satisfaction.

Ver. 4.] They acknowledged him to be perfectly an upright judge: who could not be charged to have done any thing amiss.

Ver. 5.] Of his innocence; and that they had no reason to complain of his government.

Ver. 6.] D. Kimchi refers this to the foregoing words; as if he had said, "the Lord that did such wonders by Moses and Aaron is witness," &c.

Ver. 7. *Stand still, &c.*] The Jews observe, that they were wont to stand, when they heard the word of God. Though those words, Exod. xx. 18, are but

a slender proof of it. He would not dismiss them, till, having obtained this honourable testimony from them, he had represented to them the great benefits they had received from God, and their ingratitude to him.

Ver. 8.] Any one may easily discern, this is but a compendious narrative of what God did for them, from their first coming out of Egypt, till they were settled in Canaan; no more than that *their fathers cried unto the Lord, when Jacob came into Egypt*, and the Lord sent these two persons to deliver them. For many things intervened between both these; till at last God settled them in their rest, in the good land he promised to give them.

Ver. 9.] This is a short history of the calamities which befell them, for their idolatry, after they came there: some few of which he only mentions; without observing exactly the order in which they came upon them: but these were the people who longest oppressed them.

Ver. 10.] This they did very often (Judg. iii. 9, 13, iv. 3, vi. 7, especially x. 10, 15, &c.).

Ver. 11.] This is perfectly agreeable to the history of the book of Judges; which acquaints us, that as often as they repented, and besought his pardon, &c., he raised up deliverers unto them: the latest of which, he only mentions. In which account there is no difficulty, but only about Bedan: of whom we nowhere read. But see my notes upon Judg. x. 4, unto which may be added, that the Chaldee paraphrase here hath it, *he sent Gideon and Samson*, &c., whom most take to be the person here meant, and called Ben-Dan (the son of Dan), because he was of that tribe: and by contraction called Bedan; just as instead of Saulmeel (asked of God), they called him who writes this book Samuel, for shortness' sake. Who mentions himself as one of their deliverers; because the signal overthrow he gave the Philistines, which drove them out of their country, was fresh in their memory.

out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and ye dwelled safe.

12 And when ye saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, ye said unto me, Nay; but a king shall reign over us: when the LORD your God *was* your king.

13 Now therefore behold the king whom ye have chosen, *and* whom ye have desired! and, behold, the LORD hath set a king over you.

14 If ye will fear the LORD, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you continue following the LORD your God:

15 But if ye will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall the hand of the LORD be against you, as *it was* against your fathers.

16 ¶ Now therefore stand and see this great thing, which the LORD will do before your eyes.

17 *Is it not* wheat harvest to day? I will call unto the LORD, and he shall send thunder and rain; that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness *is* great, which ye have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking you a king.

Ver. 12.] They would not stay till God raised them up a deliverer, or commanded Samuel, who was their judge, to fight with him: but would have a king like other nations, always at hand to fight their battles (see upon viii. 5). The word *nay* seems to signify that Samuel told them, that God would be with them to deliver them; or that he offered himself to be their leader under God: but they refused his offer, and continued to demand a king.

Ver. 13.] He could not upbraid them too often with this, that they would not be content with the government of God, which was peculiar to them; but chose to be like other people. Though they chose to have a king like other nations, and be governed by God no longer; yet he still puts them in mind they could not make one, but he was set over them by God; as I have before observed.

Ver. 14.] According to the covenant they lately made with him (xi. 15): all virtue springs from the fear of God. They would be defended by him; and *continue a happy people*: notwithstanding they had thus rejected him. This appears to be the meaning by what is opposed to it in the following verse.

Ver. 15.] He would suffer their enemies to oppress them, as they did in the days of the Judges: or send other plagues upon them.

Ver. 16.] For a visible demonstration of the truth of all that Samuel had said.

Ver. 17. *Is it not wheat harvest to day?*] A very clear day, and in no disposition to rain. Which was not wont to fall in harvest-time; but in the autumn, and in the spring: called the latter and the former rain. He showed how he could in an instant deprive them of all the comforts of life; as they deserved, for their rejecting him and his prophet; who was so powerful, as by his prayers to produce such wonders.

Ver. 18.] A very horrible tempest, accompanied, it is likely, with lightning; when all was serene, and no sign appeared of it. This struck such a terror into them, that they were afraid God would destroy them, as he did Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; and that Samuel would not intercede for them.

18 So Samuel called unto the LORD; and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day: and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel.

19 And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the LORD thy God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins *this* evil, to ask us a king.

20 ¶ And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not: ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart;

21 And turn ye not aside: for *then should ye go* after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver; for they *are* vain.

22 For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people.

23 Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way:

24 Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you.

25 But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.

Ver. 19.] Till now they seem not to have been sensible of their sin, in desiring an alteration in the form of their government: therefore it was a miraculous storm, full of horror, which extorted this confession from them; not only of this, but all their former sins.

Ver. 20.] He would not have them despair of recovering God's favour; and directs them the best way to it: by continuing so sensible of their wickedness, as to be moved to true repentance and steadfast obedience.

Ver. 21.] He warns them above all things against worshipping other gods, whom he calls, "vain things which cannot profit;" by a scheme of speech in the Hebrew language, signifying, "they do a great deal of mischief." Thus in Prov. xx. 23, the wise man saith, "a false balance is not good;" that is, is very bad and hateful to God; as it goes before, of "divers weights." And thus heathen writers speak, particularly Homer, *Odys. §. 85.*

Οἱ γὰρ σκεῦα ἔργα θεοῦ μάκαρες φιλόνοιοι.

"The blessed gods do not love wicked actions," i. e. they hate and detest them. He also presses them to persist in the worship of God alone; whom if they forsook and went after other gods, in vain did they expect help and deliverance from them, for they were void of all power.

Ver. 22.] The steadfastness of God in his affection to them, notwithstanding their provocation, was a mighty motive to faithful obedience.

Ver. 23.] Not only pray for them, but teach and instruct them: which were the two great offices of a prophet. They had highly disobliged him; but he imitated God, who pardoned them, and so did he.

Ver. 24.] All his prayers and instructions would not do the business, without their serious considerations. And what more worthy their constant thoughts than the great benefits they had received from God; particularly his tender mercy in not casting them off when they shook off his government.

Ver. 25.] As it proved, not only in this, but in several future reigns.

CHAPTER XIII.

1 *Saul's selected band.* 3 *He calleth the Hebrews to Gilgal against the Philistines, whose garrison Jonathan had smitten.* 5 *The Philistines' great host.* 6 *The distress of the Israelites.* 8 *Saul, weary of staying for Samuel, sacrificeth.* 11 *Samuel reproveth him.* 17 *The three spoiling bands of the Philistines.* 19 *The policy of the Philistines, to suffer no smith in Israel.*

1 SAUL reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel,

2 Saul chose him three thousand *men* of Israel; *whereof* two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in mount Beth-el, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin: and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent.

3 And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that *was* in Geba, and the Philistines heard *of it*. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear.

4 And all Israel heard say that Saul had smitten a garrison of the Philistines, and that

Israel also was had in abomination with the Philistines. And the people were called together after Saul to Gilgal.

5 ¶ And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which *is* on the seashore in multitude: and they came up, and pitched in Michmash, eastward from Beth-aven.

6 When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait, (for the people were distressed), then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits.

CHAP. XIII.

Ver. 1. *Saul reigned one year;*] In the Hebrew the words are "the son of one year in his reign or kingdom." A very learned prelate of our own (in his *Demonstration of the Messiah*, par. ii. p. 240), takes the meaning to be, that "after the Philistines were subdued by Samuel, a year passed, when Saul began to reign; and after this he reigned two years free from their yoke." As for his being called "the son of one year" in the Hebrew, it is well translated by us *reigned one year*: because he was *born*, when he was made king, and changed into another man; for thus (as Bochartus hath observed) the day of an emperor's inauguration among the gentiles was called his *birth-day*, viz. *natalis regni*, "the day when he began his reign."

When he had reigned two years] So Ralbag interprets the Hebrew words; and thereby confutes the strange fancy in Seder Olam Rabba, that Saul reigned but two years in all. Whereas the meaning is, after this he reigned two years free from the oppression of the Philistines: but when they were ended, the Philistines got the upper hand again, and enslaved the Israelites, as appears by this chapter.

Ver. 2.] In the first year of his reign he performed those things mentioned in the foregoing chapter: and when he had reigned two years, these things fell out which we read in this chapter. Which is much better than Dr. Lightfoot's exposition, that he had been king one year from his first anointing at Ramah, to his second at Gibeah: and after that he reigned two years more before the Lord cast him off, and anointed David. Symmachus and Procopius Gazæus, not much otherwise. Who by "son of one year" think the simplicity of his mind is denoted: which he preserved for some time, i. e. till he had reigned two years over Israel, and then he began to be depraved and forsaken of God.

Gibeah of Benjamin.] There was another Gibeah in the tribe of Judah (Josh. xv. 57).

The rest of the people he sent every man to his tent.] The forementioned number being sufficient for his guard, and to preserve the country in peace, and to oppose any sudden inroad of their enemies: he would not be burdensome to his people, by keeping great forces.

Ver. 3. *Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philis-*

tines] Who, though subdued by Samuel at Eben-ezer, and driven out of the country; yet kept some strongholds, as I observed, x. 5.

Geba,] This was a distinct place from Gibeah, though both in the tribe of Benjamin: as is evident from Josh. xviii. 24, 28.

The Philistines heard of it,] And thereupon (as the following words import) denounced war against Israel.

Saul blew the trumpet—saying, Let the Hebrews hear.] He gave them notice by a proclamation, what Jonathan had done, and what was the effect of it: and thereupon summoned them to come to Gilgal.

Ver. 4. *All Israel heard say that Saul had smitten a garrison*] This shows that Jonathan acted by Saul's order: who was desirous to free his own tribe from such intruders.

Israel also was had in abomination with the Philistines.] Who were highly incensed to take revenge.

The people were called together after Saul to Gilgal.] Where Samuel had appointed to meet him (x. 8).

Ver. 5.] A prodigious army, and very formidable, by reason of their chariots and horsemen, which were also very numerous (see Josh. xi. 4). But it is not likely the Philistines alone could bring so many into the field: no, nor after other nations thereabout were associated with them, is it credible that they should make up thirty thousand chariots of war. For none ever had so many; Pharaoh himself pursuing the Israelites only with six hundred (Exod. xiv. 7). Therefore most of them were no more than carriages, which were necessary for the baggage of such vast multitudes of people: which is a better account in my judgment, than to say there is a mistake made by transcribers in later times: as Bochartus himself thinks (Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 9), because in the Syriac and Arabic copies there are only found three thousand. Which is too great a number, without the help of the foregoing exposition; for in the vast army of Mithridates there were but a hundred chariots, and in Darius's two hundred, and in Antiochus Epiphanes' (of which we read 2 Macc. xiii. 2) but three hundred.

Ver. 6.] Though their wonderful success against the Ammonites had encouraged them to obey the summons of such a prosperous leader, as Saul had been; yet when they saw the vast array of the Philistines, how well they were appointed, and themselves un-

7 And *some* of the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he *was* yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.

8 ¶ And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel *had appointed*: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him.

9 And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering.

10 And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him.

11 ¶ And Samuel said, What hast thou done ?

provided, their hearts failed them, and they slunk from him as fast as they had flocked to him. One part of the people endeavoured to secure themselves in lurking places: where it was not easy to find them.

Ver. 7.] Another part of them fled as far as they could from present danger, into the country of the two tribes and a half. All that were left with him were in great fear, seeing so many of their brethren desert him.

Ver. 8. *He tarried seven days.*] He mistook Samuel's meaning (as I showed upon x. 8), who told him he would come and offer sacrifice seven days: and then adds, *thou shalt tarry till I come.* So two interpreters, who are ancient in respect of our times (Rupertus and Angelomus), have observed an amphibologia in Samuel's words in that place, which may be construed two ways; and it was Saul's folly to make choice of the wrong sense. For the last words there are as much as if he had said, "be sure to tarry till I come, and show thee what thou shalt do." And indeed common reason might have taught him, that if war was to be undertaken, it was to be managed likewise by the counsel of the Lord: and therefore he ought not to have sacrificed, or done any other solemn act, before the prophet, who was God's ambassador in this business, came to instruct him.

Samuel came not] So soon as Saul expected him.

The people were scattered from him.] That third part of the people who were left began to go away, when they saw Samuel did not come to advise and assist him in this dangerous condition.

Ver. 9.] And would have proceeded to offer the peace-offerings, if Samuel's coming had not prevented him.

Ver. 10.] Welcome him thither: which he did in honour of the prophet.

Ver. 11.] These looked like weighty reasons; but could not excuse his presumption in not waiting for Samuel, who assured him he would come thither.

Ver. 12.] He pretends it was much against his inclination: but pleads necessity for what he did, lest his enemies should have set upon him before he had commended himself to God and begged his blessing. By which it appears, that burnt-offerings were of the nature of a prayer to God: whom they acknowledged hereby to be the Lord of all. Whence it is that we read so often of Abraham and Isaac, that they "built altars (which were for sacrifice) and called upon the name of the Lord." The gentiles also, as well as the Jews, invoked God by their sacrifices, as Mr. Mede hath shown from Homer and other authors, book ii. p. 464.

Ver. 14. *Samuel said to Saul, thou hast done foolishly.*] When God advanced Saul to be king, he was little in his own eyes, and then a great man in the

And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and *that* thou camest not within the days appointed, and *that* the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash;

12 Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the LORD: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering.

13 And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever.

14 But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own

sight of God. But now he began to take upon him, and thought it was fit the prophet should wait for the king rather than the king for the prophet: and distrusted Samuel's word, who bade him tarry till he came. And so intruded upon the priest's office; or, at least, caused the priest to do that unseasonably which was reserved for Samuel to do, when God thought fit to send him: who had all along transacted all matters between God and Saul. In short his folly and disobedience consisted in this, that he intrenched upon the priest's office, or upon the prophet's, or upon both: and would not wait Samuel's coming, nor confess his fault to him when he came; but made excuses, and laid the fault upon all but himself (ver. 11).

Abarbanel hath expounded this a little more distinctly, by observing the command which Samuel gave him, when he anointed him, x. 8, where he tells him first he would come and offer sacrifice; secondly, he bids him wait for him seven days: and lastly, saith he would direct him what to do. Now Saul transgressed every part of this command: for he offered sacrifice himself, which God intended should be offered only by the prophet; and he did not stay till the end of the seventh day, but offered on the seventh day in the morning; and he intended to begin the war without any direction from Samuel what he should do. He thinks, also, that those words *seven days* (in that place), may refer to the words going before, viz. *peace-offerings* so many days. For Saul was bound, as it follows, to tarry till Samuel came, though he stayed more than seven days before he came.

For now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever.] This suggests that the intention of Samuel's coming to offer sacrifice at Gilgal for seven days, was to confirm Saul in the kingdom (as I observed upon x. 8), if he had not foolishly deprived himself of that blessing: but here the Hebrew doctors take notice of a difficulty, which is, how God could intend to establish the kingdom upon him *for ever*, without contradicting the prophecy of Jacob, who had promised the sceptre to the tribe of Judah. Which Ralbag thinks is sufficiently answered, by saying that *for ever* signifies no more than a long time; as it doth in the words of Hannah in the beginning of this book, ch. i. 22, and in Exod. xxi. 9, and many more places. And so others interpret these words, "as long as his posterity lasted."

Ver. 14.] He predicts that God would not let his family enjoy the kingdom: because of other sins which he foresaw he would commit. God had not yet commanded David to lead his people, but he fully intended to do it, if Saul did not repent, and obtain a pardon of him for his offence. Whereby he

heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee.

15 And Samuel arose, and gat him up from Gilgal unto Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul numbered the people that were present with him, about six hundred men.

16 And Saul, and Jonathan his son, and the people that were present with them, abode in Gibeah of Benjamin: but the Philistines encamped in Michmash.

17 ¶ And the spoilers came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies: one company turned unto the way that leadeth to Ophrah, unto the land of Shual:

18 And another company turned the way to Beth-horon: and another company turned to the

had not provoked him so far, as to have an irreversible sentence passed upon him (as many great men have thought), but it might have been revoked if he had not persisted in his folly, and committed a much greater offence against the Divine Majesty, in the war against Amalek. Then Samuel tells him, the Lord would not repent; which not being added here, it makes it probable he was capable of a pardon, notwithstanding this denunciation: if he had begged it with repentance, and better obedience for the time to come.

Ver. 15. *Gibeah of Benjamin.*] The place of Saul's birth, and where he lived; which I look upon as a sign that Samuel did not intend to desert him, as he did afterward, nor looked upon him yet as forsaken by God.

About six hundred men.] A strange alteration since the last year, when against the Ammonites he had three hundred thousand men with him, besides those of Judah (xi. 6).

Ver. 16. *Saul, &c., abode in Gibeah of Benjamin.*] They followed Samuel; and it was a strong place, where they could defend themselves better than in the open field: and here, it is likely, he hoped to increase his forces, being in his own tribe.

Michmash.] A place not very remote from Gibeah; but in the tribe of Ephraim.

Ver. 17. *The spoilers came out—in three companies.*] They sent out parties three several ways, to ravage the country, there being none to oppose them.

Ophrah.] There was a city of this name in the tribe of Benjamin (Josh. xviii. 23), but many take this rather to be that in the tribe of Manasseh, where Gideon was born (Judg. vi. 11).

Shual.] So called, because it abounded with foxes, as Bochartus observes.

Ver. 18. *Beth-horon.*] Both the upper and the nether cities of this name were in the tribe of Ephraim (1 Chron. vii. 24).

Valley of Zebaim.] The Chaldee paraphrast translates these words, the valley of vipers; for *tzebo* signifies a sort of speckled serpent, wherewith this valley abounded, and lay towards the wilderness of Jericho in the tribe of Benjamin. Thus also a great number of the Hebrew writers translate *Zebaim*; which Junius takes for a city in this tribe (see Bochartus, in his Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. iii. cap. 7).

Ver. 19.] To this miserable condition the Philistines had reduced them during the forty years' tyranny over them, of which we read, Judg. xiii. 1. But after Samuel had put an end to it, by the great overthrow he gave the Philistines at Eben-ezer, it seems something strange they had not restored their artificers. But the sloth of the Israelites appears in

way of the border that looketh to the valley of Zebaim toward the wilderness.

19 ¶ Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel: for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears:

20 But all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his ax, and his mattock.

21 Yet they had a file for the mattocks, and for the coulters, and for the forks, and for the axes, and to sharpen the goads.

22 So it came to pass in the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan: but with Saul and with Jonathan his son was there found.

23 And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the passage of Michmash.

their whole story; and it was not easy, in so short a time, for men to learn this trade, which the Philistines wisely destroyed, as the Chaldeans, when they destroyed Jerusalem, carried away all the smiths to Babylon, that they who remained in the land might not arm themselves again (2 Kings xxiv. 14).

Ver. 20.] Not to the country of the Philistines, for that was too far off from some parts of the land of Israel; but to their garrisons, which they held among them, even after Samuel had driven the main body of them out of the country, as I observed upon x. 5.

Ver. 21.] Thus Pliny tells us in his Natural History, lib. xxxi. cap. 14, that in the league which Porsenna made with the Roman people, after the expulsion of their kings, it was expressly covenanted, *Ne ferro, nisi in agricultura, uterentur*; "that they should not make use of iron, but only in the tilling of their fields."

Ver. 22.] The Jews being very much addicted to feeding cattle very much neglected mechanical arts, as appeared when Solomon built the temple. For there were so few skilled in architecture among the Israelites, that he was constrained to send to another nation for them. And so Rasi thinks it was in the trade of smiths; there being no iron mines in the land. But that was not the true reason, as Kimchi observes; for the Philistines, as was said before, had transplanted the smiths, when the Israelites were under their dominion. In their oppressions also, which they lay under, their enemies were wont to disarm them, as appears by the song of Deborah (Judg. v. 8). But though they had no sword nor spear, yet they had bows and arrows, and slings; which the men of Gibeah could anciently manage to a wonderful advantage, as we read, Judg. xx. 16. And besides these, they anciently used clubs to beat down their enemies; and before the invention of spears with iron points, they had sharp stakes hardened in the fire, as many authors inform us.

Ver. 23.] Some refer this to the garrison mentioned ver. 3, which Jonathan having smitten, they that escaped joined with the army at Michmash. But it refers rather to the garrison mentioned in the beginning of the next chapter (ver. 1), and the last word relates not to the passage, but to the garrison. As if he had said, "The garrison of the Philistines in Michmash went out to the passage." For Michmash, as Rasi observes, was upon a high hill, as Gibeah was; between which was a valley, called here a passage. Into which the garrison descended, to invite the Israelites to battle; or, as the Targum translates the first word, the captain-general of the Philistines went out into the valley; to view the ground, we may suppose, and form a camp there.

CHAPTER XIV.

1 Jonathan, unwilling to his father, the priest, or the people, goeth and miraculously smiteth the Philistines' garrison. 15 A divine terror maketh them beat themselves. 17 Saul, not staying the priest's answer, setteth on them. 21 The captivated Hebrews, and the hidden Israelites, join against them. 24 Saul's unadvised adjuration hindereth the victory. 32 He restraineth the people from eating blood. 35 He buildeth an altar. 36 Jonathan, taken by lot, is saved by the people. 47 Saul's strength and family.

1 Now it came to pass upon a day, that Jonathan the son of Saul said unto the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison, that is on the other side. But he told not his father.

2 And Saul tarried in the uttermost part of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree which is in Migron: and the people that were with him were about six hundred men;

3 And Ahiah, the son of Ahitub, I-chabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the Lord's priest in Shiloh, wearing an ephod. And the people knew not that Jonathan was gone.

4 ¶ And between the passages, by which Jonathan sought to go over unto the Philistines' garrison, there was a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side: and the name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh.

5 The forefront of the one was situate northward over against Michmah, and the other southward over against Gibeah.

6 And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the Lord will work for us: for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few.

7 And his armourbearer said unto him, Do all that is in thine heart: turn thee; behold, I am with thee according to thy heart.

8 Then said Jonathan, Behold, we will pass over unto these men, and we will discover ourselves unto them.

9 If they say thus unto us, Tarry until we come to you; then we will stand still in our place, and will not go up unto them.

10 But if they say thus, Come up unto us;

CHAP. XIV.

Ver. 1. *Come, and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison, that is on the other side.*] Of the valley, mentioned in the foregoing verse. This had been a very rash attempt, and very criminal (he having no order from his father, who commanded in chief, if he had not had a Divine incitation to it. Which he felt upon the sight of the Philistines appearing, as if they intended to assault Gibeah; and upon the information he received of the great spoil which the three parties made of the poor people in the country (xiii. 17).

He told not his father.] Lest he should have hindered him from this enterprise, into which he felt himself moved by God.

Ver. 2. *Saul tarried in the uttermost part of Gibeah*] In some intrenchments he had made without the city.

Under a pomegranate tree, which is in Migron.] Where he pitched his tent.

About six hundred men;] His forces were not augmented since he came to Gibeah, as might have been expected (xiii. 15, 16). But as Vegetius observes (lib. 1. De Re Militari, cap. 8), in omni conflictu non tam prodest multitudo, quam virtus: "in all conflicts valour doth more service than multitude."

Ver. 3.] It seems Phinehas (who was slain with Hophni) left two sons; Ichabod, who was born after his death; and Ahitub, who was born before; and left a son who is here called Ahijah, and in xxii. 9, Ahimelech; who left a son called Abiathar, xxiii. 6. These words, "the Lord's priest in Shiloh," manifestly belong to Eli, who was the high-priest while the tabernacle was in Shiloh.

Wearing an ephod.] Or rather, *the ephod*; which comprehends the breastplate, with *urim* and *thummim*, for they were inseparable from it. These Ahijah, being high-priest, now wore: for these words, as Ralbag observes, belong to him (see Selden, lib. 1. De Success. ad Pontif. cap. 3). Saul being now in

great distress sent for Ahijah, to consult God for him, as there should be occasion: and, as appears by the eighteenth verse of this chapter, had commanded him to bring the ark with him from Kirjath-jearim.

The people knew not that Jonathan was gone.] This makes Josephus's opinion probable, that he went away in the night: which was prudent upon another account; that he might not be spied presently by the Philistines.

Ver. 4. *A sharp rock on the one side, and—on the other*] So that there was no way to come at the Philistines, but by climbing up one of these rocks (ver. 12), which were thought inaccessible: and therefore not fortified, as the other passages to Michmah were, with such strong guards as Jonathan could not encounter.

One was Bozez,—the other Seneh.] Which were such famous precipices, that they had names bestowed on them: the original of which will not be worth our inquiry; but the latter seems to have taken its name from the thorns that grew upon it.

Ver. 5.] By this we understand how these two places lay, towards which these rocks pointed.

Ver. 6. *Garrison of these uncircumcised:*] He speaks of them with contempt, as strangers to the covenant of God.

It may be that the Lord will work for us:] He speaks with some diffidence to his servant; but was inwardly persuaded of a certain victory, by the Divine assistance.

Ver. 7. *Turn thee;*] Which way thou wilt. *I am with thee*] He resolved not to forsake his master in any undertaking, though ever so dangerous: being such a servant as Gideon had (Judg. vii. 10).

Ver. 8. *We will pass over*] He resolves to lead the way.

We will discover ourselves] At break of day. Ver. 10. *This shall be a sign unto us.*] Which he could not have known without an instinct from God, who often suggested such thoughts unto good men, as we see in the example of Abraham's servant,

then we will go up: for the Lord hath delivered them into our hand: and this shall be a sign unto us.

11 And both of them discovered themselves unto the garrison of the Philistines: and the Philistines said, Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves.

12 And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armourbearer, and said, Come up to us, and we will shew you a thing. And Jonathan said unto his armourbearer, Come up after me: for the Lord hath delivered them into the hand of Israel.

13 And Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armourbearer after him: and they fell before Jonathan; and his armourbearer slew after him.

14 And that first slaughter, which Jonathan

and his armourbearer made, was about twenty men, within as it were an half acre of land, which a yoke of oxen might plow.

15 And there was trembling in the host, in the field, and among all the people: the garrison, and the spoilers, they also trembled, and the earth quaked; so it was a very great trembling.

16 And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked; and behold, the multitude melted away, and they went on beating down one another.

17 Then said Saul unto the people that were with him, Number now, and see who is gone from us. And when they had numbered, behold, Jonathan and his armourbearer were not there.

18 And Saul said unto Ahiah, Bring hither the ark of God. For the ark of God was at that time with the children of Israel.

Gen. xxiv. 14, &c. And there is something like this in the beginning of Herodotus's fifth book concerning the Pæones and the Perinthians: where he saith the Pæonians went to war by a Divine direction with the Perinthians; and were ordered, if the Perinthians, being opposed to them, provoked them by name to fight, then they should invade them; but if they did not, they should abstain from fighting. Now while they faced one another there happened a threefold single combat; and the Perinthians being victors in two of them, began to sing a song of triumph, and insult over the Pæonians; who thereupon said one to another, *νῦν ἂν εἶη ὁ χαρριώδης ἐπιτελεσμένος ἡμῖν, νῦν ἡμῖν τὸ ἔργον*, "Now is the oracle fulfilled to us, now is our business;" and so shouting, and falling upon the Perinthians, they vanquished them, and left few of them remaining.

Ver. 11. *Both of them discovered themselves*] At the bottom of the rocks.

The Hebrews come forth out of the holes] See xiii. 6. They imagined it was not courage, but necessity, which forced them to come within their view, as they sought for food.

Ver. 12. *Come up to us,*] They mocked at them, thinking they durst not attempt to climb up to them.

Come up after me] Now he gives him the same assurance which he had before in his own mind.

Ver. 13. *Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet,*] Not in view of the Philistines, but by some difficult way, which none was ever known to go: and so, perhaps, they came behind them and surprised them.

They fell before Jonathan; and his armourbearer slew after him.] The first onset was made by Jonathan (as he led the way up the precipice), who rushed upon them with such a fury, that he threw them down to the ground, and then his armour-bearer killed them. So some understand this: which was a more wonderful action than that of Horatius Coelites (as Victorinus Strigelius observes), who alone maintained a passage at a bridge against all the forces of the enemy, and caused the bridge to be broken down behind him. But that shows, since natural courage made a man so daring, it is not incredible that Jonathan made such an attempt by Divine incitation.

Ver. 11.] viz. In one day. That is, saith Kimchi, in a very small space of ground: which De Dieu will have to be half a furrow in length (see him).

Ver. 15. *There was trembling in the host,*] News being brought of this slaughter to the host of the Philistines which lay in the field, it put them into a great consternation: for they were asleep (it is likely),

this being done very early in the morning as Josephus thinks (lib. vi. cap. 7). And all the people that attended the host, as well as the garrison, and spoilers who had been ravaging the country (xiii. 17), were very much affrighted: imagining a great army had been at hand to fall upon them, of which these two were but the scouts. Whose exploits, perhaps, were also magnified beyond the truth.

The earth quaked] Some think there was a real earthquake, which increased their fear: but it may be no more than a metaphorical expression for the great tumult they were in.

It was a very great trembling.] In the Hebrew, *a trembling of God*: that is, which God sent upon them: called by the heathen a *panic fear*, which they thought came from their gods, and made the stoutest men quake. So Pindar excellently expresses it in his Nemea, ix. ver. 63.

— Ἐν γὰρ
Δαμορίοισι φέβοιτο
Φεβοῦνται καὶ πάντες θεῶν.

"When men are struck with Divine terrors, even the children of the gods (i. e. the most heroic spirits) betake themselves to flight." And the army of the Philistines consisting (as I observed on xiii. 5) of different nations, it made the confusion and trembling the greater; because they either did not understand, or suspected one another.

Ver. 16. *The watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked*] For it was seated on a high hill, which overlooked the country about it.

The multitude melted away,] Were scattered, so that fewer and fewer were seen in a company together.

They went on beating down one another.] Not being able in this confusion to distinguish their friends from their enemies.

Ver. 17.] He easily missed Jonathan, I suppose, but could not imagine he would fall upon the Philistines without a good number of men to assist him, which he knew he had not. This made him call the high-priest, to inquire of God, that he might be informed what was the matter, and what he should do.

Ver. 18.] How could he bid him bring the ark, when it was at Kirjath-jearim, in the house of Abinadab? To this Abarbanel answers, that he doth not speak of the ark in which the tables of the law were kept (for he doth not say, "bring the ark of the covenant hither") but a little coffer, wherein the ephod was kept; that is, the breastplate with *urim* and *thummim*. These the priest brought along with him,

19 ¶ And it came to pass, while Saul talked unto the priest, that the noise that *was* in the host of the Philistines went on and increased: and Saul said unto the priest, Withdraw thine hand.

20 And Saul and all the people that *were* with him assembled themselves, and they came to the battle: and, behold, every man's sword was against his fellow, and *there was* a very great discomfiture.

21 Moreover the Hebrews *that were* with the Philistines before that time, which went up with them into the camp *from the country* round about, even they also *turned* to be with the Israelites *that were* with Saul and Jonathan.

22 Likewise all the men of Israel which had hid themselves in mount Ephraim, *when they heard* that the Philistines fled, even they also followed hard after them in the battle.

that Saul might consult God upon occasion, as David did, 1 Sam. xxx. 8. Therefore the LXX. translate it, *προσάγαγε τὸ ἔφωδ*, "bring hither the ephod." And so Rasi and Kimchi (see Buxtorf. Hist. Arææ, cap. 3, and our learned Dr. Spencer, De Leg. et Rit. Heb. fol. 859). But this doth not seem a solid interpretation, there being but one ark mentioned in Scripture, which is not always called the "ark of the covenant," but the "ark of the Lord," or the "ark of God," as it is called when it came into the camp of Israel, and was taken by the Philistines (ch. iv. ver. 6, 11, 17, 18, &c.). Therefore here, I suppose, Saul commanded the ark itself to attend him, when he wanted the advice and assistance of Samuel.

Ver. 19. *While Saul talked unto the priest,*] Desiring him to inquire of God what was become of Jonathan and his armour-bearer, and what was the meaning of that tumult in the host of the Philistines.

Withdraw thine hand.] He was going to take the *urim* and *thummim*, as the forenamed authors understand it, when Saul, hearing the tumult grow greater and greater among the Philistines, bade him forbear, there being no need, for he concluded they were routed; and therefore resolved, without any further deliberation, to go and pursue them. Or, as others understand it, the priest having stretched forth his hand to God in prayer for his advice, Saul called upon him to desist: for it was plain what they had to do, without any inquiry.

Ver. 20.] This Josephus thinks fell out (as I noted above) because their army consisted of divers nations, who did not know one another, and so fell into great confusion.

Ver. 21.] *The Hebrews—which went up with them into the camp*] As some, it seems, did; either out of fear, compulsion, or design.

Also turned] And helped to destroy the Philistines.

Ver. 22. *Mount Ephraim,*] And other places mentioned xiii. 6.

Followed hard after them] Pursued them closely.

Ver. 23. These words seem to imply, that the fight continued till they came to this place, which lay westward from Michmash (xiii. 5), and there the Philistines threw down their arms, and fled as fast as they could towards their own country.

Ver. 24. *The men of Israel were distressed that day.*] When they should have been full of joy and triumph.

So none of the people tasted any food.] That they

23 So the LORD saved Israel that day: and the battle passed over unto Beth-aven.

24 ¶ And the men of Israel were distressed that day: for Saul had adjured the people, saying, Cursed *be* the man that eateth *any* food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies. So none of the people tasted *any* food.

25 And all *they of* the land came to a wood; and there was honey upon the ground.

26 And when the people were come into the wood, behold, the honey dropped; but no man put his hand to his mouth: for the people feared the oath.

27 But Jonathan heard not when his father charged the people with the oath: wherefore he put forth the end of the rod that *was* in his hand, and dipped it in an honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his eyes were enlightened.

28 Then answered one of the people, and said,

might not lose time, nor make the least stay in the pursuit of their enemies, who fled before them. The king had the same power that the great Sanhedrin had, who, the Jews say, might devote those to destruction who did not obey the charge that was given them in war (see Selden, lib. iv. De Jure Nat. et Gent. cap. 6). But this was a very indiscreet act of Saul, becoming an excellent captain; for instead of pursuing the Philistines with vigour, they fainted for want of refreshment. Therefore great commanders always took care their soldiers should be moderately fed, that they might not be tired in a long conflict. So Vegetius informs us (lib. iii. De Re Militari, cap. 9): "Veteribus seculis mos fuit, parco cibo curatos milites ad certamen educere, ut citatiora sumpta esca redderet et longiore conflictu non fatigaretur inedia." And there was the same need of taking a little refreshment, if they could get it, when they were engaged in a long pursuit of their enemy.

Ver. 25.] Which dropped from the hollow trees, or the clefts of rocks, where bees made their combs in that country; and sometimes upon the very ground; as Bochart hath shown in his Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. iv. cap. 12, where he observes this was not peculiar to Judea, but usual in other countries.

Ver. 26.] Wild honey was so copious in those countries, and flowed so plentifully, that it gave occasion to that hyperbolical speech in the book of Job, xx. 17, where we read of *brooks, or torrents, of honey and butter*.

Ver. 27. *Jonathan heard not*] He and his armour-bearer being engaged in fight (with whom some others joined, ver. 21), long before Saul and his small army came to join him.

His eyes were enlightened.] That is, his spirits and strength, which were quite spent by long abstinence from meat, so that he could scarce see, were restored to him, and he was made fresh and lively to proceed in pursuit of the enemy. For, as Gerh. Vossius observes (lib. iv. De Orig. et Progr. Idol. cap. 79), the eyes are wont to grow dim with long hunger; and as all meat and drink refreshes and enlivens, so wine and honey do it above all other more speedily, for their spirits are both very subtle, and soon diffuse their strength through the body. It is also observed by learned men, that honey is an excellent medicine for sore and weak eyes; but that is nothing to this purpose, such cures being not performed by eating of it, but by anointing the eyes with it.

Ver. 28. *One of the people,*] That came with Saul to the pursuit.

Thy father straitly charged the people with an oath, saying, Cursed be the man that eateth *any* food this day. And the people were faint.

29 Then said Jonathan, My father hath troubled the land : see, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey.

30 How much more, if haply the people had eaten freely to day of the spoil of their enemies which they found ? for had there not been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines ?

31 And they smote the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon : and the people were very faint.

32 And the people flew upon the spoil, and took sheep, and oxen, and calves, and slew *them* on the ground : and the people did eat *them* with the blood.

33 ¶ Then they told Saul, saying, Behold, the people sin against the LORD, in that they eat with the blood. And he said, Ye have transgressed : roll a great stone unto me this day.

34 And Saul said, Disperse yourselves among the people, and say unto them, Bring me hither every man his ox, and every man his sheep, and slay *them* here, and eat ; and sin not against the LORD in eating with the blood. And all the

people brought every man his ox with him that night, and slew *them* there.

35 And Saul built an altar unto the LORD : the same was the first altar that he built unto the LORD.

36 ¶ And Saul said, Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and spoil them until the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them. And they said, Do whatsoever seemeth good unto thee. Then said the priest, Let us draw near hither unto God.

37 And Saul asked counsel of God, Shall I go down after the Philistines ? wilt thou deliver them into the hands of Israel ? But he answered him not that day.

38 And Saul said, Draw ye near hither, all the chief of the people : and know and see wherein this sin hath been this day.

39 For, as the LORD liveth, which saveth Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die. But *there was not a man among all the people that answered him.*

40 Then said he unto all Israel, Be ye on one side, and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side. And the people said unto Saul, Do what seemeth good unto thee.

41 Therefore Saul said unto the LORD God of

The people were faint.] And yet forebore to take any refreshment, for fear of the curse.

Ver. 29.] Which did not cause so long a stay as to hinder the pursuit of the enemy.

Ver. 30.] They would have been able to pursue them more swiftly, and to have done greater execution upon them, than they could when they were faint. Thus men, by their rashness, hinder what they would have.

Ver. 31. *Aijalon.]* A city in the tribe of Dan (Josh. xix. 42), which bordered upon the country of the Philistines.

Very faint.] Otherwise they might have pursued further.

Ver. 32. *The people flew upon the spoil,]* Like a ravenous bird, which wanted food.

Did eat them with the blood.] Raw, or but half roasted or boiled, their hunger being so sharp, that it made them forget their duty.

Ver. 33.] All the people were not so profane, but only some part of them. Our learned Dr. Spencer thinks, they did not "eat with the blood," as we translate it, but *upon, or by the blood*; which was an idolatrous custom in the east, to invite the familiarity of demons, as hath been noted on Lev. xix. 26. And therefore Saul, to keep the people from thus defiling themselves, commanded a great stone to be brought to him, that there they might kill their beasts at that one place, and then feed upon them (see De Leg. et Rit. Hebr. p. 334). But this doth not seem probable that they should now practise those idolatrous rites, when God had wrought such a wonderful deliverance for them; and they were so impatient to eat, that they had not time to think of such ceremonies.

Ver. 34. *Disperse yourselves]* He speaks unto his officers.

Bring me hither every man his ox, and—sheep,] This is a sign they had not all offended; having not yet killed their beasts.

Slew them there.] As many as they had occasion to use.

Ver. 35.] To offer sacrifices of peace-offerings, and give thanks to God for this great victory. Though others think it was not for sacrifice, but only a monument of God's mercy, in this late deliverance. In the Hebrew the words are (as is observed in the margin of our Bibles), "that altar he began to build unto the Lord;" i. e. he laid the first stone himself. We read of his offering before in Gilgal; but that, perhaps, was not upon an altar erected by himself, but was built before by others.

Ver. 36. *Saul said, Let us go down after the Philistines]* Having thus refreshed themselves, in the evening Saul propounded to them to renew the pursuit: hoping to cut off their whole army, when they were asleep in the night. Their good success made them as forward, as before they were backward to follow him.

Then said the priest, Let us draw near hither unto God.] It is likely he stood before the altar (if it were for sacrifice), and put them in mind, that it was dangerous to undertake any thing without God's advice: which he was there ready to ask for them: in the Targum it is, "Let us inquire by the Word of the Lord."

Ver. 37. *Saul asked counsel]* By *urim* and *thumim*. Hitherto Saul had some goodness left in him: for he hearkened to the priest, when he admonished him of his duty, which he neglected. The Targum here again hath it, "Saul asked by the Word of the Lord." Though perhaps the priest had often begged an answer, yet he received none.

Ver. 38.] He concluded some sin had provoked God, not to regard his supplication: which he desired might be found out and punished.

Ver. 39.] Though many knew that Jonathan had transgressed his father's charge (ver. 28), yet none would discover it.

Ver. 40.] He had gained great authority among the people (it appears by this, and by ver. 36), since his wonderful success.

Ver. 41. *Give a perfect lot.]* The word *lot* is not in the original, but only *give perfect*, that is, declare who

Israel, Give a perfect *lot*. And Saul and Jonathan were taken : but the people escaped.

42 And Saul said, Cast *lots* between me and Jonathan my son. And Jonathan was taken.

43 Then Saul said to Jonathan, Tell me what thou hast done. And Jonathan told him, and said, I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that *was* in mine hand, *and*, lo, I must die.

44 And Saul answered, God do so and more also : for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan.

45 And the people said unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid : *as* the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground ; for he hath wrought with God this day. So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not.

46 Then Saul went up from following the Philistines : and the Philistines went to their own place.

47 ¶ So Saul took the kingdom over Israel, and fought against all his enemies on every side,

against Moab, and against the children of Ammon, and against Edom, and against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines : and whithersoever he turned himself, he vexed *them*.

48 And he gathered an host, and smote the Amalekites, and delivered Israel out of the hands of them that spoiled them.

49 Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan, and Ishui, and Melchi-shua : and the names of his two daughters *were these* ; the name of the firstborn Merab, and the name of the younger Michal :

50 And the name of Saul's wife *was* Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz : and the name of the captain of his host *was* Abner, the son of Ner, Saul's uncle.

51 And Kish *was* the father of Saul ; and Ner the father of Abner *was* the son of Abiel.

52 And there *was* sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul : and when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he took him unto him.

is innocent. (Deut. xiii. 1, 2).

Ver. 42.] This looks like virtue in him, that, for good example's sake, he would not exempt himself, though a king, from the same trial to which he exposed all the people.

Ver. 43.] This shows a very great mind, that he neither denied what he had done, nor excused it by his ignorance, nor refused to die : though he looked upon it as very hard. So Josephus represents it, *εὐγενῶς καὶ μεγαλοφρονῶς*, &c., "with a generous and great mind" he told his father the truth ; and desired not to be spared (lib. vi. Antiq. cap. 7).

Ver. 44.] This demonstrates Saul to have been of a rash and of a rigorous temper. With whom learned men are wont to compare Titus Manlius ; who caused his son's head to be cut off, for fighting the enemy, when he had a fair advantage, contrary to order, as A. Gellius tells us (lib. ix. cap. 13). But in this regard Saul was to be commended, as Josephus also observes, that he had a greater regard to his oath, than to his kindred and natural affection.

Ver. 45.] They did not rescue him by force and violence, but by their petition to Saul, and the reason they gave for it. Josephus saith, that "by their prayers and vows to God they delivered him : " who, perhaps, signified by the priest, that he approved the people's desire. They were too forward indeed to swear directly against Saul's oath : but of the two, his being the most rash, God was pleased to annul it, and absolve him from it. Thus Josephus understands it, "They rescued him from the anger of his father," *καὶ εὐχὰς ὑπὲρ τοῦ νεανίσκου ποιοῦνται τῷ Θεῷ, ὡς τὸν αὐτὸν ἀπολύσαι τοῦ ἀμαρτήματος*, "and made their prayer to God for the young man, that he would loose him from his sin." How that phrase, "not a hair of his head," &c., was used, appears from 2 Sam. xiv. 11 ; 1 Kings i. 51.

Ver. 46.] He pursued them no further, but let them go quietly to their own homes.

Ver. 47. *Saul took the kingdom over Israel.*] Ruled with greater authority over his people after this victory : for the Philistines had enslaved them (as I observed xiii. 2). But by this deliverance they were freed from their yoke, and Saul recovered his kingdom.

Fought against all his enemies] He did not invade

them (as may be gathered from the next verse), but repelled them, and kept them within their own limits.

Against Moab, &c.] These were the principal enemies wherewith they were encompassed. And by the *kings of Zobah* are meant those that ruled in that part of Syria, which is called *Aram-Zobah* ; which lay towards Euphrates : having that river for its eastern bounds, and Damascus and the land of Canaan for its western. For it appears to be near to the Israelites, by the frequent wars which David and Solomon had with the kings of this country (2 Sam. viii. 3, x. 6, 2 Chron. vii. 3), and the aid which the Syrians of Damascus sent them (2 Sam. viii. 5), and their flying thither when they were routed (1 Kings xi. 24). And the cities which Solomon built in the wilderness (1 Kings ix. 17, 18) are said to be in Hamath-Zobah, 2 Chron. viii. 34, which demonstrates it was upon the confines of Judea.

He vexed them.] He got the better of them. And in his days the Reubenites also made war with the Hagarites, and possessed their land, till the time of the captivity (1 Chron. v. 10, 18—20).

Ver. 48. *Smote the Amalekites.*] Which war is at large described in the next chapter.

Out of the hands of them] The six forementioned nations.

Ver. 49.] These were only fit to accompany him in his wars, and upon that account are only mentioned here, and xxxi. 2, though he had another son (Ishbosheth), who is mentioned in 1 Chron. viii. 33, under the name of Esh-baal.

Ver. 50.] For Ner was brother to Saul's father, as the next verse tells us. It seems to me observable, that we never read of more than one wife that Saul had, though David had many. It is possible he did not think it prudent, in a new-erected kingdom, to follow the example of the eastern kings in every thing.

Ver. 51.] As Kish also was (xi. 1).

Ver. 52. *War against the Philistines all the days of Saul.*] Who could not perfectly subdue them ; as appears from their renewing the war (chap. xvii. &c.).

When Saul saw any strong man.] Who behaved himself with vigour and courage in the wars.

He took him unto him.] To be one of his guard or to be preferred in the army.

CHAPTER XV.

1 Samuel sendeth Saul to destroy Amalek. 6 Saul favoureth the Kenites. 8 He spareth Agag and the best of the spoil. 10 Samuel denounceth unto Saul, commending and excusing himself, God's rejection of him for his disobedience. 24 Saul's humiliation. 32 Samuel killeth Agag. 34 Samuel and Saul part.

1 SAMUEL also said unto Saul, The LORD sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the LORD.

2 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt.

3 Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.

4 And Saul gathered the people together, and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of Judah.

5 And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and laid wait in the valley.

6 ¶ And Saul said unto the Kenites, Go, de-

part, get you down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them: for ye shewed kindness to all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt. So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites.

7 And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah until thou comest to Shur, that is over against Egypt.

8 And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.

9 But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.

10 ¶ Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying,

CHAP. XV.

Ver. 1.] Being so highly obliged to God, above all other men in the nation, it highly concerned him to be very careful to observe his commands; especially having lately been disobedient (xiii. 13).

Ver. 2.] See my notes upon Deut. xxv. 17, 18.

Ver. 3.] This heavy sentence was pronounced against them long ago (Exod. xvii. 14), and renewed at their entrance into Canaan, with a charge not to forget it (Deut. xxv. 19), and now ordered to be put in execution.

Ver. 4.] The word *Telaim* signifying lambs (which it is likely were very plentiful in this place), the Targum translates it, *he numbered them by paschal lambs*: as if the passover was kept at this time. And so Rasi fancies that it being unlawful to number the people, he commanded every man to take a lamb out of the flock, and numbered them. But David Kimchi, and others, take this as we do, for the name of a place called Telem, in the tribe of Judah (Josh. xv. 24). For there is no place mentioned in Scripture called Telaim; nor any so near it in sound as this (see Selden, lib. iii. De Synedr. cap. 11, n. 5, and Bochart's Hierozoicon, par. 1. lib. ii. cap. 43). I have often observed that their armies consisted of footmen, they having no horses in Judea. And in two regards they were more useful than horsemen, as Vegetius observes (lib. ii. De Re Militari, cap. 1), first, because possunt ubique prodesse, "they may be serviceable everywhere," which horsemen cannot. And, secondly, a great number of them, sumptu et expensa minore nutritur "is maintained at less expense and charge."

Ver. 5. *Saul came to a city of Amalek.*] To the metropolis of the kingdom, whose name, perhaps, was Amalek. For so the words may be understood, "he came to the city Amalek."

Laid wait in the valley.] Or "fought them in the valley," as we translate it in the margin: for they came out to give him battle.

Ver. 6. *Kenites.*] Who were of the posterity of Jethro: some of which were of the tribe of Judah, others in Naphtali; and some, it seems, dwelt among the Amalekites in the rocky part of that country (Numb. xxiv. 21).

Go, depart, get you down] For they dwelt on high. *From among the Amalekites,*] For some of the Amalekites, it is likely, would flee to them for shelter.

Ye showed kindness to—Israel.] Some of their ancestors did, which the Israelites did not forget (Exod. xviii. 12; Numb. x. 31).

The Kenites departed] And went, it is likely, into the land of Judah.

Ver. 7.] That is, their whole country, of which this was the extent: from Havilah in the north-east, to Shur in the south-west. These two, Havilah and Shur, are constantly opposed, as the most opposite terms of Arabia, as Bochartus hath observed, in his Phaleg. lib. iv. cap. 6.

Ver. 8.] That is, all that could be met with; but some fled, no doubt, as soon as they saw him victorious; and saved themselves in other countries. Accordingly we read of good numbers of this people afterward.

Ver. 9. *Saul and the people spared Agag,*] Whosoever proposed it, they all agreed in it, not to kill Agag: and Saul, it is most likely, was the chief author of this counsel. Who, *Σουμάσας τὸ κάλλος καὶ τὸ μέγεθος τοῦ σώματος* (as Josephus speaks), "being struck with admiration of him as a very goodly and proper person, thought fit to save him." Not following herein the command of God, but his own private fancy and affection (lib. vi. Antiq. cap. 8). Others think he intended to lead him in triumph (see ver. 12).

Fatlings,] Interpreters wonderfully vary about the sense of the word *hamisimim*, which we translate *fatlings*; as may be seen in Bochartus's Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 43, fol. 430, where he shows it signifies cattle in their full strength.

All that was good,] Of their household goods (I suppose), apparel, and suchlike things.

Would not utterly destroy them:] As they had been commanded by God; but took them as a prey unto themselves.

But every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.] All that was not worth the keeping. Which is a wonderful instance of the baseness of human nature, when governed by covetousness, or any suchlike affection.

11 It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night.

12 And when Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning, it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and, behold, he set him up a place, and is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal.

13 And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD.

14 And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?

15 And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.

16 Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the LORD hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on.

17 And Samuel said, When thou wast little

in thine own sight, *wast* thou not *made* the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel?

18 And the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed.

19 Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD?

20 And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.

21 But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal.

22 And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft,

Ver. 10. *Then came the word of the Lord*] Immediately before Saul returned from his expedition.

Ver. 11. *It repenteth me that I have set up Saul*] Whom he resolved now to throw down from his throne (see ver. 29). For repentance in God imports only the will of a change, and not of every change, but of the Divine sentence pronounced, which the Scripture calls repentance. So Procopius Gazæus, *Penitentia Dei, est dispensationis ipsius mutatio, "God's repentance is the change of his own dispensation."*

He cried unto the Lord] Beseeching him to pardon Saul.

Ver. 12. *Carmel*] A city in the mountains of the tribe of Judah, where Nabal dwelt, who is called the Carmelite, xxvii. 3 (see Josh. xv. 55).

He set him up a place] Either for the dividing of the spoil, as the Targum understands it; or marking out a camp, as Kimchi; or he erected a triumphal arch, as St. Jerome: having brought Agag with him, to make his triumph greater. Which arch, it may be thought, was in the form of a hand; for in the Hebrew the word we translate *place* is *jad*, which signifies a *hand*. Or, as Rasi will have it, he here built an altar: which Elijah in future times repaired (1 Kings xviii. 30). But this is a very gross mistake: for this Carmel was very remote from that mount which Elijah frequented, as Bochartus hath observed (par. i. Hieroz. lib. ii. cap. 48). It may be rather thought, to be some building erected in the form before mentioned, to signify that they overcame the Amalekites with a strong hand.

Is gone about, and passed on] In a long pomp, I suppose, as a mighty conqueror.

Ver. 13. *Blessed be thou of the Lord*] A form of salutation, wishing him all happiness from God: who had ordered him to undertake such a piece of service as he had done him.

I have performed the commandment of the Lord] He was so insensible of any fault he had committed, that he boasts of his performance.

Ver. 14.] Which he had commanded him utterly to destroy (ver. 3).

Ver. 15.] He lays the blame upon the people, when it is evident he himself was principally in fault (ver.

9). This was a plausible pretence, it being the custom all the world over, to give part of their spoils in war unto their gods; if there had not been an express command for destroying every thing in this war, so that nothing should be spared, either for himself, or for them.

Ver. 16. *Stay*] This sounds as if Saul was going away; being abundantly satisfied in his noble achievements.

I will tell thee what the Lord hath said to me this night] When he cried to him without ceasing (ver. 11). Though Samuel was a prophet, saith Procopius Gazæus, yet speaking to a king, he begs leave he may do it freely.

Say on] He hoped, it is likely, to hear himself commended for his piety.

Ver. 17.] It is of great use for men to remember what they were: as Placilla the wife of Theodosius (Strigelius here observes) said to her husband, *Αἰεὶ σε προσέκει λόγιζομαι, τί μὲν ἤσθα πάλα, τί δὲ γέγονας νῦν, &c.* "It behoves thee always to think what thou wast heretofore, and what thou art now. For calling these things to mind, thou wilt not be ungrateful to thy benefactor: but govern the kingdom thou hast received according to the laws; and by that means honour him that bestowed it upon thee."

Ver. 18.] He was employed in a very honourable expedition, to destroy the declared enemies of the Lord.

Ver. 19.] With great greediness, as a hungry bird or beast doth upon his prey. The command was as plain as words could make it: so that there was no reason but his own base covetousness, why it was not obeyed.

Ver. 20.] A strange stupidity! to imagine such a partial obedience could be pleasing unto God.

Ver. 21.] This was a mean thing, to throw all the blame on the people, whom he should have governed better; and it was worst of all, to let them pretend religion for their disobedience.

Ver. 22.] This most Divine admonition is inculcated by all following inspired writers, David, Solomon, and the prophets (see Ps. l. 13, 14, li. 16, 17; Eccles. v. 1; Isa. i. 11, 12, &c., lxvi. 3; Jer. vii. 21, 22, &c.

and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

24 ¶ And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice.

25 Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord.

26 And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel.

27 And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent.

28 And Samuel said unto him, The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this

day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou.

29 And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent.

30 Then he said, I have sinned: yet honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord thy God.

31 So Samuel turned again after Saul; and Saul worshipped the Lord.

32 ¶ Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites. And Agag came unto him delicately. And Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is past.

33 And Samuel said, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal.

Hos. vi. 6; Micah vi. 6—8; Zech. viii. 16). And some of the heathen have said excellent things to this purpose.

Ver. 23. *For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft,*] Or, "following after divination:" which is opposed to prophecy, as idols are to God.

Stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.] The words *aven* and *teraphim* signify all manner of idolatry. From which though Saul was free, yet his obstinate disobedience made him liable to such punishment as idolaters deserved. For as they were to be cut off, so he was to be dethroned, as it here follows.

Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee] As idolaters were to lose their lives, so he and his posterity lost the kingdom. And it is observable, that he was at last slain by the hand of an Amalekite (2 Sam. i. 8).

Ver. 24.] It is not certain whether he led the people into this sin, or they led him. I look upon this only as an excuse (he having no reason to fear the people, who were all at his command), and that he was not yet thoroughly sensible of his guilt.

Ver. 25. *Pardon my sin,*] By deprecating God's displeasure.

Turn again with me,] To Gilgal; from whence he came forth to meet Samuel.

That I may worship the Lord,] And by Samuel's prayers obtain a pardon.

Ver. 26.] The prophet looked upon God's sentence as peremptory; and therefore peremptorily denied his request.

Ver. 27. *He laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle,*] It was a four-square garment covering the breast and the back; knit at the shoulder, but open on the sides as Jo. Braunius hath shown, lib. ii. De Vestitu Sacerd. Hebr. cap. 5, n. 8. On this Saul laid hold, that he might stop Samuel from going away.

It rent,] A sign the motion of Samuel was violent; he being full of indignation against Saul.

Ver. 28.] That casual rent, he took to be an apt representation of his destiny.

Ver. 29. *The Strength of Israel*] The word we translate *strength* imports *victory* (as is observed in the margin), and therefore these words should be translated, "He that gives victory," and disposes kingdoms, or "the triumphant King of Israel."

Will not lie nor repent:] Sometimes, God is said "to repent of the evil," i. e. to alter his intentions of inflicting punishment. But in this case there was no room for it, because of the oath of God, that Amalek should be cut off. This made Saul's sin unpardon-

able; it being of the like nature (to use the words of Dr. Jackson) as if a judge or inferior magistrate, being intrusted to do justice in a matter, unto which his sovereign lord had peremptorily and determinately sworn, should, upon a bribe or other sinister respect, neglect his duty, and (as much as in him lay) make his master forsworn. For an inferior judge to do this deserves more bodily deaths than one. And therefore though God did repent that he had made Saul king (for he had the kingdom only by mere promise, not by a promise confirmed by an oath), yet he would not repent his deposition, nor reverse the sentence against him; because by his preposterous indulgence unto Amalek (God's sworn enemy) he did by this fact incur the sentence of deposition by oath.

Ver. 30.] Now he makes a downright acknowledgment of his guilt; without any alleviations of it, from the fear he was in of the people, or any other thing (ver. 24). He submitted to the sentence, and only desired while he was king he might not lose his honour with those that waited on him, and with the rest of his subjects. And speaks as if he thought, that unless it were for Samuel's sake, he was afraid God would not regard him.

Ver. 31. *Samuel turned again after Saul;*] He said before he would not (ver. 26); but upon his importunity (and ordered perhaps by God), he altered his mind. For he spake before only his present thoughts, which upon further reason he might change.

Saul worshipped the Lord,] In the company of Samuel, that the people might not despise his authority while he held it.

Ver. 32. *Bring ye hither to me Agag*] This he spake to the people, in the presence of Saul, that he might see what he ought to have done himself.

Agag came unto him delicately.] Or, walking in state; for though he was at the point of death, saith Kimchi, he could not forbear to come to Samuel in a haughty manner: but this word seems to relate to *softness*, rather than *pride*; and signifies that he came to him with a soft pace, treading gingerly (as we speak) after a nice and delicate manner.

Surely the bitterness of death is past,] Being spared by Saul and his soldiers, he feared no hurt from a prophet.

Ver. 33. *As thy sword hath made women childless,*] This shows he had been a bloody tyrant, and was now cut off, not merely for the sins of his ancestors four hundred years ago, but for his own merciless cruelty.

Samuel hewed Agag in pieces] He commanded it

34 ¶ Then Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to the house to Gibeah of Saul.

35 And Samuel came no more to see Saul

to be done by the public executioner of justice: or, perhaps, did it himself (see Judg. viii. 20). This doth not prove that Samuel continued a judge after Saul was anointed: but he was authorized to do this by a special command from God.

In Gilgal.] For here they had been praying, and offering sacrifice: and God was present in all the great assemblies of his people (see Judg. xx. 1).

Ver. 34. *Then Samuel went to Ramah;*] Where he commonly lived (vii. ult.).

Saul went up to—Gibeah of Saul.] Which was the place of his birth, and constant abode (x. 26, xiv. 2).

until the day of his death; nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul: and the LORD repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.

Ver. 35. *Samuel came no more to see Saul*] He was wont, it is likely, to make him frequent visits: but now he forsook him, as a man abandoned by God.

Samuel mourned for Saul:] Yet he had still so much love to him, or to his country, as to lament the sad condition into which he was fallen.

The Lord repented that he had made Saul king] In testimony whereof he utterly cast him off; and all Samuel's tears could not procure a reversal of the sentence pronounced against him.

CHAPTER XVI.

1 Samuel sent by God, under pretence of a sacrifice, cometh to Beth-lehem. 6 His human judgment is reproved. 11 He anointeth David. 15 Saul sendeth for David to quiet his evil spirit.

I AND the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Beth-lehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons.

2 And Samuel said, How can I go? if Saul hear it, he will kill me. And the LORD said, Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the LORD.

3 And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will shew thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt anoint unto me *him* whom I name unto thee.

4 And Samuel did that which the LORD

spake, and came to Beth-lehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably?

5 And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the LORD: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.

6 ¶ And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the LORD's anointed is before him.

7 But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD

CHAP. XVI.

Ver. 1.] Since God had told him so plainly, and positively, that the sentence against him was irreversible, it was in vain to mourn and to pray (as some think he did) for his restitution to God's favour. It might increase his sorrow, perhaps, to think that if Saul should die suddenly, there was none yet appointed by God to succeed him. Which might be one reason why now God declared his pleasure about that matter.

Ver. 2. *How can I go?*] That is, with safety.

If Saul hear it, he will kill me.] For he was enraged at the sentence passed upon him, though at that present he seemed to submit unto it.

Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice] Which he, being a prophet, might do anywhere: all the ritual laws being subject to the prophets.

Ver. 3. *Call Jesse to the sacrifice.*] To an eucharistical feast upon the sacrifice: unto which they might invite their neighbours and friends. God promises to direct him so to manage the business, that he should come into no danger. From whence it may be gathered, that it was not the holy oil wherewith he anointed him, for that was kept in the sanctuary: unto which place he could not have gone to fetch it, but it would have been known, and raised suspicions of what he was going to do (see Fort. Scacchus, in his *Myrothecium*, lib. iii. cap. 46).

Ver. 4. *Samuel did that which the Lord spake,*] Took a horn of oil, and an heifer.

The elders of the town trembled at his coming,] They went out, I suppose, to meet him, but trembled when they saw him.

Comest thou peaceably?] They were afraid that he

came to reprove them for some sin that was in their city; or that he fled to them for security against Saul's anger, which might bring them into danger.

Ver. 5. *I am come to sacrifice*] That was one intention of his coming; and though there was another (to anoint David) he was not bound to declare it: for where there are two ends of any action, one may without any injury to truth declare the one, and conceal the other. As Moses did, when he told Pharaoh they must go and sacrifice to God in the wilderness; but suppressed their intention to march to the land of Canaan.

Sanctify yourselves,] See upon Exod. xix. 10.

He sanctified Jesse and his sons.] It is likely Jesse might be an elder; but if he were, his sons were not: but he gave them a particular invitation, and took care they should come prepared. Samuel was not a priest, but being a prophet, he had authority from God, in extraordinary cases, to perform the office of a priest, in offering sacrifice.

Ver. 6. *When they were come,*] After the sacrifice was over, while they were making ready the feast, that was to follow upon it, Samuel took Jesse privately into a room, and there, it is likely, acquainted him with his commission: whereupon he called for his eldest son to come to him.

He looked on Eliab,] Beholding a goodly person, handsome and tall (as appears by the following verse), he concluded within himself, that this was the person God designed for his anointed.

Ver. 7. *The Lord said*] By a secret, inward suggestion.

Look not on his countenance, &c.] All have not a noble spirit, who have a noble aspect; as ap-

seeth not as man *seeth*; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

8 Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this.

9 Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this.

10 Again, Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, The LORD hath not chosen these.

11 And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all *thy* children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send

and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither.

12 And he sent, and brought him in. Now he *was* ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he.

13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

14 ¶ But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him.

peared by Saul. Which should have made Samuel not conclude so hastily, from a goodly appearance.

Ver. 8. *Made him pass before Samuel.*] That he might have a full view of him. God had suggested to him, as he did concerning the former, that he did not approve him.

Ver. 9.] He is called Shimeah, 2 Sam. xiii. 3, and Shimma, 1 Chron. ii. 13.

Ver. 10. *Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel.*] Not all at once; but seven in all, one after another in order; David being the eighth.

The Lord hath not chosen these.] These words show that he had acquainted Jesse with his business: but these four of his sons, among whom he was to anoint one to be king, were no more qualified for it, than the first three: for he had eight sons in all (xvii. 12).

Ver. 11. *He keepeth the sheep.*] And so was not at home. The most excellent commanders were anciently taken from the plough, or from feeding sheep, as Pliny observes, lib. xviii. Nat. Hist. cap. 5, "Fortissimi viri, et milites strenuissimi ex agricolis gignuntur." And so Vegetus, lib. i. cap. 3, *De Re Militari*, discusses this point, whether the best soldiers came out of the city or country: and resolves, aptiorem armis rusticam plebem, &c., "that the country people are most fit for arms;" who live in the open air, and are bred up to labour, and endure heat, and neglect the shade; being unacquainted with baths, ignorant of delights, of a simple mind, contented with a little; having their bodies hardened to the enduring all labour; who are used by the country life to carry burdens, dig trenches, and suchlike labour. And therefore he concludes, that the strength of an army is to be supplied out of the field, for so it is, that the less men are acquainted with the delights of life, the less they fear death. Moses was thus bred a long time in the service of Jethro: and Saul looked after his father's cattle.

We will not sit down] By this it appears, all this was transacted between the sacrifice and the dressing of the feast upon it.

Ver. 12. *Now he was ruddy.*] His hair was red, which in ancient times was accounted beautiful, as Bochartus observes from this place. With which agree the words of Festus, who having said that *rutilus* signifies red, adds, *cujus coloris studiosæ etiam antiquæ mulieres erant*; "of which colour women also were studious in ancient times" (see Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 34). But it must be confessed that the Hebrew word *admoni* doth not signify only red, but also bright and shining; as Bochartus himself acknowledges those words, Lam. iv. 7, are to be understood, where he saith of the Nazarites, *adenu azem mippinim*, "they were more shining in body than pearls." And I think these words are so to be inter-

preted concerning David, that he had a clear complexion; or was very fair (as we speak) and lovely.

Of a beautiful countenance.] Or, had "beautiful eyes," as the words are in the Hebrew, "Oculis speculis et liberalibus," as Conradus Pellicanus here glosses.

Goodly to look to.] Of a pleasant aspect; full of sweetness and clemency, as the same author understands it. All this is said to signify that he was a goodly person, and had greatness in his countenance.

Anoint him.] The Jews observe upon these words, that it was necessary to anoint the first of a family, that was advanced to the kingdom; but it was not necessary to anoint his children that succeeded him: unless upon occasion of a dispute, by a contrary faction (see Selden, *De Success. in Pontificat. lib. ii. cap. 9*).

Ver. 13. *Anointed him*] He did not hereby invest him actually with the kingly power: but this anointing was only a designation of him to succeed Saul after his death. So David always understood it: looking upon Saul as the Lord's anointed as long as he lived; that is, as the king of Israel (see Judg. ix. 8).

In the midst of his brethren.] It had better have been translated, "from the midst of his brethren;" that is, he singled him out from the rest, and privately anointed him. For it is manifest by what is said before, that Samuel was afraid to have it known, and therefore did not anoint him publicly in the midst of his brethren. And by Eliab's treatment of David after this (xviii. 28), it plainly enough appears he did not know him to be the king elect of God's people.

The Jews in Seder Olam Rabba (cap. 13), say, David was twenty-nine years old when he was anointed: which certainly is false, if it be understood of this first unction of Samuel (whereby God elected him, as in the two following Judah and Israel received him for their king); for after Saul's death he reigned forty years, and lived till he was seventy. So that he was thirty years old when he began to reign: part of which time he spent in the service of Saul; and after that was sorely persecuted by him. How long that persecution lasted is uncertain: but it continued so long, that it makes the opinion of Abarinell probable, that David could not be above twenty years old, if so much, when Samuel anointed him.

The Spirit of the Lord came upon David] A spirit of prudence to behave himself wisely upon all occasions; with a spirit of courage, so that he durst grapple with a lion and a bear: and the spirit of prophecy, in which he was very eminent afterward. In short, a spirit fit for a prince.

Samuel—went to Ramah.] Having no further commission from God at Beth-lehem.

Ver. 14.] The Spirit came upon him when he was first made king, and continued with him till this time (x. 11, xi. 6); yet he did not lose his courage, but his

15 And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee.

16 Let our lord now command thy servants, which are before thee, to seek out a man, who is a cunning player on an harp: and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well.

17 And Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring him to me.

18 Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Beth-lehemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the Lord is with him.

prudence and skill in government. He grew melancholy, timorous, and suspicious: so that he started where there was no danger, as the Hebrew word seems to import; and thereby became very unfit for business, being sometimes furious and distracted; always full of anxiety and solicitude of mind: sighing and trembling like a man in the dark, as Abarbanel explains it. For his blood and spirits were thick and heavy, having lost their usual purity and splendour.

Ver. 15.] His courtiers could not but observe a strange disturbance in him: which they looked upon as so unusual, that they ascribed it to the hand of God.

Ver. 16. *Harp*.] An instrument always highly esteemed; as those were who could play well upon it. It is called *cinnor* in the Hebrew, from whence, no doubt, the Greek *Κινύρα* is derived.

When the evil spirit from God is upon thee.] When a melancholy fit seized him.

He shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well.] It being a bodily disease, they hoped by this means he might receive some relief: and, perhaps, they had seen some experiment made of it upon men in the like condition; for music wonderfully alters the spirits, and consequently the blood: and hath a peculiar virtue in it to cheer and delight those that are sad, and compose those that are furious, as Saul sometimes was.

Ver. 17.] For none durst deny his attendance on him, as Samuel had described the manner of the kingdom (viii. 11, 12, &c.).

Ver. 18.] It is likely this was some friend or acquaintance of David's, who had a mind to bring him to court: and therefore reckons up all his good qualities, as well as his skill in music: together with his success in all affairs. Which though he managed with great prudence, yet he could not have been so constantly prosperous if God had not blessed him.

Ver. 19.] This message, it is likely, might possess Jesse with some fear that the secret was discovered.

Ver. 20.] But by this present he hoped to ingratiate his son in his princely favour. The word *laden* is not in the Hebrew, but only *an ass of bread*. Which is a phrase used in other authors, as Bochart hath observed out of Athenæus: who mentions this phrase in Sosibius, ἀρτων τρεῖς ὄρους καιδηλίους, "three great asses of loaves" (Hierozioc, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 34).

Ver. 21. *Stood before him*.] Ministered unto him among the rest of his servants.

19 ¶ Wherefore Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, which is with the sheep.

20 And Jesse took an ass laden with bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent them by David his son unto Saul.

21 And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him greatly; and he became his armourbearer.

22 And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favour in my sight.

23 And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

Armourbearer.] Which was an honourable preference.

Ver. 22.] This was an extraordinary token of his kindness, that he would not keep his son to wait upon him without his consent.

Ver. 23.] *David took an harp and played with his hand*.] Josephus seems to have thought that he also sung hymns and psalms to the harp; for his words are (lib. vi. Antiq. cap. 9), λέγων τε τοὺς ἕμους καὶ ψάλλον ἐν τῇ κινύρα, &c. But the illustrious Spanheim shows that the word ψαλμός is often used for the sound of the harp. So the scholiast upon Aristophanes's *Aves*, ψαλμός κυρίως ὁ τῆς κιθάρας ἦχος (see his observations on Callimachus's hymn in Apollinem, ver. 12). And so Nero truly said (which Tacitus mentions in his *Annals*, lib. xiv. cap. 14), Antiqui ducis cithara cecinerunt, "the ancient great commanders sang to the harp." So Cornelius Nepos reports of Epaminondas, that he was an excellent musician.

Saul was refreshed.] All authors are full of the power of music, both to stir up passions, and to allay them; according to the several kinds of it. Athenæus (lib. 14) praises it for the virtue that is in it, καὶ τὰ ῥῆθι καιδέειν, καὶ τοὺς θυμοειδεῖς καὶ τὰς γυνύμας διαφοροῦς καταπραΐνει, "to regulate men's manners, and to allay and soften those that are furious, and disturbed in their minds." Such songs Aristotle calls μέλη καθαρπητικά, "purgative songs;" apt to cleanse the mind from turbid motions (lib. viii. Polit.). See Gerh. Vossius concerning this in his book *De Artibus Popularibus*, cap. 3, sect. 13, where he shows how diseases of the body have been cured by music, as well as of the mind: and sect. 45, 46, he shows the power of it over brute creatures. Bochartus also enumerates many famous artists among the ancients, besides Orpheus and Amphion (whose history is dressed up fabulously), that are celebrated, not by poets, but by good historians, for their wonderful skill in moving men's passions by music (Hierozioc, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 44, p. 461, &c.). And long before these, the great Erasmus hath observed the force of music in curing diseases, and quite altering the passions of men's minds, in his preface to Arnobius upon the *Psalms*. Which may be found among his epistles, lib. xxviii. p. 1655.

The evil spirit departed from him.] For a time: there being lucid intervals in such distempers as his was; which frequently returned again.

CHAPTER XVII.

1 *The armies of the Israelites and Philistines being ready to battle,* 4 *Goliath cometh proudly forth to challenge a combat.* 13 *David, sent by his father to visit his brethren, taketh the challenge.* 28 *Eliab chideth him.* 30 *He is brought to Saul.* 32 *He sheweth the reason of his confidence.* 38 *Without armour, armed by faith, he slayeth the giant.* 55 *Saul taketh notice of David.*

I Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle, and were gathered together at Shochoh, which *belongeth* to Judah, and pitched between Shochoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim.

2 And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and pitched by the valley of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines.

3 And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side: and *there was* a valley between them.

4 ¶ And there went out a champion out of

the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height *was* six cubits and a span.

5 And *he had* an helmet of brass upon his head, and he *was* armed with a coat of mail; and the weight of the coat *was* five thousand shekels of brass.

6 And *he had* greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders.

7 And the staff of his spear *was* like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head *weighed* six hundred shekels of iron: and one bearing a shield went before him.

8 And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out

CHAP. XVII.

Ver. 1. *The Philistines gathered—to battle.*] In what year of Saul's reign this was, we are not told: but Josephus thinks it was not long after the things related in the foregoing chapter. For so his words are, χρόνος δι' ὄστερον ὃ πολλοίς, "not many years after," &c. For the Philistines having received a great defeat (ch. xiv.), resolved to be avenged, and thought they had a fair opportunity when they heard that Saul was distracted.

In *Ephes-dammim.*] See Josh. xv. 35. By this it appears, that the Philistines invaded the country of the Israelites, and possessed themselves of some parts of it. That place here called *Ephes-dammim*, by taking away the letter *aleph*, is called *Pas-dammim*, 1 Chron. xi. 13.

Ver. 2. *Valley of Elah.*] A place, I suppose, in the same tribe, for their armies were not far one from another.

Set the battle in array.] As ready, and desirous to fight them.

Ver. 3.] After they had faced one another some time, and neither side thought fit to engage and begin to fight, they drew up their armies upon two opposite mountains, which were parted by a valley.

Ver. 4. *Goliath, of Gath.*] For to this city the Anakims fled when Joshua rooted them out of the land of Canaan (Josh. xi. 22, 23). And here they propagated a race of *giants*; that is, people of great stature and strength.

Whose height was six cubits and a span.] A great number of authors write of such men of vast stature in ancient times. See Magius De Gigantibus, and Casp. Schottus; but especially Hermannus Conringius, in his book De Antiquo Statu Holmstadii, and in another book, De Habitu Corporum Germanorum; where he shows the ancient Germans were of a vast size, as Cæsar relates in his book De Bello Gal. where he calls them immani corporum magnitudine homines "men of a huge greatness of body." And Pomponius Mela and others say the same. In short, they were generally seven feet high. And now at this day, there is a whole nation on the north side of the strait of Magellan, "immani corporum vastitate," as he there observes, p. 37.

Ver. 5. *Coat of mail.*] With plates of brass, laid one upon another like fishes' scales. So Bochartus, in his Phaleg, lib. iii. cap. 13.

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Five thousand shekels of brass.] This shows he was a man of vast strength: who was able to walk and to fight with such prodigious armour: which was impenetrable. Yet this is not to be understood, as Fortunatus Scacchus thinks, as if the coat weighed so much, for it would have been insupportable; but that it cost so much, or was valued at five thousand shekels of brass (Myrothee, vol. ii. p. 33).

Ver. 6.] That he might be nowhere vulnerable. For the target defended his neck as well as his shoulders.

Ver. 7. *Staff of his spear.*] This was one of his offensive weapons, by which the largeness of his sword may be measured.

One bearing a shield went before him.] Which was proportionable, no doubt, to his bulk: and was carried before him when he made his challenge, for the greater state's sake; but, when he fought, I suppose, was used by himself.

Ver. 8. *Cried unto the armies of Israel.*] They were divided, it seems, into several bodies, called here *armies*: and they could hear one another from the mountains on which they were encamped; and Goliath came down into the valley, and there challenged any body to come and fight with him in the sight of both armies. He charges them with presumption, in offering to make war with the Philistines, who were so much superior to them.

Am not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul?] Who doubted of this, that he was a Philistine, and they Saul's subjects! The meaning thereof is, as Abarbanel explains it, that he was one of the lords of the Philistines, a chief ruler in Gath, subject to none; and yet would condescend to fight with any of Saul's servants: whom, in comparison with him, he looked upon as no better than slaves. The Targum will have it, that he brags of his great deeds: particularly that he had killed Hophni and Phinehas with his own hand, and taken the ark of God captive; and therefore wonders at their presumption, that they should come to fight with those who had gained such victories over them. Which is not likely, for they had since that been beaten twice by the Israelites.

Choose you a man for you.] He propounds the deciding of their quarrel by a single combat: which seems to have been done out of a bravado, rather than from any examples of those ancient times, of ending quarrels in this manner: for though it looks like a charitable design to prevent much bloodshed;

to set *your* battle in array? am not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me.

9 If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us.

10 And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together.

11 When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid.

12 ¶ Now David *was* the son of that Ephraimite of Beth-lehem-judah, whose name *was* Jesse; and he had eight sons: and the man went among men for an old man in the days of Saul.

13 And the three eldest sons of Jesse went and followed Saul to the battle: and the names of his three sons that went to the battle *were* Eliab the firstborn, and the next unto him Abinadab, and the third Shammah.

yet no nation, sure, was willing to venture its whole well-being upon one single man's good success. We read, indeed, as I observed upon xiv. 10, of two or three single combats, before the armies of the two nations engaged, but they were not intended to be decisive of the quarrel between them. This therefore was, as I said before, a high rant of Goliath's, proceeding from the high opinion he had of his matchless strength: which made him brag, as if he was the support of the whole nation: which must stand or fall together with him.

Ver. 9.] These conditions were never accepted, though Saul sought for a man to fight: but quite contrary, they were so far from being agreed on by either side, that the Philistines did not yield themselves slaves to the Israelites upon the death of Goliath; but fled to their own country, and there defended themselves against them, and fought many battles with them.

Ver. 10.] He expresses the utmost contempt of their whole army: in which he signifies there was not a man that durst look him in the face.

Ver. 11.] For though Saul had not quite lost his courage, but gathered an army to fight the Philistines; yet it was not so undaunted as it had been before the Spirit of God forsook him: and the people's spirits sink, when their leaders flag and are dismayed.

Ver. 12. *David was the son of Jesse.*] He being chosen by God to combat with Goliath, the Divine writer gives an account who he was, and what relations he had.

He had eight sons.] In the first book of the Chronicles (ii. 13—15), there are but seven mentioned: one being dead without children, as R. Solomon thinks; or being only an adopted son.

The man went among men for an old man.] And therefore excused from going to the war.

Ver. 13.] These, I suppose, were men of the greatest experience and strength; and therefore fittest for the service.

Ver. 14.] David being young, was not put to the hardships of war: but the eldest only undertook to serve their prince and their country in this time of common danger.

Ver. 15.] In the beginning of this war, as Josephus thinks, Saul sent David home to his father, ἀρξάμενος αὐτοῦ τοῖς τρεῖσι υἱοῖς, &c., "contenting himself with

14 And David *was* the youngest: and the three eldest followed Saul.

15 But David went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Beth-lehem.

16 And the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself forty days.

17 And Jesse said unto David his son, Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched corn, and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to thy brethren;

18 And carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of *their* thousand, and look how thy brethren fare, and take their pledge.

19 Now Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel, *were* in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.

20 ¶ And David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took, and went, as Jesse had commanded him; and he came to the trench, as the host was going forth to the fight, and shouted for the battle.

three of his sons," who came to his assistance with the hazard of their lives.

Ver. 16.] This is an argument the Philistines could not force the camp of the Israelites: otherwise they would not have spent so much time in this bravado. Unless we suppose, as Abarbinel doth, that all this time more forces were marching to this place, as their general rendezvous, both from the country of the Philistines, and from the land of Israel: for such great armies could not suddenly be got together. Or some wise men on both sides were treating all this time, to see if they could bring matters to an accommodation. It is a mere fancy of R. Jonathan, in the Gemara of the Mischna, title Sota, that Goliath drew near morning and evening, that he might disturb the Israelites at their morning and evening prayers, and hinder them from reciting them.

Ver. 17.] For he did not know but provision might be scarce with them; or, as some will have it, he was informed they were under some hardship, and desired to know how they did. But having other sons at home with him, it was by a Divine direction that he sent David from the sheep upon this errand.

Ver. 18. *Carry these ten cheeses unto the captain*] Whose favour might be very serviceable to them.

Look how thy brethren fare, and take their pledge.] Some think that they went to war, in those days, at their own charge, and were not paid by the king. Provision therefore beginning to fail, Jesse's sons had sent to him for a supply, and by a certain token. Which their father bids David take with him, to know if it were theirs. So some expound the word *pledge*. But others think that if they had borrowed money, or pawned any thing for it, he ordered David to redeem it: or that he should bring something from them, that might certify him of their health. Others translate the word not *pledge* but *business*: and take the sense to be, Bring me word what they do; how they behave themselves; what company they keep, and whom they associate themselves withal.

Ver. 12.] They were now drawn up in battalia (as we speak) ready to engage: not in the valley, but hard by it, on the side of the mountain, where they faced the Philistines, and showed themselves resolved to fight, if they came down from the other mountain.

Ver. 20.] *By the trench*, may be meant the *carriages* (as we translate the word in the margin),

21 For Israel and the Philistines had put the battle in array, army against army.

22 And David left his carriage in the hand of the keeper of the carriage, and ran into the army, and came and saluted his brethren.

23 And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, out of the armies of the Philistines, and spake according to the same words: and David heard them.

24 And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid.

25 And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up: and it shall be, that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel!

26 And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?

27 And the people answered him after this manner, saying, So shall it be done to the man that killeth him.

28 ¶ And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle.

29 And David said, What have I now done? *Is there not a cause?*

30 ¶ And he turned from him toward another, and spake after the same manner: and the people answered him again after the former manner.

31 And when the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed them before Saul: and he sent for him.

32 ¶ And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.

33 And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.

34 And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock:

35 And I went out after him, and smote him,

wherewith the host was surrounded, instead of a trench made about it.

Ver. 21.] This is the reason of what follows.

Ver. 22. *David left his carriage*] He left the provision which his father had sent his brethren with his servant, it being no time to present it to them, when they were just going to engage.

Came and saluted his brethren.] Acquainting them, no doubt with their father's care of them.

Ver. 23.] Though the armies stood ready to engage, yet the vanity of Goliath made him once more desire the matter might be determined by a single combat.

Ver. 24.] They who could look the whole army of the Philistines in the face (among whom they knew Goliath was), one would think should not flee at the sight of one man. But the meaning is (as the next words show), they could not endure to hear his opprobrious words against them, and his blasphemous words against God.

Ver. 25.] They bewailed among themselves their sad condition; that all the people of Israel should be set at nought, and vilified by one man; who despised both them and their God (ver. 45).

To make his family "free in Israel," was to make them noble. And the Targum translates it, make them "free princes in Israel:" particularly free from paying any tribute or taxes, which was a royal privilege; of which see Selden, lib. vi. De Jure Nat. et Gentium, cap. 14, fol. 740. Here some observe, that Saul had lost his wonted piety; for he sent not to Samuel, nor consulted the high-priest, nor offered sacrifice; but only proclaimed a great reward to him that should fight with Goliath and kill him. Which showed he had not lost all *prudence*: for thus Caleb won Kirjath-sepher, by offering his daughter in marriage to him that should take it. And David himself afterward encouraged his soldiers to assault the strong fort of Zion, by promising to make him commander-in-chief of all his forces, who should first enter it. Thus Mathias Hostius observes, the Athenians offered a hundred talents to him that should bring Xerxes to them alive or dead: many more instances of this

way of exciting men to valiant exploits he gives in his history of this monomachia.

Ver. 26.] He desired them to repeat the king's promise; signifying that he would undertake to encounter Goliath. He would not have them think he was moved by the hope of the reward (which was not to be despised) so much as by zeal for God, and for his country: which suffered by the reproaches of one, who was not in covenant with God: and therefore he did not fear him, nor would suffer him any longer to make such proud boasting.

Ver. 27.] They all confirmed what was before said.

Ver. 28. *Why camest thou down hither?*] His passion made him forget that he came by his father's order, to see how they did, &c.

With whom hast thou left those few sheep?] This intimates, that he was fitter to look after sheep, than to fight a giant.

I know thy pride,] Vain-glory he thought brought him to the battle: and now made him offer to run such a desperate adventure.

Ver. 29.] He justifies his discourse: since no man, no, not Eliab himself, had the courage to wipe off the reproach which Goliath cast upon them all.

Ver. 30.] He told them he would undertake to fight Goliath; and they told him what would be his reward if he killed him.

Ver. 31.] They had been spoken to so many, that at last they came to Saul's ear: who desired to hear himself what he said.

Ver. 32.] *David said to Saul,*] Who had told him what he heard reported of his resolution.

Will go] In assured hope of victory.

Ver. 33.] This Saul spake out of kindness to David, whom he would not have to hazard himself against an old soldier, when he was inexperienced in war.

Ver. 34.] Not both together (as Castalio supposes in his translation), but at several times; and it is likely more than once.

Ver. 35.] He pursued the lion and killed him in his flight: or, if he turned again to devour him, he boldly caught him by the beard and killed

and delivered *it* out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught *him* by his beard, and smote him, and slew him.

36 Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God.

37 David said moreover, the Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the Lord be with thee.

38 ¶ And Saul armed David with his armour, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail.

39 And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved *it*. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved *them*. And David put them off him.

40 And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had,

him. And in like manner we are to understand he encountered the bear.

Ver. 36.] The author of *Halictho Olam*, by a strange fetch, concludes from hence, that he killed a lion with two of her whelps, and a bear with one of her cubs (par. iv. cap. 3). He encourages himself by three arguments. His mastery over such terrible creatures as a lion and a bear: which made him not fear this great beast Goliath. Who was not one of God's people: whom he had insolently set at nought as varlets and slaves (ver. 8) though they were the servants of the living God.

Ver. 37. *Out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear.*] In the Hebrew it is, "out of the hand of the lion, and out of the hand of the bear." And Aristotle observes, that bears have paws, *χερσιν ὁμοίως*, "resembling hands."

He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.] To silence all objections, he declares that he was possessed with a full persuasion, that God would deliver this Philistine into his hands, as he had done the lion and the bear: for he felt himself full of that spirit which then assisted him. Abarbinel thinks, that he repeats this so often, because Saul did not seem to believe it, or did not attend to it: and therefore he saith over again, ver. 37, what he had said, ver. 36. And tells him it was not by his own strength, but by the mighty power of God, that he overcame those furious beasts: as he doubted not he should do this Philistine by the same power. Whereupon Saul prayed God to prosper him.

The Lord be with thee.] As he believed he would.

Ver. 38.] Not that which he was wont to wear himself (for he was so tall it would not have fitted David), but he ordered them to bring out of his armour a helmet and a coat of mail, as it here follows.

Ver. 39.] He was not accustomed to wear such things, not being used to go armed: and, therefore, begged leave to lay them aside; as likely rather to encumber him, than facilitate his enterprise. Which Machiavel, in his *Princes*, cap. 13, applies to the danger of employing mercenary soldiers: for "aliena arma aut ex humeris decidunt, aut sunt tibi oneri, aut tunc constructum tenent."

Ver. 40. *He took his staff*] His shepherd's staff.

Five smooth stones] Or rather *five-cleft stones*: not

even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine.

41 And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield went before him.

42 And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was *but* a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance.

43 And the Philistine said unto David, *Am I a dog*, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.

44 And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.

45 Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

46 This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcases of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls

whole and entire, but broken. For the word signifies *partitions*; and, therefore, denotes the stones to have been ragged; and sharp pointed were most fit for his purpose (see *De Dieu*).

Put them in a shepherd's bag] Which hung by his side.

His sling was in his hand.] A sort of weapon, in the management of which some were wonderfully skilful in ancient days (see *Judg.* xx. 16). And Livy, with other authors, mentions slingers that could hit a mark at a very great distance: particularly the Phœnicians, who, as Bochartus observes, were famous slingers; from whom this art was derived to the Balaears (see *Hierozoicon*, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 44).

He drew near to the Philistine.] It seems David made the first motion towards him, to show he was in no fear of him.

Ver. 41.] As he was wont to do (ver. 7).

Ver. 42.] He expected some tall, robust person to encounter him; and, therefore, at the first did not mind David, who was but a stripling. He contemned him upon three accounts: as being a youth, unaccustomed to war; and being beautiful, seemed more fit to dance with women, than to fight with men; and he came also unarmed (see xvi. 12).

Ver. 43.] So the Romans were wont to do, saying, "Dii Deaque te perdat:" as Goliath, it is likely, now wished, that Dagon and Ashtaroth, and the rest of his gods would confound David.

Ver. 44.] For in his hand David was no more than a little lamb in the hand of a butcher.

Ver. 45. *I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts.*] By a commission from him who commands all creatures in heaven and earth; and in a full assurance that he will deliver thee into my hand. Concerning the word *chidon*, which we translate a *spear*, see Bochart in his *Hieroz.* par. i. p. 138.

The God of the armies] The leader and protector of those armies whom Goliath had set at nought.

Ver. 46. *Take thine head from thee.*] Which Goliath thought impossible, he having no sword by his side. David did not rashly and vainly boast beforehand of the victory, as Goliath hath done: but, being full of faith (as Pellicanus here notes), praised the Divine omnipotence, and prophesied of an assured victory.

of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

47 And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hands.

48 And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.

49 And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth.

50 So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but *there was no sword in the hand of David.*

51 Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out

of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled.

52 And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines, until thou come to the valley, and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim, even unto Gath, and unto Ekron.

53 And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and they spoiled their tents.

54 And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem; but he put his armour in his tent.

55 ¶ And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, whose son is this youth? And Abner said, *As thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell.*

56 And the king said, Enquire thou whose son the stripling is.

There is a God in Israel.] Superior to all other.

Ver. 47.] They might learn, if they pleased, that the Lord needed not human force to effect his designs. David did not want courage: but he ascribes all to God; in whose power and might he went forth, and not his own. The battle was properly the Lord's against the seven nations of Canaan: because he had commanded them to be extirpated. But in all other battles he disposed of the victory as he pleased. Strigelius here notes out of Sophocles the profane spirit of Ajax; who was therefore punished with madness: because his father Telamon piously admonishing him, as he went to war, to fight bravely, but to expect victory from God; he impiously answered, that "cowards might overcome by the help of God, but he doubted not to overcome without him."

Ver. 48. *When the Philistine arose,]* Having nothing but victory in his thoughts, as Pellicanus here observes, he arose, and marched gravely, and pompously, covered over with armour, and fearing nothing.

That David hasted,] But David, being loaded with no armour, nimbly ran towards him, and knocked him down; before he had so much as drawn his sword out of his sheath.

Ver. 49. *Smote the Philistine in his forehead,]* Which either was bare (he perhaps contemning David so much, as not to pull down his helmet over his face), or else was thrown with such a force, that it pierced his helmet first, and then his forehead: or went in at the place which was left open for his eyes. However it was, the Divine hand directed it: for though there were men so wonderfully skilful as to hit a mark that was fixed and immovable, though small and at a distance; yet none had such admirable skill as to be sure to hit a mark that was in motion, as Goliath's body was at this time.

The stone sunk into his forehead,] Pierced into his brain, so that he immediately, as it here follows, "fell upon his face to the earth." Kimchi thinks, that when he said to David, "Come, and I will give thy flesh to the fowls of the air," he looked up, and his helmet then fell from off his head.

Ver. 50. *So David prevailed]* So true is that of Vegetius (lib. i. cap. 6), *Utilius est fortes esse milites, quam grandes.* "But it was not mere fortitude and valour that prevailed," but the Spirit of God.

There was no sword in the hand of David.] This was so wonderful a thing, that so great a victory

should be obtained without the usual warlike weapons, that it was thought fit a special mark should be set upon it.

Ver. 51. *David—stood upon the Philistine,]* That he might complete his victory, and make it notorious to all the army.

Took his sword,] He was strong, not merely by nature, but by the power of God: otherwise he could not have well managed the sword of a giant.

Cut off his head] It is likely the stone had only stunned him; but his life was still in him after this blow in his forehead: and therefore now he quite despatched him.

They fled,] Having lost all their courage with his life.

Ver. 52. *Shouted,]* As they used to do when they had got the victory. They pursued them to their own country (which was in a valley), even to the gates of their principal cities; as Gath and Ekron were.

Ver. 53.] They acted like good soldiers; who did not first fall upon the spoil; and thereby let the enemy escape.

Ver. 54. *David took the head—and brought it to Jerusalem;]* After he had shown it to Saul (ver. 57), and exposed it to all the people (xviii. 6). Jerusalem was now become a noted city, which was the reason, I suppose, why he brought his head hither: though it is only said, he brought it to that place; where it having been shown as a spectacle, perhaps was deposited somewhere else.

He put his armour in his tent,] Which, I suppose, was set up for David, upon this occasion; when he prepared himself to encounter the Philistine. And when his tent was taken down after the battle, the armour was deposited in the tabernacle, as his sword was, to remain there for a trophy.

Ver. 55. *Whose son is this youth?]* Such cavillers as Spinosa from hence argue, that this chapter was not written by him that wrote the former: for how is it possible, say they, that Saul should not know David, who had lately attended on him in his court? But this is very frivolous; for in such a multitude of business as kings have, and among so many new faces which they see every day, it was easy to forget a man he had seen and conversed withal now and then; especially when he was crazed, and had a disease in his head, as Saul had. Besides, David came now in another kind of apparel than he did when he was sent to wait upon Saul at court: for he appeared now

57 And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand.

as a shepherd, in a rustic habit (ver. 40), and his countenance, it is likely, was much altered by the heroic motion he now found in himself to fight with Goliath. And after all, Abarnel observes, he doth not ask who David was, but who was his father: which he might easily forget when he had been disturbed with melancholy, and with the public affairs.

Abner said,] He being a military man, and therefore much abroad, had not seen David when he was at court, or taken no notice of him.

58 And Saul said to him, Whose son art thou, *thou* young man? And David answered, *I am* the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite.

Ver. 56.] It was natural to desire to know whence such a young man came, who so much excelled all other men.

Ver. 57.] He thought it was best the king should learn from his own mouth who he was: especially after such a glorious exploit.

Ver. 58.] More discourse, no doubt, passed between them, as appears by the next words; but this was all that was proper to be recorded, in answer to Saul's question.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1 Jonathan loveth David. 5 Saul envieth his praise, 10 seeketh to kill him in his fury, 12 feareth him for his good success, 17 offereth him his daughters for a snare. 22 David persuaded to be the king's son in law, giveth two hundred foreskins of the Philistines for Michal's dowry. 28 Saul's hatred, and David's glory increaseth.

1 AND it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

2 And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house.

3 Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.

4 And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.

5 ¶ And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, and behaved himself wisely: and

Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants.

6 And it came to pass as they came, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of musick.

7 And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.

8 And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed

CHAP. XVIII.

Ver. 1.] Such was the prudence and modesty of his discourse and behaviour, after such an heroic action, that he entirely gained Jonathan's affection.

Ver. 2.] Saul also resolved to show greater respect unto him than before. For it appears by this that he had not lived always at court, after he came first thither; but often went to his father, when Saul was well, and had no use of him.

Ver. 3. *Jonathan and David made a covenant.*] Solemnly entered into a mutual friendship. Such excellent men there were among the heathen, between whom there was ζήγνος φιλίας, as Plutarch calls it, "a yoke of friendship," wherein they were so joined together in love and amity, as to have one common interest. He mentions (in his book περί πολυφιλίας) Theseus and Pirithous; Achilles and Patroclus; Orestes and Pylades; Pythias and Damon; Epaminondas and Pelopidas: but none of them comparable to these two, Jonathan and David: who entered into the most sacred bonds of mutual assistance and defence to the very death; and kindness to their posterity after either of them was dead. Which was a singular providence of God, who by this means preserved David, in that sharp persecution which shortly after arose against him at court.

Ver. 4. *Jonathan stripped himself of the robe—and gave it to David.*] That he might appear like a courtier.

And his garments, &c.] That he might look like another Jonathan; and all might take notice they

were no longer two, but one. For he put him into the garb both of a courtier and of a soldier; or rather, great commander.

Ver. 5. *David went out.*] Upon military expeditions: none of which he refused, though ever so hazardous.

Behaved himself wisely.] Showed as much prudence in his conduct as he did courage.

Saul set him over the men of war.] Not over all; for Abner was general, as we speak, of all his forces: but he made him captain of his guard; or gave him some other great command in his army.

He was accepted—in the sight of Saul's servants.] Except a few, who envied his preferment.

Ver. 6. *As they came.*] Marched along, in a great cavalcade (as they now speak), from the place of battle.

When David was returned.] I suppose, Saul and the whole court thought fit to honour David, by accompanying him to Jerusalem, when he carried Goliath's head thither.

Of all cities.] All the neighbouring cities.

Singing and dancing.] As the custom was in times of great rejoicing.

Ver. 7. *The women answered one another as they played.*] They sang as well as played on musical instruments: and they sang alternately, as they did Exod. xv. 21. And the burden of the song seems to have been that which follows.

David his ten thousands.] For his slaying Goliath was the cause of the flight of the army of the Philistines, and the great slaughter of them.

unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed *but* thousands: and *what* can he have more but the kingdom?

9 And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.

10 ¶ And it came to pass on the morrow, that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house: and David played with his hand, as at other times: and *there was a javelin in Saul's hand.*

11 And Saul cast the javelin; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall *with it.* And David avoided out of his presence twice.

12 ¶ And Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, and was departed from Saul.

13 Therefore Saul removed him from him, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people.

Ver. 8.] He began to be jealous they would advance him to the throne in a little time, having so highly magnified him above their king.

Ver. 9. *Saul eyed David*] Narrowly observed him, whether he had any such design to make himself king. Or, as it is commonly interpreted, he looked askew upon him, as one he envied and hated, and was afraid of, as the LXX. translate it.

Ver. 10. *The evil spirit from God came upon Saul,*] Which had formerly haunted him (xvi. 14), and now, by his discontent, anger, and melancholy was brought again upon him.

He prophesied in the midst of the house:] Before the whole court. This prophesying is generally understood only of his imitating the motions, actions, and gestures of the prophets; which sometimes were very different from those of other men (see 2 Kings ix. 11); but I do not see why this word should not retain the signification here which it hath in other places, that he sung Divine songs; which perhaps he the rather did, that David might suspect no danger from him. Abarbinel thinks, that his mind being disturbed with various roving thoughts about his own condition, and about David, he foretold that David should be heir of his kingdom.

David played with his hand,] To compose and quiet his disturbed spirits.

There was a javelin in Saul's hand,] Which he had provided on purpose, as the following words show, to despatch David.

Ver. 11. *I will smite David even to the wall with it.*] This argued he was so full of fury that he designed to kill him in his own house, before all his courtiers, when David was waiting upon him and doing him service.

David avoided out of his presence twice.] Had his eye upon him, and shunned the blow, both now and at another time, mentioned xix. 10.

Ver. 12.] Who was as unsuccessful in all his designs as David was prosperous.

Ver. 13. *Saul removed him*] From his court. *Made him his captain over a thousand;*] Instead of captain of his guard (which required his attendance at court), he gave him a command abroad, where he hoped he might be killed in some expedition; or he might have an opportunity privately to take away his life.

He went out and came in] As the leader of that thousand men.

Ver. 14. *Behaved himself wisely*] None could find any fault in his conduct, whithersoever he went.

14 And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the LORD *was* with him.

15 Wherefore when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he was afraid of him.

16 But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them.

17 ¶ And Saul said to David, Behold my elder daughter Merab, her will I give thee to wife: only be thou valiant for me, and fight the LORD's battles. For Saul said, Let not mine hand be upon him, but let the hand of the Philistines be upon him.

18 And David said unto Saul, Who *am I?* and what *is* my life, or my father's family in Israel, that I should be son in law to the king?

19 But it came to pass at the time when Merab Saul's daughter should have been given to David, that she was given unto Adriel the Meholathite to wife.

Was with him.] Made all his undertakings prosperous.

Ver. 15.] His fears increased as he saw David still grow so prudent that no exception could be taken to his behaviour.

Ver. 18. *All Israel and Judah loved David,*] This is to be understood (as Corn. Bertram thinks, De Republic. Jud. cap. 16) as if he had said, the Israelites in general loved David, but especially they of the tribe of Judah.

Because he went out and came in before them.] This phrase signifies in other places, to administer all things belonging to one's charge with full authority. So Moses speaks of himself, Deut. xxxi. 2, and of Joshua, his successor, Numb. xxvii. 21. And so I suppose it signifies here, that David had an absolute power under Saul over those whom he commanded, and managed it so well that he gained everybody's affection.

Ver. 17. *Behold, my elder daughter Merab,*] He at last bethinks himself of the promise he had publicly made unto him that should kill Goliath; the performance of which David did not demand, but in modesty left it to Saul's own conscience, who now intended nothing less, it appears by the sequel, than to be as good as his word.

Only be thou valiant for me,] He would not have him think upon this marriage of coming again to live at court: but to continue a military life, and fight for his country, whereby he hoped to be rid of him.

Let not mine hand be upon him,] Now he seems to have some sense of honour, and to lay aside those base thoughts of murdering him himself.

But let the hand of the Philistines be upon him.] By whose hand God's just judgment so ordered things, that Saul himself fell.

Ver. 18. *Who am I?*] The hazarding his life, he tells him, could not deserve so high an advancement.

What is my—family in Israel,] This was not a refusal of the honour, but an acknowledgment how unworthy he was of it.

Ver. 19. *At the time*] When all things were ready for the marriage.

She was given unto Adriel—to wife.] A most high affront to David, and the greatest injury that could have been done him: which he wisely dissembled. How Jonathan resented this usage we are not told. It is likely his duty to his father made him entreat David to take it patiently, and to look upon Saul as one that was sometimes beside himself, and did not know what he did.

20 And Michal Saul's daughter loved David: and they told Saul, and the thing pleased him.

21 And Saul said, I will give him her, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him. Wherefore Saul said to David, Thou shalt this day be my son in law in the one of the twain.

22 ¶ And Saul commanded his servants, saying, Commune with David secretly, and say, Behold, the king hath delight in thee, and all his servants love thee: now therefore be the king's son in law.

23 And Saul's servants spake these words in the ears of David. And David said, Seemeth it to you a light thing to be a king's son in law, seeing that I am a poor man, and lightly esteemed?

24 And the servants of Saul told him, saying, On this manner spake David.

25 And Saul said, Thus shall ye say to David,

Ver. 20.] Not out of any love to David, or desire to perform his promise, but because he hoped by her means to bring his ends about of destroying David.

Ver. 21. *I will give him her, that she may be a snare to him.*] He hoped his daughter, in obedience to him, might be persuaded to bring him into some snare that he would lay for him; or, that being exposed to great dangers (which he was to undergo as a condition of having her to wife), he might perish in some of them.

Thou shalt this day be my son in law] That is shortly, within a time, it is likely, prefixed by Saul.

In the one of the twain.] By marrying one of his daughters. He had two; and though he was disappointed in one of them, yet his promise was fulfilled if he married the other.

Ver. 22.] It seems David was not forward to embrace Saul's offer, having been so grossly abused; therefore Saul ordered his courtiers in private discourse to take occasion to persuade him to it. The affection of the king and of the whole court was a mighty argument to induce him to it.

Ver. 23.] Having no estate, and of small credit; and therefore unable to endow her according to her quality.

Ver. 24.] In the Hebrew, "according unto these words;" that is, they reported his words faithfully, that he was as sensible of his own meanness, as of the honour that was offered him.

Ver. 25. *The king desireth not any dowry, but an hundred foreskins of the Philistines.*] This custom hath prevailed in later times in some countries, to give their daughters in marriage to the most valiant men; or those who should bring them so many heads of their enemies. Alex. a Alexandro reports of a people in Carmania, that if any were desirous to marry, it was necessary he should first bring the king the head of an enemy (lib. i. cap. 24). Vincent le Blanc reports the like of others (par. i. cap. 30). But why did Saul require the foreskins of the Philistines, and not their heads? To this Procopius Gazæus answers, that Saul did not know but David might cut off the heads of his own subjects and bring them instead of the Philistines, and therefore he asked so many foreskins, which the Israelites had not, that he might be sure he had killed so many enemies. As for portions, the Hebrew custom was not like that of the Romans, who required the wife to bring a portion to her husband, ut onera matrimonii tanto æquius sustineat, "that he might be able to bear the charges of matrimony more equal-

The king desireth not any dowry, but an hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies. But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines.

26 And when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to be the king's son in law: and the days were not expired.

27 Wherefore David arose and went, he and his men, and slew of the Philistines two hundred men; and David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full tale to the king, that he might be the king's son in law. And Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife.

28 ¶ And Saul saw and knew that the Lord was with David, and that Michal Saul's daughter loved him.

29 And Saul was yet the more afraid of David; and Saul became David's enemy continually.

30 Then the princes of the Philistines went

ly." But among the Hebrews the husband endowed the wife, and received nothing at all with her. And so the custom was among the people of that land before they came into Canaan. For Sichern bade Dinah's relations require what dowry they pleased, and it should be settled upon her, he desiring nothing of them but her (Gen. xxxix. 17). And so it was in the case of David (see Wagenseil upon Sota, cap. 4).

Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines.] Who he knew would be extremely enraged against David, by putting this great indignity upon them, as they all counted it, of cutting off their foreskins.

Ver. 26. *It pleased David well.*] In the Hebrew the words are, "the thing was right in David's eyes;" that is, he thought fit to accept the offer upon these conditions.

The days were not expired.] Which were appointed to be fulfilled (as it is in the Hebrew) before the marriage took effect; so that he had time to perform what was agreed instead of a dowry.

Ver. 27.] He gave Saul double of what he had demanded; partly to show his sense of the honour he had done him, and partly to express his love to his daughter, and to declare his intention to venture his life freely to do him service.

Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife.] There being no way to avoid it, after the marriage had been so solemnly treated and ratified.

Ver. 28. *Saul saw and knew that the Lord was with David.*] He was convinced of it, by the success which he constantly gave him.

And that Michal—loved him.] Which was a great disappointment to him.

Ver. 29.] Having thus advanced him, and seeing no hope of bringing his designs to pass against him, he was every day more resolved to destroy him. Such strange blindness did his anger, and hatred, and such like passions bring upon him, that he set himself against him who he saw and knew had God for his friend.

Ver. 30. *The princes of the Philistines went forth.*] To fight with the Israelites, who had highly incensed them by David's late action, as well as by former losses. And they thought, perhaps, that David would make use of the benefit the law allowed, Deut. xxiv. 25, of not going to war in a year after he was married.

David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul;] By discovering, I suppose, the de-

forth: and it came to pass, after they went forth *that* David behaved himself more wisely

than all the servants of Saul; so that his name was much set by.

signs of the Philistines, and preventing them; for we do not read that they came to a battle.

His name was much set by.] He was very highly esteemed.

CHAPTER XIX.

1 Jonathan discloseth his father's purpose to kill David. 4 He persuadeth his father to reconciliation. 8 By reason of David's good success in a new war, Saul's malicious rage breaketh out against him. 12 Michal deceiveth her father with an image in David's bed. 18 David cometh to Samuel in Natioth. 20 Saul's messengers sent to take David, 22 and Saul himself, prophesy.

1 AND Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David.

2 But Jonathan Saul's son delighted much in David: and Jonathan told David, saying, Saul my father seeketh to kill thee: now therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself until the morning, and abide in a secret place, and hide thyself:

3 And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where thou art, and I will commune with my father of thee; and what I see, that I will tell thee.

4 ¶ And Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works *have been* to thee-ward very good:

5 For he did put his life in his hand, and slew

the Philistine, and the LORD wrought a great salvation for all Israel: thou sawest it, and didst rejoice: wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause?

6 And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan: and Saul sware, *As* the LORD liveth, he shall not be slain.

7 And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan shewed him all those things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence, as in times past.

8 ¶ And there was war again: and David went out, and fought with the Philistines, and slew them with a great slaughter; and they fled from him.

9 And the evil spirit from the LORD was upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his javelin in his hand: and David played with *his* hand.

CHAP. XIX.

Ver. 1.] When he could not destroy him by craft, he declares open enmity to him, and commands his son and his whole court to make him away; some of which he thought would obey him. It is strange that he should speak to Jonathan to murder David, if he knew the friendship he had for him; and he could not well be ignorant of it, since he had so publicly declared it, as we read xviii. 3, 4. But he imagined his love to a father would overcome his love to a friend. And there was a great providence of God in his disclosing his mind so freely to Jonathan, whereby David came to be certainly informed of his danger.

Ver. 2. Jonathan—*delighted much in David:*] He continued to take much delight in his company, and therefore would not lose the pleasure of his friendship by suffering him to be killed.

Take heed to thyself until the morning, and abide in a secret place.] He hoped, I suppose, to find his father better disposed in the morning: and in the mean time would have David secure himself in some close place where nobody could find him.

Ver. 3. *I will go out*] The next morning.

And stand beside my father in the field] In which, it is likely, Saul used to walk in the morning, and take the fresh air. Thereabouts he advised David to lurk in some secret place, that he might speedily acquaint him with the issue of his discourse with his father.

And what I see, that I will tell thee.] Let him know how he left his father inclined.

Ver. 4.] A noble act of friendship, to adventure to commend him to one who was his declared enemy. He represented to him what a sin and dishonour it would be to kill such a faithful servant as David had

been: who never offended him; but studied by all good offices to please him.

Ver. 5.] Especially he puts him in mind of that hazardous enterprise wherein he slew Goliath. By which means the whole realm was delivered out of the enemies' hand. He also desires him to remember that he himself was a witness of it; and could not then but applaud David, and rejoice in what God had done by him. Having mollified Saul by so many arguments, he beseeches him to revoke the order he had given ver. 1, and in downright terms tells him, if he did not, he would bring innocent blood upon his own head.

Ver. 6.] Some think he sware deceitfully; that Jonathan, believing he had no ill intentions towards David, might not persuade him to fly, but bring him to court again, where he might have an opportunity to kill him. But I rather think he spake what he really meant at this present: though this alteration proceeding not from any affection he bare to David, but from a sense (which Jonathan's discourse had wrought in him) how base a thing it would be, to slay a man of such worth, and who had done him such service, he soon forgot it, and returned to his old bent.

Ver. 7.] When he was in his favour.

Ver. 8.] All these battles were only between parties, for David commanded no more than a thousand men (xviii. 13). And if the whole army of the Philistines had been gathered together, Abner would have commanded the army of Israel against them; for he was captain of the host.

Ver. 9.] The more services David did his country, the more did Saul's hatred and malice increase against him. For this new victory, in all likelihood, made him melancholy and mad to see him so prosperous. David did not omit his duty to Saul, though he knew his danger.

10 And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the javelin; but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the javelin into the wall: and David fled, and escaped that night.

11 Saul also sent messengers unto David's house, to watch him, and to slay him in the morning: and Michal David's wife told him, saying, If thou save not thy life to night, to morrow thou shalt be slain.

12 ¶ So Michal let David down through a window: and he went, and fled, and escaped.

13 And Michal took an image, and laid it in the bed, and put a pillow of goats' hair for his bolster, and covered it with a cloth.

14 And when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, He is sick.

15 And Saul sent the messengers again to see David, saying, Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may slay him.

16 And when the messengers were come in,

Ver. 10.] His wrath and fury made him forget his oath: so dangerous it is to be possessed with such passions. David got out of the palace, before Saul's order (which it is likely he gave) could be executed, to apprehend him.

Ver. 11. *To slay him in the morning.*] As he went out of the door of his house. By this it is apparent, when Saul missed his blow, he was the more enraged, and implacably pursued his destruction.

If thou save not thy life to night, &c.] She had intelligence either from her brother Jonathan, or some other friend at court: or perhaps she saw suspicious persons hovering about the house.

Ver. 12. *So Michal let David down through a window.*] Which did not look towards any of the doors which were narrowly watched.

He went.] Having most of the night, it is likely, to travel in.

Ver. 13. *Michal took an image.*] In the Hebrew, a *teraphim*. But it doth not signify such as were made for a superstitious use (which David would not have suffered in his house), but a simple image of a man's head; such as we now use for blocks, whereon to comb our perukes. Abarbinel thinks (whom Abendana follows) that women were wont in those days to make such figures in the likeness of their husbands; that when they were absent from them, they might have them in their image, to look upon them, as still present with them. Of which sort of *teraphim* (which were images in the likeness of men) was this of Michal's, who, dearly loving her husband, had got one made in his likeness. But whatsoever becomes of this, the conceit that *teraphim* were little puppets (as I may call them), which the high-priest had in his breastplate (called *urim* and *thummim*) is plainly destroyed. For this place shows that *teraphim* was a large image representing a man: and therefore fitter for a bed, than for a breastplate.

Laid it in the bed,] Where David was wont to lie.

Put a pillow of goats' hair for his bolster,] It is hard to determine what the word *cebir* signifies, which we translate *pillow*; for there is great variety of opinions among interpreters about it. But Bochartus hath with much probability resolved that it signifies *great*. And the meaning is, she put a great deal of goats' hair upon his bolster; for though the word *goats* is only mentioned in the Hebrew, yet the word *hair* must be supplied, as a great many other places of Scripture testify (see his Hie-

behold, *there was* an image in the bed, with a pillow of goats' hair for his bolster.

17 And Saul said unto Michal, Why hast thou deceived me so, and sent away mine enemy, that he is escaped? And Michal answered Saul, He said unto me, Let me go; why should I kill thee?

18 ¶ So David fled, and escaped, and came to Samuel to Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth.

19 And it was told Saul, saying, Behold, David is at Naioth in Ramah.

20 And Saul sent messengers to take David: and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as appointed over them, the Spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied.

21 And when it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they prophesied likewise. And Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they prophesied also.

rozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 51, p. 623). For in those countries goats had long hair, which was shorn, as the wool of sheep is, and served for many uses; and it is not unlike man's hair, as he there observes. It was also of divers colours, so that she might choose some fine goats' hair (which was ready at hand, being used to be spun) of the same colour with David's.

Covered it] As if David had been sick.

Ver. 14.] He not coming out of doors, where they watched for him, Saul sent other messengers to take him in his house. Her affection to David made her tell an untruth; whereby he gained more time to get to a place of safety.

Ver. 15.] As if they came to visit him, and see how he did. Such was his insatiable rage, that he could not stay to see whether he would die of his sickness; but when he was able to make no resistance, resolved to despatch him.

Ver. 16.] An image dressed up with goats' hair, resembling a man.

Ver. 17. *Why hast thou deceived me so,*] He did not expect to be served so by a daughter, whom he had married to David, that she might betray him.

He said unto me, Let me go;] This was another fiction of her own; for it is not likely that she endeavoured to detain him, or that he threatened to kill her if she did.

Ver. 18. *Naioth.*] A place near to Ramah, as the next verse shows.

Ver. 19. *Ramah.*] Ramah seems to have been the place from whence Samuel was descended, called (in the first chapter, ver. 1), Ramathaim-zophim, for the reason I gave there. And Naioth was a neighbouring place belonging to it, and perhaps the suburbs of it: where the sons of the prophets had either their ordinary residence, or were wont sometimes to retire thither for greater privacy.

Ver. 20. *Saul sent messengers to take David.*] His implacable hatred had abolished all respect and reverence to Samuel (under whose protection David now was), and to the college of the prophets, which was a kind of sanctuary unto those who fled to it.

Anointed over them,] To govern them.

They also prophesied.] That is, praised God in hymns, which the prophets composed and sang to him (1 Chron. xxv. 1, 2, 4).

Ver. 21.] A strange obstinacy, to contend so long

22 Then went he also to Ramah, and came to a great well that is in Sechu: and he asked and said, Where are Samuel and David? And one said, Behold, they be at Naioth in Ramah.

23 And he went thither to Naioth in Ramah: and the Spirit of God was upon him also, and

with the Spirit of God: who quite diverted the minds of his messengers from David, by inspiring them with Divine thoughts.

Ver. 22. *Then went he also to Ramah,*] Not out of devotion, but to destroy David.

Came to a great well] Where company commonly was to fetch water.

At Naioth in Ramah,] It is a probable opinion of Conrad. Pellicanus, that *Naioth* signifies the *habitation or college* where the prophets dwelt in Ramah.

Ver. 23. *He went thither*] He directed his way towards that place.

The Spirit of God was upon him also,] His messengers did not prophesy till they came thither; but God inspired Saul as he was on the way unto that place. So that from Sechu, I suppose, till he came there, his evil spirit was gone, and he praised God as the prophets did. This was to convince him, that he laboured in a vain pursuit after David, whom the Spirit of God powerfully defended.

Ver. 24. *He stripped off his clothes also,*] His royal robes (as R. Solomon and other Jewish doctors ex-

he went on, and prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah.

24 And he stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Wherefore they say, *Is Saul also among the prophets?*

pound it), appearing like an ordinary man; or perhaps in the prophetic habit. Or it may be meant only of his upper garment, whatsoever it was. For when the Germans are said by some to have appeared naked, Tacitus interprets it, *rejeta veste superiore*, "throwing off their upper garment." But the first I take to be the truest account; and, as Procopius Gazaus here notes, *habitus ille regni ablationem significabat*; "this throwing off his royal habit signifies the taking away his kingdom from him."

And prophesied before Samuel in like manner,] This seems to denote, that his messengers had also stripped themselves when they prophesied. And Abarinel will have it, that they all still foretold the crown should be set upon the head of David.

Lay down naked] As a man in an ecstasy, that had not the use of his senses. But by *naked* is meant only, as before, stripped of his royal robe.

Is Saul also among the prophets?] This gave occasion to renew the proverbial saying, which had been in use long before (see x. 12).

CHAPTER XX.

1 David consulteth with Jonathan for his safety. 11 Jonathan and David renew their covenant by oath. 18 Jonathan's token to David. 24 Saul, missing David, seeketh to kill Jonathan. 35 Jonathan lovingly taketh his leave of David.

1 AND David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan, What have I done? what is mine iniquity? and what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?

2 And he said unto him, God forbid; thou shalt not die: behold, my father will do nothing either great or small, but that he will shew it me: and why should my father hide this thing from me? it is not so.

3 And David sware moreover, and said, Thy father certainly knoweth that I have found grace

in thine eyes; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved: but truly as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death.

4 Then said Jonathan unto David, Whatever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee.

5 And David said unto Jonathan, Behold, to morrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat: but let me go, that I may hide myself in the field until the third day at even.

CHAP. XX.

Ver. 1. *David fled from Naioth in Ramah,*] By Saul's being thrown into a trance (mentioned in the verse foregoing), God's providence gave David time to escape; and he went from thence to Gibeah, where Jonathan was.

What have I done? &c.] Such violent and unwearied persecution must arise from some extraordinary cause or other; which he desires to know: for he could not accuse himself of any kind of fault, that should embitter Saul against him.

Ver. 3. *Thou shalt not die,*] He would have him think there was no such danger as he suspected.

My father will do nothing—but that he will shew it me,] These words signify that Jonathan knew nothing of his father's design; and that he had sent the messengers forenamed, without his privity, to seize David. Yet it is strange he should not know of his sending to his house to apprehend him. Therefore some think Jonathan, out of dutiful affection to his father, dissem-

bled the matter: and would not have David think him so very wicked as he was.

Ver. 3. *David sware moreover,*] That it was certainly so.

Let not Jonathan know this,] He was willing to believe that Saul might conceal his intentions from Jonathan; for the reason here mentioned. But by a most solemn oath he endeavours to persuade him that he was in extreme danger of losing his life.

Ver. 4. *I will even do it for thee,*] Both to find out Saul's intentions, and to save David's life.

Ver. 5. *To morrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat:*] There were solemn sacrifices every new moon, and then a feast upon them. And David being one of the king's family, by marrying his daughter, used to eat with them at these festival times: and he thought it possible that Saul, who lately pursued him in a fit of rage, when the evil spirit was upon him, might now be mitigated by the Spirit of God coming upon him at Naioth: and so might inquire after him, and receive him into fa-

6 If thy father at all miss me, then say, David earnestly asked *leave* of me that he might run to Beth-lehem his city : for *there is* a yearly sacrifice there for all the family.

7 If he say thus, *It is well*; thy servant shall have peace : but if he be very wroth, *then* be sure that evil is determined by him.

8 Therefore thou shalt deal kindly with thy servant ; for thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the LORD with thee : notwithstanding, if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself ; for why shouldest thou bring me to thy father ?

9 And Jonathan said, Far be it from thee : for if I knew certainly that evil were determined by my father to come upon thee, then would not I tell it thee ?

10 Then said David to Jonathan, Who shall tell me ? or what if thy father answer thee roughly ?

11 ¶ And Jonathan said unto David, Come, and let us go out into the field. And they went out both of them into the field.

12 And Jonathan said unto David, O LORD God of Israel, when I have sounded my father

your again, as he had formerly done. But he durst not trust to this opinion, till he had tried his mind and affection to him, after the manner here pronounced.

That I may hide myself in the field] He desires, with his approbation, to retire to his father's house, and the field thereabouts, with which he was well acquainted.

Until the third day] That is, till the next day but one after the new moon, as appears from ver. 27, 35.

Ver. 6.] It is likely this was a custom among pious families to meet together once a year, and praise God for his mercies towards them all.

Ver. 7.] If he approved of Jonathan's license, he might hope he was pacified : but if he still stormed and raged, he might probably conclude his destruction was decreed ; and that his hatred continued so implacable, that he must be forced to leave his country.

Ver. 8. *Deal kindly with thy servant* ;] In giving him a faithful account how he found his father disposed towards him.

Thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the Lord with thee :] It was Jonathan's motion, that they should make a solemn covenant before God (who is the avenger of all falseness) of mutual friendship (xviii. 3).

If there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself ;] A marvellous assurance of his integrity, which made him freely offer himself to die, without troubling his father any further, if he knew any guilt in him.

Ver. 9. *Far be it from thee* :] Do not speak after this manner. He disclaims all thoughts either of killing him himself, or letting him fall into the hands of his father, if he could prevent it. For who could imagine a man so solemnly engaged, and who had already shown himself such a faithful friend, would not discover any design he knew against him ?

Ver. 10. *Who shall tell me* ?] He desired to know who should bring him advice how matters stood.

What if thy father answer thee roughly ?] And not suffer thee to come to me thyself.

Ver. 11.] To take their measures about this matter.

Ver. 12.] The first words seem to be an exclamation : and the rest, as if he had said, Shall I who love

about to morrow any time, or the third day, and, behold, if there be good toward David, and I then send not unto thee, and shew it thee ;

13 THE LORD do so and much more to Jonathan : but if it please my father to do thee evil, then I will shew it thee, and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace : and the LORD be with thee, as he hath been with my father.

14 And thou shalt not only while yet I live shew me the kindness of the LORD, that I die not :

15 But also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever : no, not when the LORD hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth.

16 So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, Let the LORD even require it at the hand of David's enemies.

17 And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him : for he loved him as he loved his own soul.

18 Then Jonathan said to David, To morrow is the new moon : and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty.

19 And when thou hast stayed three days,

thee so much, be thought capable of breaking my word with thee ! All these verses are full of passion ; and the words are broken, concise, and interrupted ; as the words of lovers are wont to be, especially when they are disturbed.

Ver. 13.] In this case he advises him to get away, and preserve himself as well as he could : praying God to make him as successful as his father had been ; and bring him to the kingdom.

Ver. 14. *And thou shalt not only while yet I live shew me the kindness of the Lord*,] The kindness promised him before the Lord, or the greatest kindness. The words in the Hebrew run plainly thus, "And wilt thou not, if I be then alive (viz. when God had advanced him to the throne, as he did his father) wilt thou not show me the loving-kindness of the Lord ?" He made no doubt, but rather strongly affirmed his belief of it.

That I die not :] After the manner of those kings, who were wont to cut off the children of their predecessors : under whose throne they were advanced.

Ver. 15. *Thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever* :] The covenant they had made was not merely personal, but reached to their posterity.

No, not when the Lord hath cut off the enemies of David] When he had the greatest power, and none to oppose his will.

Ver. 16.] They had made a league of personal friendship, a little after the slaughter of Goliath : and now they make a friendship between their families : and Jonathan wished that God would require it, if any of his family proved David's enemies. This he renewed afterward, and added further articles to the league, that Jonathan should be next to himself (xxiii. 18).

Ver. 17. *Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him* :] Or he made him swear again by the love he bare to him.

He loved him as—his own soul.] The greatness of his love to him made him think he could never do enough to secure his friendship to all generations.

Ver. 18. *Thy seat will be empty*.] The place where he used to sit with Saul at table.

Ver. 19. *When thou hast stoyed three days, then thou*

then thou shalt go down quickly, and come to the place where thou didst hide thyself when the business was *in hand*, and shalt remain by the stone Ezel.

20 And I will shoot three arrows on the side thereof, as though I shot at a mark.

21 And, behold, I will send a lad, saying, Go, find out the arrows. If I expressly say unto the lad, Behold, the arrows are on this side of thee, take them; then come thou: for *there is peace* to thee, and no hurt; as the Lord liveth.

22 But if I say thus unto the young man, Behold, the arrows are beyond thee; go thy way: for the Lord hath sent thee away.

23 And as touching the matter which thou and I have spoken of, behold, the Lord be between thee and me for ever.

24 ¶ So David hid himself in the field: and when the new moon was come, the king sat him down to eat meat.

25 And the king sat upon his seat, as at other times, even upon a seat by the wall: and Jona-

than arose, and Abner sat by Saul's side, and David's place was empty.

26 Nevertheless Saul spake not any thing that day: for he thought, Something hath befallen him, he is not clean; surely he is not clean.

27 And it came to pass on the morrow, which was the second day of the month, that David's place was empty: and Saul said unto Jonathan his son, Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday, nor to day?

28 And Jonathan answered Saul, David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Beth-lehem:

29 And he said, Let me go, I pray thee; for our family hath a sacrifice in the city; and my brother, he hath commanded me to be there: and now, if I have found favour in thine eyes, let me get away, I pray thee, and see my brethren. Therefore he cometh not unto the king's table.

30 Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of the perverse rebellious woman, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine

shall go down quickly.] It is commonly interpreted, of staying so long with his kindred at Beth-lehem, or some other place of retirement. But in the Hebrew the words are, "thou shalt three times (or three days) go down to a very low place:" and the meaning seems to be, that if Jonathan did not come the first day, he should take it for granted he knew nothing; and come again the second; and if he brought him no news then, come the third.

Come to the place where thou didst hide thyself when the business was in hand.] When they were discoursing of this very matter: how to discover Saul's affection towards David. Or, when he did David's business with his father, and interceded so effectually for him, that Saul promised not to kill him.

Remain by the stone Ezel.] It is thought to be a stone that showed men their way, where several roads met: because the word imports *going or travelling*.

Ver. 20.] For when he came there might he passengers going to and fro: which would deprive them of the privacy they desired. Therefore this seems to have been given as a sign that the coast was clear.

Ver. 21.] So that he might securely appear, and show himself.

Ver. 22.] He would not have him venture to discover himself; but look upon this as a sign that God would not have him to appear at court.

Ver. 23.] As a witness, and an avenger, if we keep not the covenant we have made of perpetual friendship.

Ver. 24.] He did not immediately hide himself in the field, but when the time came that he had appointed: for he first went to Beth-lehem (ver. 6, 28).

Ver. 25. *The king sat upon his seat,—by the wall.*] The Israelites sat at meat (as did the Greeks and Romans in aftertimes) in a half round, or circle: which they called *sigma*, from the ancient figure of that letter, which was thus, ζ. Now the middle place, in this fashion of sitting, was most honourable among this people, as our Mr. Thorndike gathers from this very place. Upon which R. Solomon saith, "Saul sat in the head of the couch next the wall." For supposing them to sit in a round, or half circle, as the manner always was, we must needs conceive that the back or middle of this half circle must be towards the wall, for all conveniences (see his Religious Assemblies, p. 62). It may be also here observed, that the

custom of lying alone, leaning on their elbows, was not yet introduced in these ancient times; but they sat at meat as we do (see Bochartus, Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 5, p. 598).

Jonathan arose.] When his father came into the room: and after Saul had taken his place, it is likely, sat on his right hand.

Abner sat by Saul's side.] On his left hand, I suppose, being his cousin, and the general of his army.

David's place was empty.] Which, it is probable, was next to Abner's.

Ver. 26. *Saul spoke not any thing that day.*] Made no inquiry after David.

Something hath befallen him.] What this *mirrah* or accident signifies, which we translate "something hath befallen him," see upon Lev. xv. 16.

Ver. 25. *Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse?*] His calling him the son of Jesse argued both scorn and displeasure against him.

To meat, neither yesterday, nor to day?] By this it appears, the Jews anciently observed two days, in the beginning of every month, with festival joy. The reason was because the new moon being proclaimed according to its appearance, and it appearing unequally, sometimes in the afternoon, sometimes in the evening, sometimes at midnight, therefore they observed two days, as Scaliger and others have observed. And they who were not clean the first day, might observe the second: for that sort of uncleanness here spoken of lasted but one day.

Ver. 28. *Jonathan answered Saul.*] Which he, being next to the king, had power, I suppose, to grant: as appears, from his demanding of Jonathan an account what was become of him.

Ver. 29.] The eldest brother let all the rest know that their company was expected. Jonathan expresses in many words, the great importunity of David for leave to go and visit his relations: which he thought might make the king not take it ill that he had granted it.

Ver. 30. *Thou son of the perverse rebellious woman.*] Or, as it is in the Hebrew, "thou son of perverse rebellion." That is, a very perverse rebel.

Thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion.] Made him his friend, to his utter undoing.

And unto the confusion of thy mother's nakedness? For the world would think that he was no son of his

own confusion, and unto the confusion of thy mother's nakedness?

31 For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die.

32 And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said unto him, Wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he done?

33 And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him: whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David.

34 So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no meat the second day of the month: for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame.

35 ¶ And it came to pass in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad with him.

36 And he said unto his lad, Run, find out now the arrows which I shoot. And as the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him.

because he loved him entirely, whom Saul hated extremely.

Ver. 31. *As long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established,*] He was fully satisfied that David, if he lived, would be king of Israel. Which, if he knew by Samuel's anointing him, it was madness to imagine that he should be able to overthrow the counsel of God.

Now—fetch him unto me,] He could not expect to be obeyed, since his son loved him so much: but his fury made him lay this command upon him.

Ver. 32.] He declines his command, by desiring to know what his guilt was.

Ver. 33. *Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him.*] It is not said, as it is of David, xix. 10, "to smite him to the wall:" and therefore some think he intended only to wound him, not to kill him: but the word *smite*, in Scripture, commonly signifies to kill, and there is no reason to take it otherwise here: Saul's fury being so great, that he minded not what he did. One would think that he used a *javelin* or lance as a sceptre: for it was always ready at hand.

Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David.] That it was his unalterable resolution. Which is implied in that phrase (ver. 31), "he is the son of death," as Constantine L'Empereur observes upon Bava-kama, p. 90.

Ver. 34.] Here are two reasons why he fasted: first, because he was extremely afflicted for David; and, secondly, his father had put Jonathan to shame, by his foul language, and by throwing a javelin at him, for so the words run clearly in the Hebrew; "for he was grieved for David, and because," &c., the copulative *and* being wanting, as in many other places.

37 And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried after the lad, and said, *Is not the arrow beyond thee?*

38 And Jonathan cried after the lad, *Make speed, haste, stay not.* And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master.

39 But the lad knew not any thing: only Jonathan and David knew the matter.

40 And Jonathan gave his artillery unto his lad, and said unto him, *Go, carry them to the city.*

41 ¶ And as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of a place toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded.

42 And Jonathan said to David, *Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, The LORD be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever.* And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city.

Ver. 35. *In the morning,*] Of the third day. *Jonathan went out into the field*] According to their agreement (ver. 20, 21).

Ver. 36.] Which was the sign given to David of Saul's ill intentions (ver. 22).

Ver. 37.] He cried so loud, I suppose, that David might hear him what he said.

Ver. 38. *Make speed—stay not.*] So desirous he was to be alone with David.

Ver. 39. *Knew the matter.*] The meaning of all this.

Ver. 40.] That he might be left alone with David.

Ver. 41. *David arose out of a place toward the south,*] On the south of the stone Ezel: on the north side of which Jonathan shot his arrows, that the lad might not chance to stumble upon David. After three bows, he fell on his face; out of reverence to him, as the king's son, and his excellent friend. Arrianus saith (lib. iv.), that this prostration was introduced by Cyrus: but he is confuted by this action of David; which shows it to have been a far more ancient posture.

Wept one with another,] Being to become an exile from his friend, from his wife, from his kindred, and the people of God; and from all sacred solemnities.

Ver. 42. *The Lord be between me and thee,*] As much as to say, doubt not that I will faithfully keep my covenant with thee; as I doubt not of thy perpetual steadfastness in it, when I am dead. And this must be our satisfaction, in this sad separation.

He arose and departed.] i. e. David left Jonathan.

Jonathan went into the city.] I suppose their discourse continued but a short time; for fear of being discovered.

CHAPTER XXI.

1 David at Nob obtaineth of Ahimelech hallowed bread. 7 Doeg was present. 8 David taketh Goliath's sword.
10 David at Gath feigneth himself mad.

1 THEN came David to Nob to Ahimelech the priest: and Ahimelech was afraid at the

meeting of David, and said unto him, *Why art thou alone, and no man with thee?*

CHAP. XXI.

Ver. 1. *Nob*] It is hard to tell where this city was; for it is not reckoned among the cities of the priests,

either in the tribe of Judah, or of Benjamin, or of any other. But D. Kimchi saith, his father took it for Jerusalem; and perhaps it was near to it: where the tabernacle being fixed, the priests resorted thither in

2 And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed my servants to such and such a place.

3 Now therefore what is under thine hand? give me five loaves of bread in mine hand, or what there is present.

4 And the priest answered David, and said, There is no common bread under mine hand, but there is hallowed bread; if the young men have kept themselves at least from women.

5 And David answered the priest, and said

great numbers, and settled there. In Neh. xi. 32, we find mention of a city of this name, in the tribe of Benjamin: whither Saul, perhaps, brought the tabernacle, being his own tribe.

Unto Ahimelech the priest.] Intending here to commend himself and his cause to God; and to beg his direction and protection. Ahimelech is nowhere called the high-priest, but always Ahimelech the priest, or simply, the priest (ver. 4—6, 9): yet, being the son of Ahitub (xxii. 9, 11), who was the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, he is generally supposed to have been the brother of Ahijah (mentioned xiv. 3), and he being dead, to have succeeded him in the high-priesthood.

Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David.] Seeing him alone; and having heard, perhaps, something of the king's displeasure against him.

Why art thou alone.] A man of David's quality, he knew, never went without attendants. And the truth is, David had some persons with him, as the fourth verse tells us, and appears from our Saviour's words (in the second of St. Mark), where he mentions "David and those that were with him." But he had no such persons as used to be his guard; and he left those that were with him at some distance, that Ahimelech might not see them.

Ver. 2. The king hath commanded me a business, &c.] We are not from hence to take an example of speaking untruths (as Conradus Pellicanus here glosses), but the wickedness of the world is the more to be deplored, which sometimes puts a necessity upon excellent men to lie, that they may preserve their lives, which cannot be safe without it.

I have appointed my servants to such and such a place.] Here he acknowledges he had servants with him: but he had disposed them into several places, that the king's business might be the better concealed.

Ver. 3. What is under thine hand?] He desires to know what he was able to do for him, to supply his wants. Particularly he desires to satisfy his hunger, and enough for his servants.

What there is present.] That is, any other victuals.

Ver. 4.] It was the ancient custom among other nations, for the priests to keep themselves even from the lawful use of women, before they performed their office: as Porphyry informs us, lib. iv. Περὶ Ἀπορρησίας, sect. 7. Therefore Ahimelech requires this of David's soldiers, or companions, that being to eat of the holy bread, which none but priests might eat, they should eat it with the same purity, which was required of the priests.

Ver. 5. Women have been kept from us about these three days,] As many days as the Lord himself required for the sanctifying of the people, when he appeared on Mount Sinai, at the giving of the law (Exod. xix. 15).

unto him, Of a truth women have been kept from us about these three days, since I came out, and the vessels of the young men are holy, and the bread is in a manner common, yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel.

6 So the priest gave him hallowed bread: for there was no bread there but the shewbread, that was taken from before the Lord, to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away.

7 Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the Lord; and his name was Doeg, an Edomite, the chiefest of the herdmen that belonged to Saul.

8 ¶ And David said unto Ahimelech, And is

The vessels] That is, their bodies: so the word *keli* here signifies, as *κελεις* doth in 1 Tim. iv. 4.

Are holy,] That is, separated from women.

The bread is in a manner common,] He adds, that he need not scruple to give them the hallowed bread; for it was not so holy as when it was upon the table of the Lord: but became, in a manner, or in some part, common bread; being now the food not only of the priest, but of his whole family.

Though it were sanctified this day in the vessel.] The marginal translation is more plain, "especially when there was other that day sanctified in the vessel." He means, new bread was set upon the table of the Lord: so that no wrong was done to him. By the vessel is meant the dish on which the bread was placed, mentioned Exod. xxv. 29.

Ver. 6.] In this neither Ahimelech nor David committed any sin: for invincible necessity dispensed with all these ritual laws; as the Jews themselves confess. Particularly R. Levi, who saith, in a great famine they might eat an ass's head, which was an unclean creature. And they justify this by the word of the law (Lev. xviii. 5), "he shall live in them," not, He shall die in them. From whence they gather, that in danger of life such laws were not to be observed. And so Procopius Gazæus observes, that wise men among the ancient people of God, had less regard to these bodily precepts of the law: and that Abiathar, in granting leave to David and his men to eat of the pontifical bread, "was much wiser than the vulgar people." He calls him Abiathar, not Ahimelech, who granted this indulgence: for so doth our blessed Saviour, Mark ii. 26, and there is a learned friend of mine, who hath a Dissertation ready for the press, to prove that Abiathar was at this time high-priest. Though it is commonly thought he was only the *sagan*, as the Jews in later times call him who was the high-priest's vicar: and upon that account was a secondary high-priest; though that name of high-priest did not belong to Abiathar in the highest sense. And besides this there is no incongruity in saying, that was done "in the days of Abiathar the high-priest" (as our Saviour speaks), which was done in Abiathar's days, though done somewhat before he came to the high-priesthood. As things may be said to have been done in the days of Henry VIII. or any other king of England, which came to pass before he began to reign.

Ver. 7.] It is not to be imagined that he was detained here by force and constraint: but by some vow he had upon him; or other religious performance, to which he had obliged himself. His native country was Edom: but he was proselyted to the Jewish religion. The Hebrew word *abir* signifies a "potent man," or prince; and is sometimes attributed to God. And therefore here signifies, that he was set over all the herdsmen, as their inspector and governor. Such

there not here under thine hand spear or sword? for I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste.

9 And the priest said, The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the valley of Elah, behold, it is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod: if thou wilt take that, take it: for there is no other save that here. And David said, *There is none like that; give it me.*

10 ¶ And David arose, and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath.

11 And the servants of Achish said unto him, Is not this David the king of the land? did they not sing one to another of him in dances, say-

there were in Syria, as Bochartus observes, out of Diodorus Siculus; who mentions one that was *προσστῶς τῶν βασιλικῶν πτηνῶν*, "pecoris regii præfectus." And so the Targum, and Kimchi, and others, here translate it.

Ver. 8.] He left them all behind, that he might the better conceal himself, and pass for a private man. He pretended to Ahimelech, it was because he had not time to go to his house: the king pressing him immediately to be gone about his business.

Ver. 9. *Wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod:*] Behind the place where the garments of the priests were laid up: of which the ephod and its appurtenances were the chief.

There is none like that; give it me.] Which he thought he might use, though it had been laid up in God's treasury as a monument of his wonderful mercy: because he was in great necessity to provide for his own defence.

Ver. 10. *Fled that day*] Out of the country of Israel.

Went to Achish] A miserable condition! to be forced to flee to those for protection, who, he had reason to think, were his bitter enemies. For this was the city of Goliath, whom he had slain, and whose sword he had now about him. But perhaps he thought he should not be known; or he knew Achish to be a very generous person; or being now in dis-

ing, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?

12 And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath.

13 And he changed his behaviour before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scabbled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard.

14 Then said Achish unto his servants, Lo, ye see the man is mad: wherefore then have ye brought him to me?

15 Have I need of mad men, that ye have brought this fellow to play the mad man in my presence? shall this fellow come into my house?

grace with Saul, he thought the Philistines might take him for Saul's enemy, and engage with them against him. Thus Themistocles being banished his own country, fled first to Admetus the king of the Molossians, with whom he had been at enmity, and then to the king of Persia.

Ver. 11. *Is not this David the king of the land?*] Either they meant a chief commander in Israel, who was respected as the king: or they had heard of his being designed to be king instead of Saul, which made him persecute him.

Did they not sing—of him?] By this it appears they had good information of what was done in the land of Israel: and so might know what was reported, that Samuel had anointed him to be their king.

Ver. 12.] This discourse deeply affected him, and made him think himself not safe there.

Ver. 13.] He counterfeited himself to be out of his wits, or to be a fool, who never had any. For he wrote upon the gates, and slavered, as fools are wont to do.

Ver. 14.] Some of the courtiers had presented him unto the king: who seeing him a goodly person, had listed him, perhaps, as an officer in his service.

Ver. 15.] He would not have his court troubled with fools or madmen. For it is likely he did not believe this to be David; or if he was, he was now become good for nothing: and come out of his own country because he was beside himself.

CHAPTER XXII.

1 Companies resort unto David at Adullam. 3 At Mizpeh he commendeth his parents unto the king of Moab. 5 Admonished by Gad, he cometh to Hareth. 6 Saul going to pursue him, complaineth of his servants' unfaithfulness. 9 Doeg accuseth Ahimelech. 11 Saul commandeth to kill the priests. 17 The footmen refusing, Doeg executeth it. 20 Abiathar escaping, bringeth David the news.

1 DAVID therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him.

2 And every one that was in distress, and

CHAP. XXII.

Ver. 1. *The cave Adullam:*] Which was a stronghold (1 Chron. xi. 13) in the tribe of Judah (Josh. xv. 35), unto which tribe he belonging, might hope to find some friends there.

His brethren—went down thither to him.] Either to comfort him, or to secure themselves from the fury of Saul, who they thought might probably wreak his hatred to David upon them.

every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men.

3 ¶ And David went thence to Mizpeh of

Ver. 2. *Every one that was in distress,*] All needy people, pinched with want, who heard that David was there.

In debt,] Perhaps David might not know they were such persons: or if he did, intended not to protect them from their creditors, if they had been able to pay them. It was the manner in ancient times, among the Gauls, for those who were in debt or oppressed, to betake themselves to the service of some great men: by whom, as they were maintained, so

Moab: and he said unto the king of Moab, Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth, *and be with you*, till I know what God will do for me.

4 And he brought them before the king of Moab: and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold.

5 ¶ And the prophet Gad said unto David, Abide not in the hold; depart, and get thee into the land of Judah. Then David departed, and came into the forest of Hareth.

6 ¶ When Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men that *were* with him, (now Saul abode in Gibeah under a tree in Ramah, having his spear in his hand, and all his servants *were* standing about him;)

7 Then Saul said unto his servants that stood about him, Hear now, ye Benjamites; will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, *and* make you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds;

8 That all of you have conspired against me, and *there is* none that sheweth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse, and *there is* none of you that is sorry for me, or sheweth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?

9 ¶ Then answered Doeg the Edomite, which was set over the servants of Saul, and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub.

10 And he enquired of the Lord for him, and

they devoted themselves to live and die with them. Thus Cæsar tells us, lib. vi. De Bello Gall. cap. 13. "Plerique cum aut are alieno aut magnitudine tributorum, aut injuria potentiorum premantur, sese in servitutem dicant nobilibus, &c." And these they called *Soldarii*: and the men that came to David seem to have been such as resolved to live and die with him.

[Discontented.] In the Hebrew, "bitter of soul;" that is, lay under sore afflictions.

[Gathered themselves unto him;] They listed themselves under him, as their commander: who was forced to take this course in his own defence, that he might not be suddenly surprised. But Grotius observes (lib. i. De Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 4, sect. 6), that David did not entertain these men into his service, till, in the judgment of Jonathan, and by many other certain arguments, his life appeared to be in imminent danger. And then he neither assaulted any city, nor sought for any occasion to fight: but avoided it, by seeking for lurking-places, sometimes in the deserts, sometimes among strange people: always taking care not to hurt his countrymen.

[About four hundred men.] Among whom, I suppose, his own kindred were the chief.

Ver. 3. David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab: For the Moabites were at difference with Saul (xiv. 47).

[Let my father and my mother—be with you.] He rather hoped for this kindness to be shown to his aged parents (who were not able to travel up and down, as he was likely to do), because he was descended from a Moabite by the mother's side, especially if Ruth the Moabitess were of the royal family, as the Jews imagine.

[Till I know what God will do for me.] Who, he doubted not, would make good his word to him.

Ver. 4.] All the time of his exile: when he wandered here and there, and had no certain place of abode: being hunted by Saul from place to place; seldom suffering him to rest. So Pellicanus expounds the Hebrew word *metzudah*: which signifies also a strong hold.

Ver. 5: The prophet Gad] Who being bred under Samuel, and knowing he had anointed David to be king, resolved to accompany him in his banishment: which was a great comfort to him.

[Abide not in the hold;] This doth not signify any particular strong place, where he now was: but, in general, all those places where he thought himself secure, in the neighbouring countries.

[Get thee into the land of Judah.] Where he would have him publicly appear; as one that confided in God, and his own innocence.

[David—came into the forest of Hareth.] Where there

were many secret lurking-places: unto which he might upon occasion resort.

Ver. 6. When Saul heard that David was discovered,] He was not so well beloved, as to have early intelligence of David's listing men: which made him reproach those that attended him, in the following verse.

[Now Saul abode in Gibeah under a tree in Ramah,] Or, in a high place, as Ramah signifies. Otherwise the first words must be interpreted near Gibeah, or in the territories of Gibeah.

[Having his spear in his hand,] By his spear is to be understood his sceptre, according to the phrase of those times. For so Justin (lib. xliii. cap. 3), speaking of the first times of the Romans (which was about the reign of Saul), saith, Per ea adhuc tempora, reges hastas pro diademate habebant, quas Græci sceptrâ dixere, &c. "In those days, kings hitherto had spears as signs of royal authority: which the Greeks call sceptres." For in the beginning of things, the ancients worshipped spears for immortal gods. In memory of which religion, spears are still added to the images of the gods. And thus the kings of Argos (as Pausanias tells us in his Bœotica) called their sceptres spears.

[His servants were standing about him;] His usual guards, and the principal officers of his court.

Ver. 7. Hear now, ye Benjamites;] Ye men of my own tribe: of whom he seems to speak with disdain.

[Will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, &c.] Bestow preferment upon them all, more or less; if not lands of inheritance. For so the words are to be translated, "give you fields," &c., or "make you captains," &c.

Ver. 8.] To conceal David's designs from him, if not to assist him in them. The spirit of jealousy always possesses those who are engaged in such bloody designs as he had against David: which all good men abhorred. He suspected Jonathan had made a league with David; but did not certainly know it, much less what it was: and was very much vexed, that none were solicitous enough for him (so the word signifies, as De Dieu observes, which we translate *sorry for him*), to make a discovery of it to him. His jealousy carried him so far as to make him suspect Jonathan not only sided with David, but had encouraged him to take up arms, and to appear openly, as having many friends and partakers: for since he threw the javelin at Jonathan, it is likely he absented himself from court, or did not appear so frequently, or looked discontented when he came into his presence.

Ver. 9.] The rest being silent, Doeg undertook to inform the king who were false to him: or being a

gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine.

11 Then the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests that were in Nob: and they came all of them to the king.

12 And Saul said, Hear now, thou son of Ahitub. And he answered, Here I am, my lord.

13 And Saul said unto him, Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread, and a sword, and hast enquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?

14 Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said, And who is so faithful among all thy servants as David, which is the king's son in law, and goeth at thy bidding, and is honourable in thine house?

15 Did I then begin to enquire of God for

forward man, and hating David, prevented all the rest of his fellow-servants. He speaks as contemptibly of him, as his master had lately been wont to do, not vouchsafing to call him by his name (xx. 27, 30). He represents him, as if he came to take advice of Ahimelech, and lay his designs accordingly.

Ver. 10. *He enquired of the Lord for him.*] Some think Doeg in this slandered Ahimelech, because we read nothing of it; and David speaks of his false tongue: but this may as well be true as that which follows is. And Doeg's wickedness consisted in representing things wrong: concealing the truth, and saying nothing of David's pretences to Ahimelech; but insinuating as if he were in a plot with David against the king. Whereas the good man was made to believe that David was going about the king's business, and upon that account assisted him.

Gave him victuals, and—the sword of Goliath.] And very innocently, as he very well knew: but represented these as acts whereby he abetted David in his conspiracy: which are the lies of which David accuses him, nothing being farther from the truth.

Ver. 11.] By "his father's house" is meant all the house of Eli, whom God had threatened to cut off.

Ver. 12. *Hear now, thou son of Ahitub.*] He shows not the least respect to him, but rather the utmost contempt: calling him in his rage *the son of Ahitub.*

Here I am, my lord.] But he did not forget his respect to the king.

Ver. 13.] A very rash charge, unless there had been proof that he did these things with an evil intent, which there was not.

Ver. 14.] The oracle was consulted only upon public occasions, not for any private business. And therefore the sense of Ahimelech's apology for himself is this: Since David was held by all to be a most loyal subject, as well as a person of great honour, and in high favour with the king, having married his daughter; what could he think but that David was sent by the king (as he said he was) upon some business of public concern; to command his forces, suppose (as he had often done), in some expedition against his enemies? And, doubting what course to take, came to advise with God, as he had done heretofore. For this was not the first time (as he saith in the next verse) that he had consulted the Divine Majesty for him, in difficult cases, concerning the good of the kingdom.

Ver. 15. *Did I then begin to enquire of God for him?*] He desired that might not be an argument against

him? be it far from me: let not the king impute any thing unto his servant, nor to all the house of my father: for thy servant knew nothing of all this, less or more.

16 And the king said, Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou, and all thy father's house.

17 ¶ And the king said unto the footmen that stood about him, Turn, and slay the priests of the Lord; because their hand also is with David, and because they knew when he fled, and did not shew it to me. But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the Lord.

18 And the king said to Doeg, Turn thou, and fall upon the priests. And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod.

19 And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword, both men and wo-

men; for he had theretofore done the same thing without any imputation of guilt.

Be it far from me.] That which he was charged withal; conspiracy against the king (ver. 13).

Thy servant knew nothing of all this.] If there was any bad design, he pleads perfect ignorance of it.

Ver. 16.] A mad resolution: for what had the rest of the priests done to deserve such a bloody execution?

Ver. 17.] *The king said unto the footmen.*] In the Hebrew it is, "to the runners;" that is, to those who used to go before him, and to follow him when he went abroad.

Turn, and slay the priests of the Lord.] Such was the power their kings exercised (as Samuel told them they would), that without a formal process against a man accused of a crime, they commanded him to be cut off at their pleasure.

The servants of the king would not.] Such was their reverence to God and religion in ancient times: which kept them in their wars from doing any hurt to the priests of their enemies, as Grotius observes, lib. iii. De Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 11, sect. 10. And therefore Theodoret here justly praises the guards of Saul, that they chose rather to expose themselves to the enraged fury of Saul, than execute it upon the priests of God.

Ver. 18. *The king said to Doeg, Turn thou and fall upon the priests.*] He who was the informer, he made also his executioner. Kings never want some to execute their commands, though never so bloody. Saul was little better than a madman; and yet had those at his beck who would do as he bade them, because he was their king. It was excellently, therefore, said by Justin Martyr, *Εὐχόμεθα τοῖς βασιλεῦσι καὶ ἀρχοῦσι, μετὰ τῆς βασιλικῆς δυνάμεως, καὶ ἀσώφρονα τὸν λογισμὸν ἔχοντας εὐρεῖσθαι*, "Let us pray that kings and rulers, together with a royal power, may be found having a sober mind."

That did wear a linen ephod.] i. e. Ministered unto God: but we are not to understand by the ephod such a garment as the high-priest wore, for this is distinguished from that by the matter of it, which was merely linen: and nothing else but a linen robe, which was an honourable kind of garment, which others who were not priests were permitted to wear; as I observed before upon ch. ii. ver. 18, and see Braunius, lib. ii. De Vestitu Hebr. Sacerd. cap. 6.

Ver. 19.] His fury transported him to deal worse with them than he did with the Amalekites; some of

men, children and sucklings, and oxen, and asses, and sheep, with the edge of the sword.

20 ¶ And one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped, and fled after David.

21 And Abiathar shewed David that Saul had slain the LORD's priests.

which he spared, though God commanded him to destroy them all. But he did this to terrify all the Israelites from giving the least assistance to David: and make them forward to come and tell him, if they knew where he was. In all this was fulfilled the word of the Lord against the house of Eli by the prophet, in the second chapter of this book; and by Samuel, when he was a child, in the third chapter. Abarbinel thinks, that at this time, the Gibeonites were slain; upon which account there was a sore famine in the days of David. For Josephus saith (lib. vi. cap. 14), that Doeg slew in all three hundred eighty-five per-

22 And David said unto Abiathar, I knew it that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul: I have occasioned the death of all the persons of thy father's house.

23 Abide thou with me, fear not: for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: but with me thou shalt be in safeguard.

sons; taking some men, as wicked as himself, into his assistance.

Ver. 20.] For he could be safe nowhere else.

Ver. 21.] Which confirmed David in his belief of the hatred he bore him, and his resolution to destroy him.

Ver. 22.] For he knew he was no friend of his, and a man that loved mischief.

Ver. 23.] He comforts him with the assurance, that he would take as much care of him, as of himself. For he was sure God would make good his promise of protecting him, till he was made king of Israel.

CHAPTER XXIII.

1 David, enquiring of the Lord by Abiathar, rescueth Keilah. 7 God shewing him the coming of Saul, and the treachery of the Keilites, he escapeth from Keilah. 14 In Ziph Jonathan cometh and comforteth him. 19 The Ziphites discover him to Saul. 25 At Maon he is rescued from Saul by the invasion of the Philistines. 29 He dwelleth at En-gedi.

1 THEN they told David, saying, Behold, the Philistines fight against Keilah, and they rob the threshingfloors.

2 Therefore David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And the LORD said unto David, Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah.

3 And David's men said unto him, Behold, we be afraid here in Judah: how much more then if we come to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?

4 Then David enquired of the LORD yet

again. And the LORD answered him and said, Arise, go down to Keilah; for I will deliver the Philistines into thine hand.

5 So David and his men went to Keilah, and fought with the Philistines, and brought away their cattle, and smote them with a great slaughter. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.

6 And it came to pass, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah, that he came down with an ephod in his hand.

7 ¶ And it was told Saul that David was

CHAP. XXIII.

Ver. 1. Then they told David, &c.] Or, "they had told David," &c. For this was done before Abiathar came to tell him of the slaughter of the priests, ver.

6, where it is said, he fled to David to Keilah. Which was a city in the tribe of Judah (Josh. xv. 44). Which the Philistines now besieged; being encouraged thereunto, perhaps, by the news they heard that David was forced to flee his country.

Threshingfloors.] Which was commonly without their cities; for the convenience of wind, to separate the chaff from the corn (see Ruth iii. 2, 15).

Ver. 2. David enquired of the Lord,] It is probable by the prophet Gad, who we read before, xxii. 5, was now with him. For there is no mention yet of Abiathar's having the ephod: though some think it is mentioned, ver. 5, to show how David inquired of God.

Shall I go and smite these Philistines? A remarkable instance of David's love to his country: unto which he did not become an enemy, when he was banished from it.

Ver. 3. We be afraid here in Judah:] In that part of the country where they then were. His men argued against this expedition, because they did not think themselves safe in their own country, where they hoped they had some friends: and therefore thought they should be in greater danger, if they made the Philistines their enemies.

Ver. 4. David enquired of the Lord yet again.] Not for his own satisfaction, but for theirs: as we read in the history of Gideon that he did.

The Lord—said, Arise,] Make no delay. He expressly assures him of victory.

Ver. 5.] He seems to have pursued the Philistines to their own country; from whence he brought their cattle. Or else we must suppose these cattle were the booty they had among the Israelites; which is not so probable, because then David would have restored them to their owners.

Ver. 6. With an ephod in his hand,] Or rather, "with the ephod." For he being left, I suppose, to keep the sanctuary while his father and the rest of the priests went to wait upon Saul, as soon as he heard of their slaughter, took this principal vestment of the high-priest, viz. the ephod, unto which the urim and thummim, with the breastplate, were annexed, and carried it unto David. Unto whom he hoped to be the more acceptable, when he appeared capable to serve him in that high office. And accordingly he calls upon him (ver. 8), to "bring hither the ephod;" as he did afterward (xxx. 7). But the ephod could do no good, without the urim and thummim, which were inseparable from it. And that he speaks of the high-priest's ephod is manifest, because he doth not call it a linen ephod, such as the priests wore; but the ephod. The only difficulty is, that Saul after this

come to Keilah. And Saul said, God hath delivered him into mine hand; for he is shut in, by entering into a town that hath gates and bars.

8 And Saul called all the people together to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men.

9 ¶ And David knew that Saul secretly practised mischief against him; and he said to Abiathar the priest, Bring hither the ephod.

10 Then said David, O LORD God of Israel, thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake.

11 Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard? O LORD God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy servant. And the LORD said, He will come down.

12 Then said David, Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul? And the LORD said, They will deliver thee up.

seems to have consulted God by *urim* (xxviii. 6). But perhaps he made a new one, in the room of that which Abiathar carried away: but God would not own it, nor any other way give him advice. Aben Ezra, indeed, here notes, that there wants that which they call the *he hejediah*, that is, the demonstrative particle *he*, to show that he means the high-priest's ephod, and therefore this was only a *linen ephod*. Which led him into this absurd opinion, that in some cases God answered without *urim* and *thummim*; being consulted merely by an ephod. ●

Ver. 7.] So remarkable an action could not but come presently to Saul's ears; who was not at all mollified by it, but rather more resolutely bent upon David's destruction. The men of Keilah could not but open their gates to their deliverer; but Saul fancied that he sought for safety in a place, that would only secure him from running away from him.

Ver. 8.] Saul raised a great army, and pretended, it is likely, he would go, and be avenged of the Philistines: but his inward intention was to go against David.

Ver. 9. *David knew that Saul secretly practised mischief against him;*] This intimates that Saul did not openly declare, when he raised his army, he would besiege Keilah; but made a show of some other design.

Bring hither the ephod.] Which no doubt he put on: otherwise he could not have inquired of the Lord by it.

Ver. 10.] Some think that David put on the ephod, and then asked the Lord's advice: but that is a great mistake; for the high-priest was the person appointed by God, to ask counsel of him for the supreme governor (Numb. xxvii. 21). Therefore David spake these words by the mouth of Abiathar.

Ver. 11.] He seems to have been in a great fright, and some confusion of spirit, when he spake these words: which made him not only to ask two things together (which the Jews say was not usual), but also out of due order. For the first question should have been, "Will Saul come down?" and then the other should have followed, "Will they deliver me into his hand?" God therefore put him into the right method, by answering to the last question first: as the Jewish doctors observe in the Gemara of the Codex Joma.

Ver. 12.] Hence the Talmudists gather, that he who asked out of order was bound to ask again. God saw the base disposition of their hearts, whatsoever

13 ¶ Then David and his men, *which were* about six hundred, arose and departed out of Keilah, and went whithersoever they could go. And it was told Saul that David was escaped from Keilah; and he forbore to go forth.

14 And David abode in the wilderness in strong holds, and remained in a mountain in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God delivered him not into his hand.

15 And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life: and David *was* in the wilderness of Ziph in a wood.

16 ¶ And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God.

17 And he said unto him, Fear not: for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father knoweth.

18 And they two made a covenant before the

gratitude they pretended to David for their deliverance. For that is a rare virtue; not to be found in those in whom self-love prevails. It is not easy to be resolved, how they inquired of God, the tabernacle not being there. It is likely David had some tent, wheresoever he was, wherein he was wont to pray to God, and meditate his praises; and there God was pleased to answer him.

Ver. 13. *Then David and his men,—about six hundred.*] His forces were increased two hundred, since the famous victory over the Philistines at Keilah.

Went whithersoever they could go.] Sometimes to one place, sometimes to another: according as they found any hope of safety. So Hackspar interprets this phrase in his Disputations, p. 403.

It was told Saul that David was escaped] Now he began to have better intelligence of David's motions, since the slaughter at Nob: which made the people afraid to fall under his displeasure.

He forbore to go forth.] Not knowing as yet where to find him.

Ver. 14. *David—remained in a mountain*] Where it was not easy to come at him.

But God delivered him not into his hand.] As he foolishly fancied he would (ver. 7), though God very manifestly had forsaken him, and was with David.

Ver. 15. *David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life.*] That he was restless in his endeavours to destroy him.

David was—in a wood.] Where he could better defend himself than in an open country.

Ver. 16. *Jonathan—went to David*] Being a very private place, they had, it is likely, by some intelligence which passed between them, appointed a meeting there.

Strengthened his hand in God.] In his promise to him. What Hecuba saith in Euripides, is most true in this friend of David's, and in Saul his father:

Ἄνθρωπος κακὸς οὐδὲν ἔσθ' ἄλλο πλὴν κακός·
ὁ δ' ἰσθλός, ἰσθλός· οὐδέ συμφοράς ἵπτα
φύσιν διόρθει, ἀλλὰ χριστός ἴσθ' αἰεὶ :

"A bad man is nothing else but bad. But a good man is still good: nor because of any calamity doth he lose his nature; but is always good."

Ver. 17. *Thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee;*] He doth not mean, that he would succeed him in his throne; but be the principal per-

LORD: and David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house.

19 ¶ Then came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself with us in strong holds in the wood, in the hill of Hachilah, which is on the south of Jeshimon?

20 Now therefore, O king, come down according to all the desire of thy soul to come down; and our part shall be to deliver him into the king's hand.

21 And Saul said, Blessed be ye of the LORD; for ye have compassion on me.

22 Go, I pray you, prepare yet, and know and see his place where his haunt is, and who hath seen him there: for it is told me that he dealeth very subtilly.

23 See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hideth himself, and come ye again to me with the certainty, and I will go with you: and it shall come to pass, if he be in the land, that I will search him out throughout all the thousands of Judah.

son in the kingdom, next to David. Which, I suppose, had been agreed between them.

That also Saul my father knoweth.] For he remembered what Samuel told him xv. 28, and by his wonderful successes concluded he was the person of whom Samuel spake.

Ver. 18. *They two made a covenant*] Solemnly renewed the covenant, which they had formerly made. This is the third time that we read of their making a covenant (see xviii. 3, xx. 16). In none of which is there any mention of a sacrifice, no more than there is in the covenant between David and the elders of the people (2 Sam. v. 3), and between Solomon and Hiram (1 Kings v. 12); which is an argument that eating together of a sacrifice or going between the parts of a sacrifice, was not essential to the making a covenant: though it must be acknowledged, the rite was so ancient of dividing the parts of the sacrifice, that hence is the phrase which is so frequent in Scripture of "cutting a covenant," i. e. entering into it.

Jonathan went to his house.] For he did not accompany his father, in his search after David.

Ver. 19.] These people were of the tribe of Judah; among whom David thought himself the safer, because he was of the same tribe. But they were afraid to be served as those at Nob: which made them come and discover the place where he was, very particularly and precisely.

Ver. 20. *According to all the desire of thy soul to come down.*] Which they knew was very great.

Our part shall be to deliver him] For being neighbours to it, they knew all the avenues of the wood where he was: and how to come at him.

Ver. 21.] This signifies, that the generality of people did not favour him in his design: which made him so joyfully receive the Ziphites' intelligence.

Ver. 22. *Go, I pray you, prepare yet,*] Dispose all things so that I may take him.

See his place where his haunt is,] Inform themselves perfectly, in what hill, or wood, or cave, he hid himself. He would have them certainly informed, that he might not go after him in vain.

He dealeth very subtilly.] So that it was not easy to catch him.

Ver. 23.] He seems to be very diffident, having been so oft disappointed: and by this means gave David time to get intelligence, and remove to another

24 And they arose, and went to Ziph before Saul: but David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the plain on the south of Jeshimon.

25 Saul also and his men went to seek him. And they told David: wherefore he came down into a rock, and abode in the wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard that, he pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon.

26 And Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain: and David made haste to get away for fear of Saul; for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them.

27 ¶ But there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Haste thee, and come; for the Philistines have invaded the land.

28 Wherefore Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines: therefore they called that place Sela-hammahlekoth.

29 ¶ And David went up from thence, and dwelt in strong holds at En-gedi.

place. Their tribes were divided into thousands (see Judg. vi. 15); among some of whom he supposed he would lurk; and he would not cease searching for him till he found him.

Ver. 24. *They arose,*] As he had directed them, ver. 22. Having heard what the Ziphites had undertaken, he disappointed their design, by going into another place, with which, it is likely, they were not so well acquainted. For Maon was a distinct wilderness from Ziph; though both in the tribe of Judah.

Ver. 25. *Saul also and his men went to seek him.*] Hearing, I suppose, by the Ziphites, whither he was gone.

They told David:] He also had intelligence brought him, that Saul was coming against him.

He came down into a rock.] Some craggy place. Not thinking himself safe there, he went into another part of the same wilderness.

When Saul heard that, he pursued after David] So that he came to the very place where he was.

Ver. 26.] Saul's forces being far more numerous, he divided them into several parties; who marching several ways, were about to encompass the whole mountain: so that it should be impossible for David to escape them. Who therefore made haste to get away before he was quite surrounded.

Ver. 27.] A marvellous providence of God, who stirred them up at this very time to make an irruption into the land of Israel, for the preservation of David when he was in extreme danger.

Ver. 28.] It was very probable David would in a little time have fallen into his hands, had not the messenger, who, I suppose, was sent by his council, desired him with all speed to come and oppose the Philistines, who were the most dangerous enemies.

Sela-hammahlekoth.] That is, "the rock of divisions." Either because Saul was distracted here between two counsels, whether to pursue David, or go immediately against the Philistines; or, because God divided Saul from David, when he was coming up close unto him.

Ver. 29. *En-gedi.*] A place in the tribe of Judah, not far from the Dead Sea; which Solomon in his song celebrates for the famous vineyards which were there: and St. Jerome and Eusebius say there was excellent balm at En-gedi: from which the wilderness near it took its name. where David found secure lurking-places.

CHAPTER XXIV.

1 *David, in a cave at En-gedi, having cut off Saul's skirt, spareth his life.* 8 *He sheweth thereby his innocence.*
16 *Saul, acknowledging his fault, taketh an oath of David, and departeth.*

1 AND it came to pass, when Saul was returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, Behold, David is in the wilderness of En-gedi.

2 Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats.

3 And he came to the sheepcotes by the way, where was a cave; and Saul went in to cover his feet: and David and his men remained in the sides of the cave.

4 And the men of David said unto him, Behold the day of which the LORD said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee. Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily.

5 And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt.

6 And he said unto his men, The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD's anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD.

7 So David stayed his servants with these words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul. But Saul rose up out of the cave, and went on his way.

8 David also arose afterward, and went out of the cave, and cried after Saul, saying, My lord the king. And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed himself.

CHAP. XXIV.

Ver. 1. *When Saul was returned from following the Philistines,*] Who either retreated upon Saul's march towards them, or he drove them out of the land. The very place was not told him where David was, but only in general that he was in that wilderness.

Ver. 2. *Saul took three thousand chosen men*] Men of valour, and whom he thought he might trust.

Went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats.] In craggy and bushy places, where none but wild goats lived; but he imagined David might there skulk: and, therefore, resolved to be at the pains of searching for him there.

Ver. 3. *He came to the sheepcotes by the way, where was a cave;*] In which the sheep rested in the heat of the day. Unto which place David was directed by God's guidance; for Saul would not suspect that he would abide in the highway unto those rocks, where he was going to look for him.

To cover his feet:] See upon Judg. iii. 24.

David and his men remained in the sides of the cave.] Where they could see him by the light at the entrance of it: but he could not see them, because it was dark in the remote parts of it. Some of these caves were exceeding large: Strabo in his sixteenth book mentions one that would contain four thousand men.

Ver. 4. *Behold the day of which the Lord said unto thee,* &c.] We do not read anywhere that God made a promise to deliver Saul into David's hand: but so they interpreted what Samuel had said, that God would take the kingdom from Saul and give it to David. And they, having a desire to return to their own habitations, and likewise to have preferment under David, desired him to make use of the opportunity which now presented itself of destroying his enemy, and advancing himself.

Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily.] Which he might easily do, if he were asleep: as that phrase may be interpreted, "he went in to cover his feet." This robe was long, coming down to the feet: as the Hebrew word *meil* signifies.

Ver. 5. *David's heart smote him.*] He was inwardly troubled. For it looked like an indignity

unto a prince to have his royal robe disfigured: Tantam intelligebat personæ illius sanctitudinem (as Grotius speaks), "such he understood was the sacredness of his person." And that very deservedly; for the supreme powers being obnoxious to many men's hatred, ought to be secured in the discharge of their office. Of which the Romans took care in the very tribunes of the people, that they should be *ἀσυλωτοι, inviolable* (lib. i. De Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 4, sect. 7).

Ver. 6. *He said unto his men,*] When he returned unto them, and they grew angry, he had only cut off the skirt of his robe, and not killed him.

The Lord forbid that I should do this thing] Which they desired. For I must own him, as long as he is alive, to be my lord and master; unto whom I am bound to be faithful.

The Lord's anointed,] Whom God hath appointed to be king as long as he lives.

Seeing he is the anointed of the Lord.] Set up by God, who alone could throw him down. For he was as much constituted king by God while he lived, as David was after his death. And his anointing made his person sacred: for the very heathens looked upon their kings as holding the place of God. So Artabanus the Persian (as Plutarch relates in the life of Themistocles), "This is the very best of our many excellent laws," *Τὸ τιμᾶν βασιλῆα καὶ προσκυνεῖν, ὡς εἰκόνα Θεοῦ τὰ πάντα ἀσζοντος*, "that we should honour and adore our king, as the image of God, who preserves all things."

Ver. 7. *So David stayed his servants with these words,*] Who still had a desire to kill him, though David would not: which he hindered by his wise and pious persuasions.

But Saul—went on his way.] To his camp, which he had left to take some repose in the cave, having a guard to attend him, who stood without while he covered his feet within.

Ver. 8. *David also arose*] When Saul was gone.

My lord the king.] A bold attempt, to adventure to come into the presence of such an enraged enemy. But his innocence and confidence in God emboldened him, especially having so strong an evidence to give him of his integrity.

David stooped—and bowed himself.] See xx. 41.

9 ¶ And David said to Saul, Wherefore hear-est thou men's words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt?

10 Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the LORD had delivered thee to day into mine hand in the cave: and *some* bade me kill thee: but *mine eye* spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he is the LORD's anointed.

11 Moreover, my father, see, yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand: for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see that *there is* neither evil nor transgression in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee; yet thou huntest my soul to take it.

12 The LORD judge between me and thee, and the LORD avenge me of thee: but mine hand shall not be upon thee.

13 As saith the proverb of the ancients, Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked: but mine hand shall not be upon thee.

14 After whom is the king of Israel come out?

Ver. 9.] He wisely endeavours, at the entrance of his speech, to mollify Saul, by transferring all the blame of his persecution, from him, unto the sycophants and false accusers that were about him.

Ver. 10. *The Lord had delivered thee to day into mine hand in the cave.*] Out of which he followed Saul.

Mine eye spared thee.] A phrase for taking pity and compassion upon those whom we have in our power to hurt. He acknowledgeth him both to be his king, and appointed by God so to be.

Ver. 11. *My father.*] So he was by the marriage of his daughter; and as he was supreme governor, the father of his country. Or if he had not been so, yet this word was proper to be used, that he might soften and sweeten him into more tender usage to him.

See the skirt of thy robe in my hand.] He offers him a demonstration of the truth of what he declared: and prays him to observe it.

Know thou and see.] Let it convince thee.

There is neither evil nor transgression in mine hand.] That he had no bad design against him, nor ever attempted to do him any harm. For if he had, it had been as easy to cut his throat, as to cut off the skirt of his robe.

Yet thou huntest my soul to take it.] This was a great aggravation of Saul's guilt (which makes David repeat it), that he sought the life of one who had no way offended him, and when it was in his power would not hurt him.

Ver. 12. *The Lord avenge me of thee.*] If he still persisted to persecute him. But he doth not, by these words, "avenge me of thee," pray God to punish him for the injuries he had done him; but only to vindicate and deliver him from his violent and unjust persecution. So the Hebrew word *nakam* often signifies.

Mine hand shall not be upon thee.] He persisted in his resolution not to avenge himself, but leave it to God to do him right.

Ver. 13.] Men may be known by their actions. And this is as if David had said, Were I so bad as I am represented, I should now have shown it; but I will never have my hand in such crimes. Or thus, It is for wicked men to do this, but I am none of them.

Ver. 14.] He turns every stone, as we speak, to appease Saul's rage; and tells him in conclusion, that it was below him, and a disparagement to him to

after whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog, after a flea.

15 The LORD therefore be judge, and judge between me and thee, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thine hand.

16 ¶ And it came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, *Is this thy voice, my son David?* And Saul lifted up his voice, and wept.

17 And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.

18 And thou hast shewed this day how that thou hast dealt well with me: forasmuch as when the LORD had delivered me into thine hand, thou killest me not.

19 For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? wherefore the LORD reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me this day.

20 And now, behold, I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand.

raise armies against such a mean person as he was. He represents himself as contemptible as it was possible, that he might convince Saul it was not for his honour to take so much pains to kill him if he could: for what an inglorious thing was it for a king, with so many armed men, to triumph over a dead dog? As if a lion should hunt after a flea. "Which (as Bochartus glosses) if it be sought, is not easily found; and if it be found, is not easily caught; and if it be caught, is a poor prey, especially for a prince."

Ver. 15.] He thought he could not repeat this too often, that as hitherto, so he resolved hereafter to leave it to God to judge which of them was in the right, and not avenge himself. It may seem strange that Saul, who came with such an enraged mind to seek for David, should hear him make so long a speech to him with patience, and not furiously fall upon him as soon as he saw him. But we may well think, that at the first he was surprised to see him follow after him out of the cave; and more astonished to find, after a few words, that it was in David's power to kill him, if he had pleased: which he knew he had, by a long persecution of him, provoked him to do.

Ver. 16.] Though he stood at such a distance that it is likely he could not know him by his face, yet he very well knew his voice. His heart was mollified at present, by this unparalleled kindness of David in sparing his life, when he could have taken it away.

Ver. 17.] Most men have their good moods; and Saul now could scarce avoid being touched with a deep sense how very unjust and unkind he had been to one who truly loved him.

Ver. 18.] The demonstration of his kindness was so clear, that he could not but acknowledge it, and be affected with it.

Ver. 19. *For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away?*] i. e. He will certainly destroy him to save himself. The kindness of David therefore was unusual, and without example.

The Lord reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me.] Herein David had imitated God, who doth good to the evil: from whom Saul prays David might receive his reward for the good done to him.

Ver. 20.] These wonderful providences of God over David, and David's no less wonderful virtue, at last convinced Saul that God designed him to be the king of his people, and that none could hinder his establishment.

21 Swear now therefore unto me by the LORD, that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father's house.

Ver. 21.] As he had endeavoured to destroy David, and as kings frequently destroyed the family of those into whose thrones they were advanced.

Ver. 22. *David sware unto Saul.*] Who should rather have sworn unto David, he would suffer him to live quietly; yea, have invited him to return home, and assured him of his protection. But David did not require this: resolving to trust to God, and not to him. Some question how David kept this oath, when he hanged up seven of Saul's sons (2 Sam. xxi.). But they should consider, that he did not this of himself, but at the desire of the Gibeonites, unto whom God

22 And David sware unto Saul. And Saul went home; but David and his men gat them up unto the hold.

required satisfaction should be given for Saul's bloody endeavours to destroy them.

David and his men gat them up unto the hold.] viz. Of En-gedi. For he durst not stay in such an open place as he now was in, knowing Saul's inconstancy, and the hatred he had to him, and the fury he was in when the evil spirit came upon him. It is dangerous to trust a reconciled enemy: and the old saying is very wise, *μην ἄσπευδν*, "remember not to be too credulous." And so the son of Sirach (Eccles. xii. 10, 11), "Never trust thine enemy: though he humble himself, yet take good heed, and beware of him."

CHAPTER XXV.

1 Samuel dieth. 2 David in Paran sendeth to Nabal. 10 Provoked by Nabal's churlishness, he mindeth to destroy him. 14 Abigail understanding thereof, 18 taketh a present, 23 and by her wisdom 32 pacifieth David. 36 Nabal hearing thereof dieth. 39 David taketh Abigail and Rhinoam to be his wives. 44 Michal is given to Phalti.

1 AND Samuel died; and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah. And David arose, and went down to the wilderness of Paran.

2 And there was a man in Maon, whose possessions were in Carmel; and the man was very great, and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats: and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel.

3 Now the name of the man was Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail: and she was a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful

countenance: but the man was churlish and evil in his doings; and he was of the house of Caleb.

4 ¶ And David heard in the wilderness that Nabal did shear his sheep.

5 And David sent out ten young men, and David said unto the young men, Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name:

6 And thus shall ye say to him that liveth in prosperity, Peace be both to thee, and peace be to thine house, and peace be unto all that thou hast.

7 And now I have heard that thou hast

CHAP. XXV.

Ver. 1. *Samuel died.*] According to Josephus (lib. vii. latter end) he governed Israel after the death of Eli twelve years, and lived eighteen in the reign of Saul, and then died. But according to Sir J. Marsham, he judged Israel sixteen years before Saul's inauguration; and after he was made king lived eighteen. Such was his virtue, and such was the love the people bare to him, that the whole nation bewailed his loss, and that many days, as Josephus saith, *Καὶ ἐπὶ πολλὰς ἡμέρας ἔκλαιον*.

Buried him in his house at Ramah.] The place where he was born, and had long lived: where, it is likely, there was a place belonging to his house in which his family was interred.

Wilderness of Paran.] Which was in the southern parts of Judea, near to Arabia: into which he might presently flee, if there were occasion. The Mahometan writers (as Hottinger observes) make Paran a part of Arabia Deserta: so that now it was that David dwelt "in the tents of Kedar;" which was the same with Paran, as our learned Fuller observes in his Miscellanies.

Ver. 2. *Carmel.*] There were two Carmels: one in the north near the sea, in the confines of Asher and Zebulun, to which Elijah was wont to resort; and another in the south near Hebron, in the tribe of Judah, which is here meant. See Josh. xv. 55, both concerning Maon and Carmel.

The man was very great.] A very wealthy man.

He was shearing his sheep.] They pulled off the wool at Rome, and in the neighbouring countries (as Bochartus observes), but not in Greece, nor Judea; where they sheared it, as we do now.

Ver. 3. *The man was churlish and evil in his doings.*] Uncharitable, and perhaps oppressive in his dealings.

He was of the house of Caleb.] Descended from a worthy ancestor, but very unlike him. In the Hebrew the word is *Calebi*, a *Calebite*, of the family of Caleb. But the word *Caleb* signifying a dog, some of the ancient interpreters understand the word here as if the holy writer insinuated he was of dog-like dispositions and manners. Whence the LXX. translate it, *ὁ ἀνθρωπος κυνικός*, a *dogged man*, or a cynic; and so the Syriac and Arabic.

Ver. 4.] For the wilderness of Paran was not far from Nabal's house.

Ver. 5. *David sent out ten young men.*] To show his great respect to him.

Get you up to Carmel.] For it was a mountain, as the other Carmel was.

Go to Nabal, and greet him in my name.] Present his service to him, as we now speak; and wish him continued happiness, as it is in the following words.

Ver. 6. *Thus shall ye say to him that liveth in prosperity.*] In the Hebrew the words are only, "to him that liveth:" unto which we add *in prosperity*, because *life* in Scripture signifies happiness, as *death* signifies misery.

Peace be both to thee, &c.] A most affectionate and

shearers: now thy shepherds which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there ought missing unto them, all the while they were in Carmel.

8 Ask thy young men, and they will shew thee. Wherefore let the young men find favour in thine eyes: for we come in a good day: give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants, and to thy son David.

9 And when David's young men came, they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David, and ceased.

10 ¶ And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? there be many servants now a days that break away every man from his master.

11 Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence they be?

12 So David's young men turned their way, and went again, and came and told him all those sayings.

13 And David said unto his men, Gird ye on every man his sword. And they girded on every man his sword; and David also girded

on his sword: and there went up after David about four hundred men; and two hundred abode by the staff.

14 ¶ But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master; and he railed on them.

15 But the men were very good unto us, and we were not hurt, neither missed we anything, as long as we were conversant with them, when we were in the fields:

16 They were a wall unto us both by night and day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep.

17 Now therefore know and consider what thou wilt do; for evil is determined against our master, and against all his household: for he is such a son of Belial, that a man cannot speak to him.

18 ¶ Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses:

19 And she said unto her servants, Go on before me; behold, I come after you. But she told not her husband Nabal.

comprehensive salutation; wherein he wishes well to him (both his soul and body), and to his whole family, and to all that he possessed, either at home or abroad: and some think in the first words he wishes all this might be perpetuated as long as he lived. There could not well be a higher compliment, as we now speak; for *peace* comprehends all manner of blessings in the holy language.

Ver. 7. *I have heard that thou hast shearers:*] Whom he entertained that day.

He represents the good demeanour of those who belonged to him while they were in his neighbourhood, and suggests that he would not have had so many sheep to shear, if his men had been like others in their condition. But though they were soldiers, and in great necessity, they never took any thing from him.

Ver. 8. *Ask thy young men, and they will shew thee.*] He desires him to be informed of the truth of this from his own servants.

Give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants.] Most humble words, and full of respect, mixed with strong arguments, from their harmless and friendly living in his neighbourhood; and from the present festival which he kept, when men's hearts use to be open and bountiful: and they did not desire delicacies, but any thing that was at hand, which he could spare.

Ver. 9.] Added nothing of their own, but waited for his answer in silence, as Maimonides interprets it, in his *More Nechoh*, par. i. cap. 116.

Ver. 10.] A most rude and brutish answer to such a civil message and humble request. He reproaches them all as a company of fugitives and vagabonds, and taxes David secretly with infidelity to his master Saul.

Ver. 11.] A most foolish speech; when he had just before called David the son of Jesse: which shows he knew well enough who he was.

Ver. 12.] They did not stand arguing with him, or entreating him: but slighted him as much as he did them.

Ver. 13.] Being resolved, in his passion, to be re-

venged on Nabal. For he had with him six hundred men in all, as we read before, xxiii. 13.

Ver. 11. *One of the young men*] Belonging unto Nabal. Some of his servants were wiser and better than he himself, which makes good that saying of Seneca (in his third book *De Beneficiis*), *Nulli præclusa est virtus, omnibus patet, &c.* "Virtue is shut up from none; it lies open to all." It admits all, it invites all; free men and servants, kings and exiles. It makes not choice of such a house, or of such an estate: but is content with a man himself. For who can choose but admire the wisdom and fidelity of this shepherd? who admonished his mistress of the danger her family was in, as he rationally concluded from the rude abuse that had been put upon David, whose merits he honestly set before her.

Ver. 15.] They confirm every word that David's messengers had told their master (ver. 7).

Ver. 16.] They add more than David's men had said of themselves, that they not only did them no hurt, but were a guard and defence to them against robbers, and against wild beasts.

Ver. 17. *Evil is determined against our master.*] This they understood, either from the young men whom David sent, who let fall some words signifying how highly he would resent the indignity done to him; or they concluded it from what they had observed of the nature of David; who was very kind, but would not put up with rude affronts.

That a man cannot speak to him.] So wilful and obstinate, that they durst not speak to him of this matter: fearing he would be mere insolent to them than he had been to David.

Ver. 18.] She was so prudent a woman as not to neglect the good advice of a servant. This shows that Nabal was a great man, who had such plenty of provisions in his house. For it is not to be imagined, that she would rob the shearers of a festival day to gratify David.

Ver. 19. *Go on before me:*] They carried the present; that David beholding it, might be a little mitigated before she came to him.

She told not her husband Nabal.] Who, it is likely,

20 And it was so, as she rode on the ass, that she came down by the covert of the hill, and, behold, David and his men came down against her; and she met them.

21 Now David had said, Surely in vain have I kept all that this fellow hath in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that pertained unto him: and he hath requited me evil for good.

22 So and more also do God unto the enemies of David, if I leave of all that pertain to him by the morning light any that pisseth against the wall.

23 And when Abigail saw David, she hasted, and lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground,

24 And fell at his feet, and said, Upon me, my lord, upon me let this iniquity be: and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience, and hear the words of thine handmaid.

25 Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal: for as his name is,

so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him: but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send.

26 Now therefore, my lord, as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing the LORD hath withholden thee from coming to shed blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand, now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal.

27 And now this blessing which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord, let it even be given unto the young men that follow my lord.

28 I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid: for the LORD will certainly make my lord a sure house; because my lord fighteth the battles of the LORD, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days.

29 Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul: but the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the LORD thy God; and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, as out of the middle of a sling.

would have persisted in his folly: or been so long before he would have been persuaded to be wiser, that it would have been too late to prevent the danger.

Ver. 20. *She came down by the covert of the hill,*] By a way full of bushes, so that David saw not her, nor she him, till they met together.

David and his men came down against her;] From another hill, I suppose.

She met them.] In the bottom, between the two hills.

Ver. 21.] This he said to himself: or to his men, as soon as the messengers came back; or as they were upon the road to Nabal's house.

Ver. 22. *So and more also do God unto the enemies of David,*] He means to himself: but being unwilling to pronounce his own name, or any other whom he respected, together with a curse, he transfers it to an enemy: by a figure called *euphemismus*. Or, as some take it, the meaning is, "let my enemy destroy me, if I let Nabal and his family escape." But the former is the plainest interpretation; it being common in the Jewish language (as Joh. Cocceius observes), when they speak of any evil to themselves, to translate it to another person. Of which he gives instances out of Maccoth, and Bava Bathra (see him upon the Gemara Sanhedrin, cap. 4, sect. 18, annot. 1).

If I leave—to him by the morning light] He intended to fall upon them in the night, when they were in a dead sleep, after great jollity.

Any that pisseth against the wall.] That is (as the generality of interpreters think), "so much as a dog;" this being, they take it, like that saying of Aurelian, mentioned by Vopiscus, who, going to a city, and finding the gates shut against him, said in his wrath, *Canem in hoc oppido non relinquam*, "I will not leave a dog in this town." But Bochartus excepts to this interpretation, that all dogs do not piss against the wall, but only the males; and that not till they be six or eight months old, as Aristotle and others observe. And therefore (to omit his other reasons), he takes this phrase to be a periphrasis of a man, as the Hebrews expound it, particularly Ralbag. So that it is as much as to say, *I will not leave a man alive*.

Ver. 23.] Both out of reverence to him as a great man, and as an humble supplicant, for pardon of a great offence.

Ver. 24.] She applies herself to him, in a speech full of art and prudence; and first begs, like a kind wife, that she might suffer, not her husband, who was not so wise as he should be. She desires him patiently to hear her reasons.

Ver. 25.] She represents him as a man that offended out of folly rather than malice; which might a little excuse his rudeness. There are many such allusions in Scripture, as there is here of Nebala and Nabal (see Gen. v. 25, xlix. 8, 16, 19; Zeph. ii. 4). If any were to be punished, she had desired it might be herself; yet she had this to say in her own behalf, that she knew nothing of the message sent by David.

Ver. 26. *Seeing the Lord hath withholden thee, &c.*] This is wonderfully artificial, to presume so much upon his goodness and clemency, as already to conclude, she had diverted him from his purpose: or rather, that God had interposed, by his good providence, to hinder him from shedding blood.

Let thine enemies,—be as Nabal.] That is, may thou have no worse enemies than he. Or, may thy enemies have no more power to hurt thee, than Nabal hath. This is another argument to persuade him to mercy; that Nabal was so inconsiderable, that, as he would do him no good, so he could do him no evil.

Ver. 27. *And now this blessing*] That is, this present or gift. The same phrase in xxx. 26; 2 Kings v. 15.

Let it even be given unto the young men that follow my lord.] To appease their anger: or, as unworthy of David's acceptance.

Ver. 28.] She still speaks as if she had been the offender; because she desired none might suffer but herself. She prays him to be good to her, as God would certainly be to him; and puts him in mind of all his heroic acts against the Philistines, and other enemies; and that hitherto he had been blameless, and done no hurt to the Israelites: and therefore hoped he would do none to her, and her family.

Ver. 29. *Yet a man is risen—to seek thy soul.*] Saul she means restlessly endeavoured to take away his life.

The soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life] Be preserved. For those things which we would not have lost, nor scattered about, we are wont to bind up in bundles.

The souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out.] As we bind up things to preserve them from being thrown about, or lost; so we put things into a

30 And it shall come to pass, when the LORD shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel;

31 That this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself: but when the LORD shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid.

32 ¶ And David said to Abigail, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me:

33 And blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand.

34 For in very deed, as the LORD God of Israel liveth, which hath kept me back from hurting thee, except thou hadst hastened and come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal by the morning light any that pisseth against the wall.

35 So David received of her hand that which she had brought him, and said unto her, Go up

in peace to thine house; see, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy person.

36 ¶ And Abigail came to Nabal; and, behold, he held a feast in his house, like the feast of a king; and Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken: wherefore she told him nothing, less or more, until the morning light.

37 But it came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became as a stone.

38 And it came to pass about ten days after, that the LORD smote Nabal, that he died.

39 ¶ And when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, Blessed be the LORD, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and hath kept his servant from evil: for the LORD hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head. And David sent and commended with Abigail, to take her to him to wife.

40 And when the servants of David were come to Abigail to Carmel, they spake unto her, saying, David sent us unto thee, to take thee to him to wife.

sling, that they may be cast out of sight, or a great way from us.

Ver. 30.] Nothing could be more obliging than this, at every word to call him her lord, and to acknowledge his title to the kingdom; and her belief that he would certainly enjoy it.

Ver. 31. *This shall be no grief unto thee, &c.*] She reserves the most Divine argument to the last; that he would have a clear and quiet conscience, and not be disturbed with a remembrance that he had shed the blood of the innocent, or otherwise avenged himself: which belonged unto God.

Remember thine handmaid.] Thou wilt thank me for my advice.

Ver. 32.] He was so moved with this pathetic speech, that, in the first place, he acknowledges the good providence of God, which directed her to come so seasonably to prevent the effects of his anger. Whereby he was absolved from his oath, which he had sworn, to cut off Nabal's family. And indeed it was null in itself; for no man can oblige himself to do an evil thing; as this would have been: there being a double guilt in it, as Philo observes, if he had shed their blood. To which may be applied the words of Seneca, that in such cases, scelus est fides, "to keep one's word, is a wicked thing." See Grotius De Jure Belli et Pacis, lib. ii. cap. 13, sect. 6, where he observes, that Cicero mentions the like case with this in the vow of Agamemnon. And Procopius Gazæus here well resolves, that this oath of David was the effect of anger; but his sparing Nabal the effect of reason and prudent counsel.

Ver. 33.] Next he commends her, and her wise counsel; for which he beseeches God to bless her; for she had preserved him from a very outrageous piece of revenge; which might have afflicted him all his days.

Ver. 34.] It may seem strange, that his anger should not cool in so much time as passed between the return of his messengers and Abigail's meeting him: but the affront was great, and his soldiers, it is likely, inflamed his rage, and he resolved to make Nabal an example to others, not to use him so rudely.

Ver. 35.] Both she herself, and what she said, and

what she brought, were most welcome to him. So happy a thing it is (as Euripides speaks in his *Hæclicæ*, ver. 359), to fall into the hand of a wise, and not a foolish enemy. For the latter, if he get the better, exercises nothing but cruelty: but with the former there is room for mercy, justice, moderation, and pardon. Such an enemy Abigail met withal; unto whom Nabal's offence was not more provoking to the destruction of his family, than the admiration of Abigail's virtue to its preservation.

Ver. 36. *Nabal's heart was merry*] Had eaten and drunk too liberally, at a very great feast, which he made for his shearers.

She told him nothing,] Said not a word of what had passed, because he was not capable to understand the mercy of God to him.

Ver. 37. *When the wine was gone out of Nabal,*] When he had slept himself sober.

His heart died within him,] He fainted away, and was as cold as a stone; out of the dread of the danger which he imagined still hung over him. For it is a frigid interpretation of Rasi and Kimchi, that he was troubled to hear of the great present that his wife had made to David.

Ver. 38.] It seems he lay so long dispirited, in a stupid senseless condition; and then God put an end to his life, either by some disease, or by a sudden stroke.

Ver. 39.] He doth not rejoice so much in his death (who was a worthless wretch) as in the justice of God; who showed him, that, if men would have patience, they should see right done them; so that they need not go about to avenge themselves. Abigail being a woman of admirable prudence, as well as beauty (ver. 3), and one that expressed a high esteem of him, he sent some to treat with her about marriage with him.

Ver. 40.] This was their business: which, no doubt, they delivered in many more words, which signified the great esteem and affection which David had for her; whom he knew to be a woman of such great wisdom, that she had respect not merely to his present, but to his future condition. Otherwise he would not have adventured, being now very poor, to court one that had such riches.

41 And she arose, and bowed herself on her face to the earth, and said, Behold, *let* thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord.

42 And Abigail hasted, and arose, and rode upon an ass, with five damsels of her's that went after her; and she went after the

Ver. 41. *Bowed herself*] In reverence to the very name of David: whom she highly honoured, as a man of an heroic spirit; and who, she was fully persuaded, should be king of Israel (ver. 30).

Let thine handmaid be a servant] She sent him an answer in these words; which show her humility to be as great as her other virtues; for to wash one's feet was the lowest sort of service.

Ver. 42. *Abigail hasted, and arose, and rode upon an ass, with five damsels*] That she might come attended suitable to her quality and his (see Grotius, Gen. xxx. 3).

She went after the messengers] Though she did not long deliberate about the matter, but soon consented, yet it is not likely she followed them immediately: but staid some decent time before she went to David.

Became his wife.] She had a strong faith in God to marry a man who had nothing to live upon, but was forced to wander from place to place, and beg the assistance of his friends. But she verily believed he would at last come to the throne, as she had before expressed: and could make some provision for him out of her own estate.

Ver. 43.] At the same time: according to the corrupt custom of those days, wherein they had perverted the law of nature, which is admirably expressed by Euripides in his *Andromache* (ver. 177, &c.).

αἰεὶ γὰρ καλὸν,
Διὸς γυναικῶν ἀνὴρ' ἐν' ἡνίας ἔχειν, &c.

messengers of David, and became his wife.

43 David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel; and they were also both of them his wives.

44 ¶ But Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Phalti the son of Laish, which was of Gallim.

"It is not good for one husband to govern two wives: but he should be content with one, who would live happily."

And again (ver. 909).

Καὶὸν δ' ἑλεῖται, ἐν' αἰῶρα διὰ τὸ ἔχειν λαχρῆ.

"Thou hast said, it is an evil thing for man to have two wives." For where there are more than one they seldom agree, but breed great trouble to their husband. It is commonly thought, that Ahinoam was his wife before he married Abigail (see upon xxvii. 3).

Ver. 44. *But Saul*] Or rather, *for Saul*, the particle *vau* being often so used.

Had given Michal—to Phalti] Here is the reason why David took another wife; because Saul had deprived him of his former: but it was no good reason for taking two, which were more than he had before. He was not divorced from Michal, and therefore we read afterward that he took her again. And the Jewish doctors are of opinion, that this Phalti was a very pious man, and would never touch her, because she was another man's wife: which was the reason David received her again (see 1 Sam. iii. 15).

Gallim.] A town near Accaron, as Eusebius and St. Jerome tell us; which had its name from Gal, a heap of stones; it being, I suppose, a stony place.

CHAPTER XXVI.

1 Saul, by the discovery of the Ziphites, cometh to Hachilah against David. 5 David coming into the trench stayeth Abishai from killing Saul, but taketh his spear and cruse. 13 David reproveth Abner, 18 and exhorteth Saul. 21 Saul acknowledgeth his sin.

1 AND the Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself in the hill of Hachilah, which is before Jeshimon?

2 Then Saul arose, and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph.

CHAP. XXVI.

Ver. 1. *The Ziphites*] The old enemies of David (xxiii. 19).

Doth not David hide himself in the hill of Hachilah,] He thought he might safely return thither, Saul having so lately made peace with him. The Ziphites also could not but hear how he had obliged Saul, and what declaration Saul had made, that he knew David would be king of Israel (xxiv. 20). Which David thought might discourage them from meddling any more. But quite contrary, they being afraid, if he came to be king, he would remember and revenge their ill usage of him, went to excite Saul to destroy him.

Ver. 2. *Having three thousand—men*] The same number he had the last time he pursued after him (xxiv. 2).

To seek David] The inconstancy, falseness, and

3 And Saul pitched in the hill of Hachilah, which is before Jeshimon, by the way. But David abode in the wilderness, and he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness.

4 David therefore sent out spies, and understood that Saul was come in very deed.

5 ¶ And David arose, and came to the place

implacable rage of this prince is inconceivable. Who having not long ago been obliged to David for his life and had acknowledged his error, and made David swear he would be good to his posterity, yet openly declared himself again to be his enemy, and sought to kill him.

Ver. 3. *By the way.*] That is by the way that went to the wilderness.

He saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness] He thought at first his intelligence had not been true; but he was credibly informed that Saul's wrath was broke out again, and that he intended to come thither.

Ver. 4.] A good captain always hath scouts abroad; who assured him his information was true, and that Saul was not far from him.

Ver. 5. *Came to the place where Saul had pitched:*] Within sight of it; where he might observe how they lay.

where Saul had pitched : and David beheld the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his host : and Saul lay in the trench, and the people pitched round about him.

6 Then answered David and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab, saying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai said, I will go down with thee.

7 So David and Abishai came to the people by night : and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the trench, and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster : but Abner and the people lay round about him.

8 Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day : now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time.

9 And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not : for who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD's anointed, and be guiltless?

10 David said furthermore, As the LORD liveth, the LORD shall smite him ; or his day

shall come to die ; or he shall descend into battle, and perish.

11 The LORD forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the LORD's anointed : but, I pray thee, take thou now the spear that is at his bolster, and the cruse of water, and let us go.

12 So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster ; and they gat them away, and no man saw it, nor knew it, neither awakened : for they were all asleep ; because a deep sleep from the LORD was fallen upon them.

13 Then David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of an hill afar off ; a great space being between them :

14 And David cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, Answerest thou not, Abner? Then Abner answered and said, Who art thou that criest to the king?

15 And David said to Abner, Art not thou a valiant man? and who is like to thee in Israel? wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord.

16 This thing is not good that thou hast done

David beheld the place where Saul lay, and Abner] Who, it is likely, lay near him.

Saul lay in the trench,] Or rather, "in his chariot," for so the LXX. translate the Hebrew word by *καρρα*, or as some editions have it, *καρρα*; which signifies a chariot drawn by mules, as Bochartus shows out of Homer and other authors, par. i. Hierozoic. lib. ii. cap. 19.

The people pitched round about him.] He was enclosed, I suppose, with the carriages; as our marginal translation is of the foregoing word.

Ver. 6. Ahimelech the Hittite.] A valiant man of that nation, who was a proselyte to the Jewish religion : and not only followed David, but was always near to his person.

And to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab,] Who were the sons of David's sister (1 Chron. xi. 16) whose father is nowhere mentioned, being a man, I suppose, of no note.

Who will go down] That is, which of these two.

Abishai said, I will go down with thee.] Either Ahimelech declined it, as too hazardous an enterprise : or Abishai, being a hot, forward young man, offered himself, while the other stood deliberating.

Ver. 7. So David and Abishai came to the people by night:] A bold attempt, for two men to come into the midst of an army of three thousand chosen men, who were not without a watch, though they were now asleep. But a strong confidence in God's promise that he would preserve him, overcame all fear of danger.

Abner and the people lay round about him.] To secure his person from any sudden assault.

Ver. 8.] Though David would not kill him himself, when he had the like opportunity (xxiv. 4), yet Abishai thought he might give him leave to do it : and he undertook to stick him to the ground at one thrust so that he should make no noise by crying out.

Ver. 9.] Being made king by God's special appointment, he looked upon it as a high crime to do him any hurt ; because he was a sacred person.

Ver. 10.] God, who made him king, after a solemn manner, could only depose him ; and that he could do several ways ; either by a sudden stroke, or in the course of nature, or letting him fall in battle.

Ver. 11. The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed:] What he permitted another to do, when he could hinder it, was as if he had done it himself. But he abhorred to meddle with that which belonged to God, as he had before said.

Take thou now the spear that is at his bolster,] As a witness what they could have done, if respect to God, whose anointed he was, had not withheld them.

The cruse of water,] This was set there, either for him to drink, if he was thirsty, or to wash himself ; which was prescribed by their law in case of many pollutions.

Ver. 12. So David took the spear and the cruse of water] By the hand of Abishai : who, like an excellent soldier, was perfectly subject to his commander, to forbear, or to do whatsoever David enjoined him. The Jewish doctors, in Bereschith Rabba, observe, that there are three sorts of that they call *tardama*, which is the Hebrew word for *deep sleep* in this place. The first, mere sound sleep, which God sent upon Adam (Gen. xi. 21). The second is the deep sleep of prophecy, which he sent upon Abraham (Gen. xv. 12). The third is this here mentioned, which they call the sleep *marmorita* (it should be printed *marmota*, as Bochart observes), which is a little creature more drowsy than a dormouse (Hierozoic. par. i. lib. iii. cap. 33).

Ver. 13.] So that he was in safety, and yet his voice might be heard.

Ver. 14. Answerest thou not,] Art thou still asleep? *Who art thou that criest to the king?]* And disturbest his repose.

Ver. 15. Art not thou a valiant man, &c.]) In the Hebrew the words are, "Art thou not a man?" That is, in place of authority as well as of great courage and valour.

Wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king?] Observed better military discipline, for the preservation of Saul's person.

For there came one of the people in to destroy the king] Came into the camp with that intention, and had a very fair opportunity.

Ver. 16. This thing is not good] A soft way of

As the LORD liveth, ye are worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master, the LORD's anointed. And now see where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his bolster.

17 And Saul knew David's voice, and said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And David said, It is my voice, my lord, O king.

18 And he said, Wherefore doth my lord thus pursue after his servant? for what have I done? or what evil is in mine hand?

19 Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If the LORD have stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering: but if they be the children of men, cursed be they before the LORD: for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the LORD, saying, Go, serve other gods.

20 Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth before the face of the LORD: for the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains.

speaking: but his meaning was, that he was very faulty, as appears by what follows.

Ye are worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master.] Guarded him better from any danger. It is probable they despised David's small forces, which made them so grossly negligent. He sets before them the tokens of their carelessness; and of the opportunity he had to kill Saul.

Ver. 17.] Saul was in great confusion of mind, and knew not what more to say to him. David humbly acknowledgeth his authority; and the allegiance he owed him: though he had done him so many injuries.

Ver. 18.] Being conscious of his own innocence, David expostulates with him in a long speech: and desires, in the first place, to know what crime he had to accuse him of; especially since he lately acknowledged that he was more righteous than himself (xxiv. 16).

Ver. 19. *Let my lord the king hear the words of his servant.*] Having no answer to that question, he desires him to be so patient, as to suffer him to argue awhile with him. For God is not implacable, but willing to be reconciled, if I have offended him. Or the meaning may be, if, for any offence against God, there be just cause for this anger, I refuse not to die, and expiate the faults with my blood. Or the words may refer to Saul, as if he had said, Offer to God some sacrifice, that he, being appeased, may free thee from this pertinacious melancholy.

They have driven me out] From having any settled abode in his own country; which he foresaw he should be forced also to leave, as we read he did in the next chapter.

Saying, Go, serve other gods.] That was the effect of their actions, though they did not say so in so many words. For they banished him into a nation of another religion, as Mr. Mede expounds these words (see book iii. p. 823).

Ver. 20. *Let not my blood fall to the earth*] God seeing it, and being the avenger.

For the king—is come out to seek a flea.] Which was neither for his profit nor his glory (see xxiv. 14).

As when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains.] Hunt a poor bird from mountain to mountain, with a great deal of labour, which is not easily caught, and worth nothing when one hath it: the Hebrew word *kere* is nowhere to be found, but here and in Jer. xvii. 11, from both which places we learn it was a mountain-bird of no great value: in taking of which

21 ¶ Then said Saul, I have sinned: return, my son David: for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.

22 And David answered and said, Behold the king's spear! and let one of the young men come over and fetch it.

23 The LORD render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness: for the LORD delivered thee into my hand to day, but I would not stretch forth mine hand against the LORD's anointed.

24 And, behold, as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the LORD, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation.

25 Then Saul said to David, Blessed be thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail. So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place.

the fowler spent his pains to little purpose. And it was one of those birds that sits upon the eggs of other birds; as the words of Jeremiah import, "She gathereth what she hath not brought forth," that is, eggs which she did not lay. From which it is apparent, that this word doth not signify a *partridge*, which is a bird of price, and doth not sit on other birds' eggs; but, as Bochart hath taken a great deal of pains to show, was a bird with a long bill and short feet, called *rusticula*. I will not mention the opinions of interpreters about it, for they are very various, and the same men are not constant to themselves; for R. Solomon, who here takes it for a *partridge*, in that place of the prophet Jeremiah takes it for a *cuckoo* (see Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. i. cap. 12).

Ver. 21.] He invites him to come to the court again; which is more than he did at their former meeting. This is a very ingenuous confession, wherein he condemned himself as a great offender against God and against David. In which for the present, no doubt, he was very serious, and both ashamed and sorry for what he had done.

Ver. 22.] He durst not venture to go and present it himself to Saul, though it was the testimony of his fidelity and affection to him. For he did not know but the evil spirit might come on a sudden upon him, and make him change his good resolution.

Ver. 23.] He repeats what Saul had confessed, the more to affect his heart with it: and tells him he doubted not the Lord would deal with him accordingly, howsoever Saul used him.

Ver. 24.] He prays God to deal with him as he had done with Saul; and then he doubted not to come out of all his troubles.

Ver. 25. *Blessed be thou, my son David, &c.*] He perceived it was in vain to contend any longer against David, whom God designed for great things (as he saw by his most worthy and noble actions), and would still have the better of him, until he came to the throne: for possibly Saul looked upon the taking away his spear, which I observed (upon xxii. 6) was his sceptre, as an omen the royal authority should be translated to David.

Saul returned to his place.] To Gibeah, from whence he came (ver. 1), but David did not think fit to accompany him, remembering how fickle he was, and therefore, notwithstanding all those good words, not to be trusted.

CHAPTER XXVII.

1 Saul hearing David to be in Gath seeketh no more for him. 5 David beggeth Ziklag of Achish. 8 He, invading other countries, persuadeth Achish he fought against Judah.

1 AND David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: *there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand.*

2 And David arose, and he passed over with the six hundred men that *were* with him unto Achish, the son of Maach, king of Gath.

3 And David dwelt with Achish at Gath, and his men, every man with his household, *even* David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal's wife.

4 And it was told Saul that David was fled to Gath: and he sought no more again for him.

5 ¶ And David said unto Achish, If I have now found grace in thine eyes, let them give me a place in some town in the country, that I may dwell there: for why should thy servant dwell in the royal city with thee?

6 Then Achish gave him Ziklag that day:

CHAP. XXVII.

Ver. 1. *I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul:* Whose heart he believed was not altered, though he had felt lately some compunction for what he had done against him. But David had the greatest reason to believe he would never be able to compass his design, having God's promise he should be king of Israel; therefore these words were spoken in a melancholy fit, when he was under some great depression of spirit. He thought, that as long as he remained in any part of Saul's dominions, he would never cease his persecution: but by going into an enemy's country, he would be forced to be quiet.

Ver. 2.] It is not certain that this was the same Achish mentioned xxi. 10, with whom David took shelter at his first flight from Saul. He seems rather to have been another, who is distinguished from the former by the name of his father. But whichever he was, he had either invited David to come thither for his security (hoping to make use of his valour or his prudence in his wars), or David had sent ambassadors before to treat with him, and had his royal word, that he should be protected by him. And it appears afterward, that he had David in great esteem; for he gave him a town for his own inheritance (ver. 6).

Ver. 3.] It was a very capacious place that could contain so many men and their families; some of which might be numerous. And Achish was very generous to receive so many strangers and old soldiers into his royal city, as might have made themselves masters of it. Ahinoam being here mentioned before Abigail, hath made many think she was his wife, before he took the other.

Ver. 4.] Unto which, it is likely, he was inclined; if he had not found it to be in vain.

Ver. 5.] This he said, that he might avoid envy. For perhaps he might have too much the port of a king; having so many men at his service, and being attended, no doubt, with a considerable number of them about his person. In a private town also he

wherefore Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day.

7 And the time that David dwelt in the country of the Philistines was a full year and four months.

8 ¶ And David and his men went up, and invaded the Geshurites, and the Gezrites, and the Amalekites: for those *nations were* of old the inhabitants of the land, as thou goest to Shur, even unto the land of Egypt.

9 And David smote the land, and left neither man nor woman alive, and took away the sheep, and the oxen, and the asses, and the camels, and the apparel, and returned, and came to Achish.

10 And Achish said, Whither have ye made a road to day? And David said, Against the south of Judah, and against the south of the Jerahmeelites, and against the south of the Kenites.

11 And David saved neither man nor woman alive, to bring *tidings* to Gath, saying, Lest

might more freely exercise his own religion; without any offence to the Philistines, who worshipped other gods.

Ver. 6. *Then Achish gave him Ziklag*] Either out of his royal bounty, or on condition of some service he should do him.

Wherefore Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah] In the division of the land of Canaan it was first given unto the tribe of Judah (Josh. xv. 31), and afterward to that of Simeon, who had a portion out of the land given to Judah (Josh. xix. 5). But the Philistines kept possession of it, so that neither of them enjoyed it: till now it became by Achish's gift the peculiar inheritance of David and his successors.

Ver. 7.] How long he wandered up and down, till he settled here, we are nowhere told: but it is probable the persecution of Saul lasted a great while.

Ver. 8.] The Geshurites and Gezerites were both of them relics of the Canaanites, whom God commanded to be rooted out (see Grotius). The Amalekites who were near had been destroyed by Saul, but not these that were afar off: or, perhaps, these were some that fled into these remote parts when they heard Saul was coming against them. And the following words (ver. 11, of David's killing all) must be understood, that he left none alive whom he found in these parts; but there still were Amalekites in other places (xxx. 1). Abarbanel imagines all the people here mentioned were in enmity with Achish, and hated him and his people: so that when David smote them he made no complaint about it.

Ver. 9.] To give an account of his actions, and to present him, I suppose, with part of the spoil.

Ver. 10. *Whither have ye made a road to day?*] For David, it is likely, constantly kept his men in exercise upon some expedition or other. He answers Achish cunningly, in such ambiguous words, that he might understand him as if he had assaulted the land of Judah; whereas he only fell upon those people who bordered on those parts which he mentions. For these countries lay on the south of Judah: and the Jerahmeelites were a part of Judea, and the Kenites

they should tell on us, saying, So did David, and so will be his manner all the while he dwelleth in the country of the Philistines.

of the family of Jethro were their neighbours and confederates.

Ver. 11.] Who had people of some countries thereabouts; perhaps tributaries to them, and under their protection: whom they might fear David would serve

12 And Achish believed David, saying, He hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant for ever.

in the same manner, had they known how he dealt with these.

Ver. 12.] The enmity between him and his own people being, as he thought, irreconcilable, he must make him his friend by faithful service for ever.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

1 Achish putteth confidence in David. 3 Saul, having destroyed the witches, 4 and now in his fear forsaken of God, 7 seeketh to a witch. 9 The witch, encouraged by Saul, raiseth up Samuel. 15 Saul, hearing his ruin, fainteth. 21 The woman with his servants refresh him with meat.

1 AND it came to pass in those days, that the Philistines gathered their armies together for warfare, to fight with Israel. And Achish said unto David, Know thou assuredly, that thou shalt go out with me to battle, thou and thy men.

2 And David said to Achish, Surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do. And Achish said to David, Therefore will I make thee keeper of mine head for ever.

3 ¶ Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away

those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land.

4 And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa.

5 And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled.

6 And when Saul enquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.

7 ¶ Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek

CHAP. XXVIII.

Ver. 1. *In those days,*] While David was in the country of the Philistines.

The Philistines gathered their armies together for warfare,] Mustered all their forces to invade the land of Israel, being encouraged, it is probable, by the banishment of David, the death of Samuel, and the prehensy of Saul.

Achish said unto David,] Achish seems to have been the principal person in the country, and the commander of all their forces. For we read of no other king among them but he: who required David, who was now one of his subjects, to assist him in this warfare against his own native country.

Ver. 2.] David answered in doubtful words, which might be taken in different senses. Achish understood him that he would do his best to serve him: and thereupon promised, if he did, that he would make him captain of his guard, or some great officer, near to his person.

Ver. 3. *Now Samuel was dead,*] This was noted before (xxv. 1), but repeated here again, to show that Saul now was sensible of his loss, wanting his advice in a time of great distress.

Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, &c.] According to the Divine commandment (Lev. xx. 27), which, perhaps, he had executed in the beginning of his reign, when he was governed by Samuel: or if he did it since, it was to show that he had some zeal for God left, whereby he kept up his authority among the people.

Ver. 4. *The Philistines gathered themselves together,*] Met at an appointed place.

Shunem:] A place in the tribe of Issachar, as we learn from Josh. xix. 18.

Pitched in Gilboa.] A mountain near the valley of Jezreel, not far from Shunem: as that place in Joshua informs us. So that they seem to be pitched, as they were before the great battle was fought when Goliath

fell, upon two mountains with a valley between them.

Ver. 5. *When Saul saw the host of the Philistines,*] Of which he had a full view from Mount Gilboa.

His heart greatly trembled.] For the Spirit of God having forsaken him, his courage very much failed him, when he saw how numerous the Philistines were, and heard, perhaps, that David was among them; and reflected upon all the evil he had done unto him.

Ver. 6. *When Saul enquired of the Lord,*] This seems to contradict what is said 1 Chron. x. 14, that he "did not inquire of the Lord:" which was the reason that "he slew him." But Kimchi and others thus reconcile these two places; that since he did not continue to inquire of him, but went to a witch, it was all one as if he had not inquired at all; for he did it faintly, coldly, and indifferently: resolving, if he was not heard there, to go to some other place for counsel. See Buxtorf, Hist. Urim et Thummim; who observes, out of Samuel Laniado, a learned Jew, that "he whose heart is perfect with God, lifts up his eyes unto him, and fixes them on him; hoping in him, though he doth not presently hear him; and perseveres in his hopes, firmly settling a resolution to wait upon him. But so did not Saul, who was remiss and negligent, saying, if God will not hear me, I will go and consult a familiar spirit."

The Lord answered him not.] Because he had killed his priests, as R. Solomon here notes. And by this means, as R. Levi ben Gerson here farther observes, had nobody capable of the Holy Spirit to consult God for him.

Neither by dreams,] By which he prayed, perhaps, that God would inform himself.

Nor by Urim,] Kimchi thinks that he sent to Abiathar to inquire about the event of this war, for he had the urim with him. It is observable that the Scripture never saith that God answered by thummim, for that is comprehended under urim; which is always put first when they are joined together, and here it is mentioned alone (see xxiii. 6).

me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, *there is* a woman that hath a familiar spirit at En-dor.

8 And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me *him up*, whom I shall name unto thee.

9 And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the

wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die?

10 And Saul swore to her by the Lord, saying, *As the Lord liveth*, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing.

11 Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel.

12 And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou *art* Saul.

13 And the king said unto her, Be not afraid:

Nor by prophets.] A college of which, no doubt, was still remaining at Ramah, whom Samuel had educated. It will be amiss to observe, that the same ways of inquiry were among the gentiles, as appears by what Achilles saith in the council of the Greeks, who met to consider about the plague Apollo had sent among them (Iliad i. ver. 62):

Ἄλλ' ἄγε εἰς τινα μάντιν ἕρεστον ἢ ἑρῖα,
Ἥ καὶ ἄντροπιδον, (καὶ γὰρ τ' ἄναρ ἐκ Διὸς ἱερῆν)
Ὅς κ' αἴτοι ———

Where he reckons three sorts of men, a prophet, or a priest, or an expounder of dreams; who might tell why Apollo was so angry with them.

Ver. 7. *Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit.]* In this he acted like a distracted man, who now approved what he had condemned. He mentions a woman rather than a man, because the weaker sex were most addicted to these practices (being most easily deceived by evil spirits), among whom such a person he thought might be soonest found.

His servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit.] There are always some flatterers in courts, who will never contradict their princes; but are ready to comply with them in their worst designs. And it appears by this, that though this sort of divination was not publicly practised, yet it was known that there were some who privately continued to consult the dead. I say publicly, because it is very probable that before Saul executed the law against them, there were those that made profession of having familiar spirits, as there were among the heathen. For Plutarch, in the life of Cimon, speaks of Pausanias going to a Νεκρομαντεῖον (an oracle of the dead) at Heraclaea, where he called up the soul of Cleonice.

At En-dor.] A place in the tribe of Manasseh (Josh. xvii. 11), not far from Shunem, as Salianus observes: and part of the mountain of Gilboa was over against En-dor, and another part of it against Shunem. This woman, the Jewish doctors say, was the mother of Abner.

Ver. 8. *Saul disguised himself—and he went, and two men with him.]* He put off his royal apparel, and clothed himself like an ordinary man, having but a small attendance; that he might not be suspected to be what he was. These two servants, the Jewish doctors say, were Abner and Amasa.

They came to the woman by night:] They could not go the direct way, for then they must have passed through the army of the Philistines: and therefore they fetched a compass, and travelled also by night, that they might not be discovered. And it is likely they went on foot, that less notice might be taken of them; and they might go and return through by-ways, which made their journey the longer. In the night also it was, that women went about such magical practices. For, as Psellus observes in his book

of Demons, it is the common opinion of the Greeks, that none of the terrestrial demons dare appear in the day-time. Ἐλληνικῆς γὰρ ἐστὶ δόξης τὸ μηδὲνα τῶν ἐπιγῶν δαιμόνων θάρσειν τὰς τοῦ ἡλίου αἰγὰς. Nay, he saith all those things were performed after the summer solstice, when the days grew short, and the nights increased.

Bring me him up, whom I shall name unto thee.] This consulting the dead was a very ancient practice among the gentiles, as appears from Homer: but long before him, mentioned by Moses himself, who forbids it in Deut. xviii. 10. Notwithstanding which, the Israelites, who had a Divine oracle and holy prophets to guide them, fell into this foul sin, as they did into most of the gentile abominations.

Ver. 9.] For so the law was (Lev. xx. 27). And Saul seems by the woman's speech to have executed it, for she saith he had cut them off; whereas it is only said that he had put them away: as if he had failed in his duty, and merely banished such persons, when he should have put them to death.

Ver. 10. *And Saul swore to her by the Lord,]* An oath was so sacred a thing in those days, that they entirely relied upon it, and ventured their lives upon its credit.

Ver. 11.] It is a wonderful thing that he should believe a woman should have power to disturb the rest of Samuel, and bring him thither at her command. But he was forsaken by God, and grown delirious.

Ver. 12. *When the woman saw Samuel,]* Here interpreters are very much divided; some imagining it was Samuel himself that appeared, others, a spectre, which by the power of the devil appeared in his likeness. Several of the ancient fathers are of the former opinion, and particularly Justin Martyr; who, in his dialogue with Trypho the Jew, alleges this as a demonstration of the immortality of the soul, p. 333. And most of the Roman church are now of the same mind. But Tertullian saith (in his book De Anima, cap. 57), "God forbid we should believe the soul of any holy man, much less of a prophet, should be brought up by the power of the devil." Of this persuasion are a great number of the ancients, particularly St. Cyril of Alexandria, who thinks it the greatest absurdity to believe that a wretched woman should call up Samuel's soul; the demons, with whom such people deal, having no such power. And so St. Jerome calls this *Samuelis phantasma*. Yet there are vast numbers of modern authors who think that by God's permission or dispensation the soul of Samuel might appear, which Sir John Marsham himself takes not to be improbable (see Chron. Canon. xiii.). But the very letter of the text seems to me to be against this opinion: which speaks of bringing him up, and his coming up out of the earth; whereas, if it had been Samuel, he should rather have come down from heaven. This apparition, therefore, was one of those fallacious spirits whom Porphyry speaks of (lib. ii.

for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth.

14 And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself.

15 ¶ And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called

De Abstinencia), "who put on any shape, and counterfeited (as his words are) the gods, and demons, and the souls of the dead;" *Γένος ἀπατηλῆς φύσεως πατόμορφον καὶ πολύτροπον, ὑποκριόμενον καὶ θεοῦ, καὶ δαίμονας, καὶ ψυχὰς τεθηρηκότων.* Which a very learned person (Joh. Wagenseil) hath confirmed by this reason, which seems to me very solid; that since God was not pleased to answer Saul (as he confessed) either by prophets, or by dreams, or by urim and thummim, but had withdrawn himself wholly from him, it is not probable that he would send Samuel himself to him from the dead (and none else could do it), and that at the call of a witch, when he would not favour him with any revelation from a living prophet, or any other way (Confut. Carm. Lipmanni, p. 198).

She cried with a loud voice:] She cried out for fear of Saul, when she perceived, by the reverence the spectre paid him, who he was. For so Abarbinel interprets it, he bowed with his face to the ground, in honour of Saul, whereby the woman concluded he was the king.

Ver. 13. *Be not afraid:]* Do not imagine I come with any design to discover thee, and bring thee to punishment.

What sawest thou?] But tell me what appeared to thee.

I saw gods ascending out of the earth.] By the word *Elohim* the Jews understand a judge, for so judges are called in Ps. lxxxii. 1, 6. Peter Martyr therefore interprets it not amiss, "a person very majestic, like a judge or a king." And so R. Esaias, mentioned by Vorsius upon Pirke Eliezer (p. 113), who by *Elohim* understands hominem insignis atque excelsæ stature, "a man of an eminent and high stature;" as the Scripture calls high trees and mountains, "trees and mountains of God." And he is said "to ascend out of the earth." For so the heathen endeavoured (as Homer, Virgil, Statius, and other ancients poets tell us) to bring up the dead out of the earth, to give them answers to their doubts. Which wicked custom prevailed long among the Jews, for Isaiah alludes to it in xxx. 4, when he saith, they should be brought so low as to speak like a familiar spirit out of the ground, and whisper out of the dust. And it is evident, likewise, from Isa. lxxv. 4, that they were wont to go to the sepulchres of the dead, there to consult them. For that is the meaning of *sacrificing in gardens* (ver. 3), for there they were wont to bury their dead.

Ver. 14. *What form is he of?] This is an argument he saw nothing, but afterward heard a voice.*

He is covered with a mantle.] Such as kings wore, and also prophets, who had very great authority (xv. 27, 2 Kings ii. 8, 13). The Hebrew word *meil* signifies as much as the Greek *ροβήρος*, a long garment which came down to the feet. By the description

thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do.

16 Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the LORD is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy?

17 And the LORD hath done to him, as he spake by me: for the LORD hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, even to David:

18 Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the LORD, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the LORD done this thing unto thee this day.

19 Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel

which the woman gave of him, he concluded it was Samuel; and thereupon made his reverence to him.

Ver. 15.] This shows it was an evil spirit, personating Samuel, who spake these words. For it is not in the power of witches to disturb the rest of good men, and to bring them into this world when they please. And Samuel, we may be sure, would never have acknowledged such a power in magical arts, the credit of which the devil endeavoured to support. Some think Saul omits inquiry by urim, because, in truth, he neither did nor could make use of that; Abiathar having carried it away to David. But this doth not agree with ver. 6, which supposes he did inquire by urim. He should rather, by repentance, and prayer, and sacrifices, and doing right to David, have besought the favour of God, as Pellicanus here well observes.

Ver. 16.] Nothing could be more senseless than to imagine Samuel could do any thing for him, when the LORD, whose servant Samuel was, would not regard him.

Ver. 17. *The LORD hath done to him,]* That is, to David, mentioned in the conclusion of the verse.

As he spake by me:] Still the evil spirit personates Samuel, that Saul might be deceived into a belief that it was really he who spake to him.

The LORD hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand,] As Samuel had foretold long ago; and now it was ready to be accomplished.

Ver. 18. *Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the LORD,]* This relates (Abarbinel thinks) to his sin in Gilgal (ch. xiii.).

Nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek,] This was his next sin, whereby he highly provoked God's anger against him: for he was not sensible he had offended his express command, but justified his conduct, till Samuel took a great deal of pains to convince him; and then told him he would rend the kingdom from him (xv. 38).

Therefore hath the LORD done this thing unto thee] He doth not mention his sin in killing the LORD's priests; because this decree of taking the kingdom from him was passed before that sin was committed.

Ver. 19. *The LORD will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines:]* Samuel himself could no more know this, than an evil spirit; unless God had been pleased to suggest it: which he might think good to do to this ghost, which personated Samuel, that he might terrify Saul. Or, he saw the Philistines to be so numerous, and Saul so feeble and dispirited, that he doubted not the victory would be on the Philistines' side; and therefore confidently pronounced it. But the former is more probable, that God used this evil spirit to declare his mind at this time: so that he spake nothing but by his direction.

To morrow shall thou and thy sons be with me:] If

with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the Lord also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.

20 Then Saul fell straightway all along on the earth, and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel: and there was no strength in him; for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night.

21 ¶ And the woman came unto Saul, and saw that he was sore troubled, and said unto him, Behold, thine handmaid hath obeyed thy voice, and I have put my life in my hand, and have hearkened unto thy words which thou spakest unto me.

22 Now therefore, I pray thee, hearken thou

we take the word *to-morrow* strictly, Eustathius, archbishop of Antioch, his argument against Origen is good, that this could not be Samuel who spake, because his words are false: there being more than a day between this and the fight, as many have clearly proved from the story itself. But the meaning may be no more, than very shortly thou shalt be as I am, that is, dead. For, as many have well observed (particularly Hackspan, in his disputation concerning Angels and Demons), by these words, *be with me*, mors simpliciter notatur, non vero peculiaris mortem secutus status; "death is simply noted, but not the state which follows after death." He would not have him think his army should be able to defend him. Abarbanel observes, that he reckons up three judgments, in the very order wherein they fell out (which shows all was spoken by God's order); first, that the host of Israel should be delivered into the hand of the Philistines; then, that Saul and his sons should be slain; and, lastly, that the Philistines should come and dwell in their cities (xxi. 7), which he takes to be the sense of the last words, which otherwise are only a repetition of the first.

Ver. 20.] No wonder he fainted away, being weak in body for want of food; and extremely afflicted in mind by this dismal message, which Samuel, he thought, brought him from God.

also unto the voice of thine handmaid, and let me set a morsel of bread before thee; and eat, that thou mayest have strength, when thou goest on thy way.

23 But he refused, and said, I will not eat. But his servants, together with the woman, compelled him; and he hearkened unto their voice. So he arose from the earth, and sat upon the bed.

24 And the woman had a fat calf in the house; and she hasted, and killed it, and took flour, and kneaded it, and did bake unleavened bread thereof:

25 And she brought it before Saul, and before his servants; and they did eat. Then they rose up, and went away that night.

Ver. 21.] These words suggest that Saul was in some private room, where he alone heard the words that were spoken by the apparition. She had exposed herself to extreme danger: for what we carry in our hand may easily fall out, or be snatched from us.

Ver. 22.] For without some refreshment she saw it would be impossible for him to get to his camp again.

Ver. 23. *But he refused.*] He chose rather to die there than by the Philistines.

But his servants together—compelled him;] Pressed him so hard; and that he yielded to them.

He hearkened unto their voice.] Who knew nothing of what he had heard, but thought he had fainted away only for want of food.

Sat upon the bed.] As the manner (I observed before) then was; and not to lie along when they ate.

Ver. 24. *The woman had a fat calf*] The Hebrew word *marbek* is well translated *fat*, as Bochartus confesses, though it properly signifies (as he demonstrates) a calf that treads out the corn, and is fattened up by that means (Hieroicoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 31).

Did bake unleavened bread] Because there was no time to let it ferment.

Ver. 25.] Before the break of day; that none might discover they had been with such a woman.

CHAPTER XXIX.

1 David marching with the Philistines, 3 is disallowed by their princes. 6 Achish dismisseth him, with commendations of his fidelity.

1 Now the Philistines gathered together all their armies to Aphek: and the Israelites pitched by a fountain which is in Jezreel.

2 And the lords of the Philistines passed on by hundreds, and by thousands: but David and

his men passed on in the rereward with Achish.

3 Then said the princes of the Philistines, What do these Hebrews here? And Achish said unto the princes of the Philistines, Is not this David, the servant of Saul the king of

CHAP. XXIX.

Ver. 1. *Aphek.*] There were three places of this name; one in the tribe of Judah, another in Manasseh, and a third in Asher. Which last seems to be here meant, where the sons of Eli were slain (see iv. 1).

Jezreel.] A valley which was overlooked by the mountain Gilboa: from whence the Israelites came down (xxviii. 4), to draw up their army here.

Ver. 2.] When they took a view of their army, the great men appeared, some at the head of a hundred, some of a thousand soldiers.

Achish.] Who seems to have been the general of

the army: and to have made David and his men his life-guard, according to his resolution, xxviii. 2.

Ver. 3. *What do these Hebrews here?*] Who they were afraid would prove false to them, and take part with their own countrymen.

Is not this David,—which hath been with me these days, or these years.] The meaning is, "I may say years, not days:" for he had been with him part of two years: and, if he had not formerly known him, his predecessor had (xxi. 10), and it is likely he had held correspondence with him before he came to him.

I have found no fault in him] This intimates, that he looked on him as revolted from Saul; and, by the

Israel, which hath been with me these days, or these years, and I have found no fault in him since he fell unto me unto this day?

4 And the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him; and the princes of the Philistines said unto him, Make this fellow return, that he may go again to his place which thou hast appointed him, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary to us: for wherewith should he reconcile himself unto his master? *should it not be with the heads of these men?*

5 *Is not this David, of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying, Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands?*

6 ¶ Then Achish called David, and said unto him, Surely, as the Lord liveth, thou hast been upright, and thy going out and thy coming in with me in the host is good in my sight: for I have not found evil in thee since the day of thy coming unto me unto this day: nevertheless the lords favour thee not.

experience he had of his fidelity, he thought he might be still trusted.

Ver. 4. *The princes—said unto him,*] In an angry tone.

That he may go again to his place.] At Ziklag, which they were contented he should possess.

Lest in the battle he be an adversary to us.] And thereby do them more mischief than the army of the Israelites.

Should it not be with the heads of these men?] That is, of the Philistines. They reasoned wisely, according to the common practice of mankind; and well it was for David, that they were such politicians; for hereby God delivered him out of a very great strait; either of being an enemy to his country, or false to his friends, and to his trust. And by the same good providence he was sent back to rescue his wives, and the wives and children of his men, who were taken captive.

Ver. 5.] They remembered that he was their old enemy, who killed Goliath: and was highly magnified for it above Saul himself.

Ver. 6. *Surely, as the Lord liveth, &c.*] He swears by the God whom David worshipped, that he might be the more believed: or, perhaps, he had learned something from David of the true God, though he worshipped others with him. He commends him as an unblamable person in his private conversation; and as an excellent commander in his army.

I have not found evil in thee] A very honourable testimony from a foreign prince.

The lords favour thee not.] Unto whom Achish was forced to yield: for he was not an absolute king; but the lords of the country still retained a great authority.

Ver. 7.] From the effects of whose envy and jealousy he could not preserve him.

7 Wherefore now return, and go in peace, that thou displease not the lords of the Philistines.

8 ¶ And David said unto Achish, But what have I done? and what hast thou found in thy servant so long as I have been with thee unto this day, that I may not go fight against the enemies of my lord the king?

9 And Achish answered and said to David, I know that thou art good in my sight, as an angel of God: notwithstanding the princes of the Philistines have said, He shall not go up with us to the battle.

10 Wherefore now rise up early in the morning with thy master's servants that are come with thee: and as soon as ye be up early in the morning, and have light, depart.

11 So David and his men rose up early to depart in the morning, to return into the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

Ver. 8.] He had told him before that he found not the least fault in him: therefore this question may seem impertinent. But David was to act his part handsomely upon this occasion; so that, though he was inwardly pleased, he would not have them suspect he was glad to be dismissed: and therefore, since the king was satisfied with his fidelity, asks why he might not be trusted to fight against his enemies, and that his lords would give him a reason? But Abarbanel thinks he never intended this; but being chosen by Achish to be the keeper of his head (xxviii. 2), he resolved only to discharge this office; but not to join in the battle against Israel.

Ver. 9. *I know that thou art good in my sight, as an angel of God.*] He had learned something, as I observed before (ver. 6) of the Hebrew religion: and it appears by this, of their language also. And the meaning is, he looked upon David as a man sent down from heaven to him: all things prospering that he took in hand.

He shall not go up with us to battle.] They seem to have made such an order in council: which the king durst not contradict.

Ver. 10. *Rise up early*] Lest any mischief should come to him, if he delayed his departure.

With thy master's servants] This intimates, that the lords of the Philistines would not trust them, because they looked on them still as Saul's subjects.

As soon as ye be up—depart.] He advises them to lose no time, but, as soon as they could see their way, leave the army, and march to Ziklag.

Ver. 11. *So David and his men rose up,—to return into the land of the Philistines.*] For now they were in the Philistines' camp, in the land of Israel, at Aphek (ver. 1).

The Philistines went up to Jezreel.] To the battle to the Israelites, who were pitched there (ver. 1).

CHAPTER XXX.

1 *The Amalekites spoil Ziklag.* 4 *David asking counsel is encouraged by God to pursue them.* 11 *By the means of a revived Egyptian he is brought to the enemies, and recovereth all the spoil.* 22 *David's law to divide the spoil equally between them that fight and them that keep the stuff.* 26 *He sendeth presents to his friends.*

1 AND it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire;

2 And had taken the women captives, that were therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away, and went on their way.

3 ¶ So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, it was burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives.

4 Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep.

5 And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite.

6 And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.

7 And David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David.

8 And David enquired at the Lord, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all.

9 So David went, he and the six hundred men that were with him, and came to the brook Besor, where those that were left behind stayed.

10 But David pursued, he and four hundred

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Ver. 1. *When David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day,*] So many days' journey it was from the camp of the Philistines to this place (see the beginning of the next book, ver. 2).

The Amalekites had—Ziklag, and burned it with fire;] To revenge themselves for what David had done to them (xxvii. 8), which they might easily do, when he and his men were absent; and but a small, if any, guard left in the place.

Ver. 2.] Towards their own country. This may seem strange, that David having killed all he could meet with, and spared none, neither men nor women (xxvii. 9, 11), they should not serve his people in the same kind. But though they sought revenge, yet they desired booty much more: being a poor and very covetous people; who intended to sell them for slaves, and make money of them.

Ver. 3.] This befell David when he seemed to be in the greatest security: having escaped the fury of Saul, and also the service of the Philistines; who were likely to make Saul pay very dear for his ill usage of David. But such is the state of this world, we are often surprised with sudden unexpected troubles; and, as the proverb is, "Many things fall out between the cup and the lip."

Ver. 4.] For such calamities are enough to break the heart of the most courageous and undaunted spirits.

Ver. 5.] This is set down distinctly, to aggravate David's loss.

Ver. 6. *The people spake of stoning him,*] As the cause of this calamity, in leaving the city unguarded: or in provoking the Amalekites so grievously as he had done, in the slaughter of all he could find.

The soul of all the people was grieved,] Grief took away the use of their reason.

David encouraged himself in the Lord his God,] Who had never failed him in the greatest distresses: but done great things for him, and promised to do greater.

Ver. 7. *Bring me hither the ephod,*] From these words Petrus Cunæus (lib. i. De Rep. Heb. cap. 14),

concludes, that the kings of Israel might make use of the ephod, as well as the high-priest: because David saith, *Bring me hither,* &c. But this doth not signify that he himself meant to use it; but only that he desired it might be used for him: according to what is said of Joshua, in Numb. xxvii. 21, that he should stand before Eleazar the priest, "who should inquire for him," &c.

Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David,] From these words the same Cunæus, in an epistle of his to Caspar Barlaeus (Epist. Ecclesiastica, 506, p. 767), argues for his forenamed opinion, because it is not said he brought it *le David*, but *el David*; the former of which, he thinks, might have signified for his use; but this denotes, it was for him to use himself: which he endeavours to confirm from the high privilege which the king had above other men, of sitting in the house of God, &c. But this is confuted lately by a man very learned in these matters (John Braunius, lib. ii. De Vest. Hebr. Sacerd. cap. 20, n. 32), who well observes (as Buxtorf also doth), that in the foregoing words David doth say, *Bring the ephod, li, i. e. pro me, or mea causa, for me, or in meam gratiam, for my sake.*

Ver. 8. *David enquired at the Lord,*] He inquired by Abiathar. So all the Hebrew doctors, as Buxtorf observes in his Hist. Urin. cap. 3.

Shall I overtake them?] This shows it is a vain observation of the Jews, that they were not to ask two questions together: for David still continues to do so here, as he had done at Keilah: though God, they say there, had set him right in his inquiry, and taught him to do otherwise.

Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them,] He answers both questions at once, and tells him also more than he asked; that he should regain all that he had lost: which, no doubt, was a mighty encouragement unto him in his pursuit.

Ver. 9.] They that were left to look after the stuff (ver. 24), who were so tired, that they were not able to march any farther.

Ver. 10.] Grief, it is likely, made them neglect to take necessary refreshment before they came out.

men: for two hundred abode behind, which were so faint that they could not go over the brook Besor.

11 ¶ And they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David, and gave him bread, and he did eat; and they made him drink water;

12 And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins: and when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him: for he had eaten no bread, nor drunk any water, three days and three nights.

13 And David said unto him, To whom *belongest* thou? and whence *art* thou? And he said, I *am* a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite; and my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick.

14 We made an invasion upon the south of the Cherethites, and upon the coast which *belongeth* to Judah, and upon the south of Caleb; and we burned Ziklag with fire.

15 And David said to him, Canst thou bring me down to this company? And he said, Swear

unto me by God, that thou wilt neither kill me, nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will bring thee down to this company.

16 ¶ And when he had brought him down, behold, *they were* spread abroad upon all the earth, eating and drinking, and dancing, because of all the great spoil that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the land of Judah.

17 And David smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day: and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men, which rode upon camels, and fled.

18 And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away: and David rescued his two wives.

19 And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor any *thing* that they had taken to them: David recovered all.

20 And David took all the flocks and the herds, *which they* drave before those *other* cattle, and said, This *is* David's spoil.

Ver. 11. *They found an Egyptian*] They knew him to be so by his habit: or, perhaps, they did not know whence he was, until he came to himself and told them. But finding him in the garb of a soldier, they thought he belonged to the Amalekites.

Brought him to David,] Half dead.

Gave him bread,] Natural compassion might move them to this: but they had another motive, which was the hope of making some discovery, by his means, where the enemies were.

Ver. 12.] Did all they could to comfort him up, and revive his spirits. Having nobody near him to look after him: and being so sick, he could not look after himself. This is to be understood as Matt. xii. 40, of one whole day, and part of two others: as appears from the next verse, where he saith, "Three days ago I fell sick." In the Hebrew, "I fell sick this third day;" i. e. this is the third day since I fell sick.

Ver. 13.] A barbarous act, to leave him there to perish, when they had camels good store for the carriage of men, as well as of their spoil (ver. 17). But this inhumanity cost them dear: for by this means they lost their own lives. Such is the wonderful providence of God (as Conr. Pelicanus here piously observes), which governs all the desires and thoughts, and counsels, and works, and whatsoever is done among men, both the good and the bad.

Ver. 14. *We made an invasion upon the south of the Cherethites,*] They are the same with the Philistines. For the Arabians call their country (as Bochartus observes) Keritha, and the Syrians call it Creth. Whose inhabitants the Hebrews call Crethi, or Crethim. And to put all out of doubt, "the south of the Cherethites" here mentioned, is, in the sixth verse explained, "the land of the Philistines." Who were excellent archers, as we may gather from xxxi. 3 (see there).

And upon the coast which belongeth to Judah,] The south coast of that tribe.

South of Caleb;] We read nowhere else of this land: which, in all probability, signifies that south part of Judah which was given to Caleb, and which his posterity inherited (Josh. xiv. 13).

We burned Ziklag with fire.] With which they seem to have ended their expedition.

Ver. 15. *Nor deliver me into the hands of my master,*] Who, it is likely, had otherwise been cruel to him and, therefore, he had no mind to serve him any longer Besides, his service, I suppose, was no better than slavery.

I will bring thee down to this company.] For he heard them say, it is likely, where they would stay and rest themselves.

Ver. 16. *When he had brought him down,*] Who had given him security, no doubt, by his oath, as he desired: and that, as I observed before, was such a sacred thing in ancient times, that all men relied upon it.

They were spread abroad upon all the earth, eating and drinking, &c.] They had laid aside their arms, and were feasting and making merry; as men are wont to do, when they have had great success in their enterprises.

Ver. 17.] David came upon them in the evening, when they were refreshing and resting themselves with mirth and jollity: being secure that no danger was near them; because the Israelites and the Philistines (among whom they thought David was) were ready to engage; so that he could no more come to revenge himself, than the Philistines could for the injuries done to them. And it is probable David let them fall asleep, when they had eaten and drunk liberally; and at peep of day fell upon them, and hunted them until the evening, which began the next day. The country of Arabia, where this people lived, abounded with camels: one sort of which run very swiftly. They were used also by some nations in battle: as Vegetius observes, lib. iii. De Re Militari, cap. 23 (see Stewechius's Annotations on him).

Ver. 18.] Which are here particularly mentioned, because he had the greatest concern for them.

Ver. 19.] According to the word of God (ver. 6).

Ver. 20. *David took all the flocks*] Which had been taken by the Amalekites from the Philistines and other places.

Which they drave before those other cattle,] His soldiers drave them before those cattle that had been taken from David and his men.

This is David's spoil.] Not that he challenged it all to himself: but that it was acquired by his valour and conduct; which they now magnified, who lately spake of stoning him. For some think they sung a

21 ¶ And David came to the two hundred men, which were so faint that they could not follow David, whom they had made also to abide at the brook Besor: and they went forth to meet David, and to meet the people that were with him: and when David came near to the people, he saluted them.

22 Then answered all the wicked men and men of Belial, of those that went with David, and said, Because they went not with us, we will not give them *ought* of the spoil that we have recovered, save to every man his wife and his children, that they may lead *them* away, and depart.

23 Then said David, Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which the Lord hath given

us, who hath preserved us, and delivered the company that came against us into our hand.

24 For who will hearken unto you in this matter? but as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that carrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike.

25 And it was so from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day.

26 ¶ And when David came to Ziklag, he sent of the spoil unto the elders of Judah, even to his friends, saying, Behold a present for you of the spoil of the enemies of the Lord;

27 To *them* which were in Beth-el, and to *them* which were in south Ramoth, and to *them* which were in Jattir,

triumphant song, and that this was the burden of it: which they repeated at the end of every verse.

Ver. 21. *Whom they had made also to abide at the brook Besor:*] That they might look after their stuff.

They went forth—to meet the people] To congratulate their happy success; and to receive their wives and children, who had been carried captive.

He saluted them.] He was glad to see them, and inquired how they did (as it is in the margin) for he had left them very weak.

Ver. 22. *Then answered all the wicked men*] It is likely David told these two hundred men, when he saluted them, that they should lose nothing by their not being able to go along with him: which made these men, who had no conscience, but were only greedy of prey, to say what follows.

We will not give them ought of the spoil] This was a savage resolution of such as feared not God, nor regarded men: since it was not the choice of their brethren to stay behind, but mere necessity and inability to travel further.

Ver. 23. *Then said David,*] Who still preserved his authority over the most wicked among them.

Ye shall not do so, my brethren,] He overrules them: but thought fit to do it in a friendly manner. As much as to say, When God hath been so good to us, we ought not to be unkind to our brethren.

Ver. 24. *For who will hearken unto you in this matter?*] No equal persons, he was confident, would be of their opinion, if the matter was referred to them. Polybius explains the order of dividing the spoils of war (as Grotius observes, lib. iii. De Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 6, sect. 17), some of which was allotted those who remained in the camp. But the proportions were various in several places. In some a simple portion was given to a footman; a double to a centurion; and a treble to a horseman. In other places they varied from this: but howsoever the division was made, the commander-in-chief was allowed to take the best of the spoil to himself: as David perhaps now did: and then left the rest to be equally divided among his men. But the Talmudists say, that, in aftertimes, the king had all the royal furniture that was found in the tent of the conquered prince given unto him for his share.

Ver. 25.] The equity of this law appears from hence: that by common consent these two hundred men were left behind to look after their baggage: and they were part of the same body of men, linked together in the same common society: and were hindered by mere weariness from going to fight, which otherwise they would have done; and their will was accepted for the deed; and they were in the same common danger; for if the four hundred had been

routed, their enemies would soon have cut them off.

This law may seem to have been ordained before by God himself in Numb. xxxi. Which, if it were, it may be thought strange that David should not allege that law to quiet the present contention. But it is evident this was a very different case from that: for threescore thousand who stayed at home, had no more among them than the twelve thousand had who went to the battle (ver. 27, of that chapter). And what was then done was not ordained to be observed as a statute through all generations. This therefore was a new law, but perpetually continued to the time of the Maccabees: as appears from the second book of their history, ch. viii. ver. 28, 30. And Osiander observes, that it pleased the Romans to do the same, as Festus tells us (see Josh. xxi. 8). But the most ancient custom among the Romans was (as Godescalcus Stewechius shows at large upon Vegetius De Re Militari, lib. ii. cap. 7), to burn part of the spoils, as an offering to their gods; and for the rest, sometimes the soldiers were permitted to keep what every man had got to himself: and sometimes, if the necessities of the commonwealth required, they were all brought to the quaestor, to be put into the public treasury. Out of those which every man kept to himself, they were wont, when they came home, to have some of them upon the posts of the gates to their houses: which it was lawful to remove when a house was sold to another man.

Ver. 26. *He sent of the spoil unto the elders of Judah,*] By this it seems plain, that he had reserved some part of the spoil to himself: out of which he made presents to his friends; some of which were of the best quality in the tribe of Judah.

A present for you] In the Hebrew, “a blessing for you,” &c. So he calls the present, because it was a token that he wished all prosperity to them: who had been kind to him in his banishment, and helped to maintain and protect him: and whom he was desirous still to oblige, that they might more readily receive him, when he had a right to take possession of the kingdom.

Ver. 27. *Beth-el,*] This seems to be the same place with that which is called Baalath and Kirjath-baal, Josh. xv. 9, 60.

South Ramoth.] A place in the tribe of Simeon (Josh. xix. 8), called *Ramoth in the south*, to distinguish it from Ramoth-gilead, which lay northward. By which it appears he had other friends, who sometimes gave him shelter, or subsistence, besides those in his own tribe.

Jattir.] A town in the mountainous part of the tribe of Judah (Josh. xv. 48).

28 And to *them* which were in Aroer, and to *them* which were in Siphmoth, and to *them* which were in Eshtemoa,

29 And to *them* which were in Rachal, and to *them* which were in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, and to *them* which were in the cities of the Kenites,

Ver. 28. *Aroer*.] Not that on the other side Jordan (mentioned in Numb. xxxii.), but some other place, in the tribe of Judah, or some neighbouring tribe, where the other places here mentioned were: for we nowhere read, that David ever fled, during Saul's persecution, into the country beyond Jordan.

Ver. 29. *Jerahmeelites*.] These people lay on the south of Judah (xxvii. 10), where, it is likely, Rachal also was.

Kenites.] Who were near to the Jerahmeelites, it appears from the forenamed place.

30 And to *them* which were in Hormah, and to *them* which were in Chor-ashan, and to *them* which were in Athach,

31 And to *them* which were in Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men were wont to haunt.

Ver. 30. *Hormah*.] This was a city in the tribe of Judah (Josh. xv. 30), afterward given unto the tribe of Simeon (Josh. xix. 4).

Chor-ashan.—*Athach*.] It is probable that these two places were also in the same tribe.

Ver. 31. *Hebron*.] Which was certainly a city of Judah (Josh. xv. 54): where David was first made king, and reigned over that tribe (2 Sam. ii. 1, 2, &c.).

Where David—and his men were wont to haunt.] Either to lurk among them, or to get provisions, or intelligence from them.

CHAPTER XXXI.

1 *Saul having lost his army, and his sons slain, he and his armourbearer kill themselves.* 7 *The Philistines possess the forsaken towns of the Israelites.* 8 *They triumph over the dead carcasses.* 11 *They of Jabesh-gilead, recovering the bodies by night, burn them at Jabesh, and mournfully bury their bones.*

1 Now the Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa.

2 And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Melchishua, Saul's sons.

3 And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was sore wounded of the archers.

4 Then said Saul unto his armourbearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me

through, and abuse me. But his armourbearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it.

5 And when his armourbearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him.

6 So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armourbearer, and all his men, that same day together.

7 ¶ And when the men of Israel that were on the other side of the valley, and they that were on the other side Jordan, saw that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were

CHAP. XXXI.

Ver. 1. *The Philistines fought against Israel*.] i. e. Gave them battle: and as they began the quarrel (xxix. 1), so they seem to have begun the fight.

Fell down slain in mount Gilboa.] They fled thither from the valley of Jezreel, and were there slain in great numbers.

Ver. 2. *The Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons*.] Who were the leaders of the army: which the Philistines thought would never rally again, if they were slain or taken. It seems Ishbosheth was not there, being no warlike man; or he escaped out of the battle by flight, as Abner and other great men did: or perhaps he was left at home to manage domestic affairs. Jonathan seems to have deserved a better fate: but the providence of God suffered him to be slain, that David might more easily come to the throne. For though he had freely consented to it, yet he was such a favourite of the people, that many of them might have stickled for him.

Ver. 3.] They pursued him so close, that there was no hope he could escape. In the Hebrew the words are, the archers *found him*: which signifies, in that language, to rush upon one on a sudden. Bows and arrows were the principal weapons of this nation; in the use of which they were very dexterous, and did terrible execution. Which is the reason, some think,

that David, when he came to the throne, taught the Israelites the use of the bow (as we read in the next book, ch. i. ver. 18), that they might not be inferior to the Philistines, nor fall into the like disaster that Saul had done. And when he had made peace with the Philistines, he took some of their archers, with whom he was well acquainted, to be the keepers of his body: which are those so often mentioned in the following books, under the name of *Cherethites*, 2 Sam. viii. 18, xv. 18, xx. 7, 1 Kings i. 38, 44, 1 Chron. xviii. 17, in all which places, where the Hebrew hath the word *cerethi*, the Chaldee paraphrast interprets it *archers* (see Bochartus, in his *Canaan*, lib. i. cap. 15, p. 459).

Ver. 4. *Thrust me through*.] For though he had received many wounds, yet they were not mortal; at least, not for the present.

Lest these uncircumcised—abuse me.] He was afraid they might put him to some ignominious death, or make sport with him, as they did with Samson.

His armourbearer would not.] Dreaded to think of killing his king.

Saul took a sword, and fell upon it.] And killed himself, as appears by the next words.

Ver. 5.] Some of the Jews think this was Doeg.

Ver. 6.] That is, all the men that attended upon his person.

Ver. 7. *The other side of the valley*.] Of Jezreel. *The other side Jordan*.] Or rather on "this side."

dead, they forsook the cities, and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them.

8 And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen in mount Gilboa.

9 And they cut off his head, and stripped off his armour, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to publish it in the house of their idols, and among the people.

10 And they put his armour in the house of

Ashtaroth: and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan.

11 ¶ And when the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead heard of that which the Philistines had done to Saul;

12 All the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-shan, and came to Jabesh, and burnt them there.

13 And they took their bones, and buried them under a tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

Jordan;" for the Hebrew word signifies either side. And there was no occasion for those beyond Jordan to flee.

Fled;] Being afraid, I suppose, to be carried captive.

The Philistines came and dwell in them.] The consternation being so great, that there was none to oppose them.

Ver. 8. It came to pass on the morrow.] It was contrary to military discipline, presently to fall upon the spoil, which they did not till the next day.

Ver. 9. They cut off his head.] As David had done the head of Goliath.

Sent into the land of the Philistines.] They sent the news of this great victory; and perhaps his head and armour in token of it.

To publish it in the house of their idols.] That they might give thanks to their gods for the victory they had obtained.

Ver. 10. They put his armour in the house of Ashtaroth:] As the sword of Goliath was laid up in the tabernacle.

They fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan.] To expose it, as we do the bodies of great malefactors, to public shame and reproach. And thus it appears. by ver. 12, they did with the bodies of his sons.

Ver. 11.] They lived on the other side of Jordan; for the people on this side were fled.

Ver. 12. Went all night.] To avoid discovery.

Took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-shan.] Which was a city in the tribe of Manasseh, not far from Jordan and the sea of Genesaret: out of which the Manassites could not expel the old inhabitants (Judg. i. 27). To this place they of Jabesh might march in a night's time, and accomplish their design. Aristotle reports, in the fifth book of his Ethics (as Strigelius here observes), that the temples of the Graces were built in the very midst of the cities of the Greeks, that all men might be admonished to be

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grateful. Of which virtue the men of Jabesh-gilead gave a most noble example: who, being delivered by Saul in the beginning of his reign from the Ammonites, when they were in danger to lose their eyes (ch. xi.), now repay his care of them when he was dead, by not suffering his carcass to want the honour of burial.

Came to Jabesh, and burnt them there.] Some think they burnt their flesh, which was rotten and putrid: others, that they poured upon their flesh aromatic hot spices, such as Joseph ordered for the embalming of his father: or, as the Targum understands it, *they burnt them, or over them.* Where Kimchi notes, that the paraphrast had respect to the custom delivered down from their ancestors, of burning the beds and other utensils of the dead upon their graves; or to the burning of spices. Certain it is, there was no such custom as this among the Jews, of burning the bodies of the dead. Though some think that these people imitated the heathenish custom, affecting singularity, as appears from the story of the Benjamites, Judg. xxi. 8, where we read, they alone would not come to the assembly of the whole nation. Such a singularity Gierus thinks they were now guilty of: and, therefore, in a parallel place to this, 1 Chron. x. 11. there is no mention made of this *burning*: either because it was an unwonted practice, or unworthy to be remembered.

Ver. 13. Buried them under a tree at Jabesh.] In this also, there seems to be some of the superstition of the gentiles: among whom trees were accounted sacred things.

Fasted seven days.] Expressed great sorrow: of which this was a token. Lucian saith, in his book De Lucta, that the Greeks were wont in their funerals neither to eat nor drink for three days. But this is not to be so understood: but that they fasted for seven days together till the evening (as the manner of fasting was among the Jews), and eat nothing all day.

THE
SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL,

OTHERWISE CALLED, THE SECOND BOOK OF THE KINGS.

CHAPTER I.

1 *The Amalekite, who brought tidings of the overthrow, and accused himself of Saul's death, is slain.* 17 *David lamenteth Saul and Jonathan with a song.*

1 Now it came to pass after the death of Saul, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites, and David had abode two days in Ziklag;

2 It came even to pass on the third day, that, behold, a man came out of the camp from Saul with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head: and so it was, when he came to David, that he fell to the earth, and did obeisance.

3 And David said unto him, From whence comest thou? And he said unto him, Out of the camp of Israel am I escaped.

4 And David said unto him, How went the matter? I pray thee, tell me. And he answered, That the people are fled from the battle, and many of the people also are fallen and dead; and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also.

5 And David said unto the young man that told him, How knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan his son be dead?

6 And the young man that told him said, As I happened by chance upon mount Gilboa, behold, Saul leaned upon his spear; and, lo, the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him.

7 And when he looked behind him, he saw me, and called unto me. And I answered, Here am I.

8 And he said unto me, Who art thou? And I answered him, I am an Amalekite.

9 He said unto me again, Stand, I pray thee, upon me, and slay me: for anguish is come upon me, because my life is yet whole in me.

10 So I stood upon him, and slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after that he

CHAP. I.

Ver. 1.] The fight between Saul and the Philistines fell out, when David was in pursuit of the Amalekites. It seems the Amalekites had not quite burnt Ziklag; contenting themselves with the spoil.

Ver. 2. *On the third day,*] After his coming into Ziklag.

His clothes rent, and earth upon his head:] As the manner of deep mourners was (see 1 Sam. iv. 4).

Did obeisance.] Honoured him as king.

Ver. 3.] Some of the Jews have a conceit that this was Doeg's son; of which, though there was no proof, yet the objection against it is of no value. For Doeg was an Edomite, and this person an Amalekite, which seems inconsistent with his being the son of Doeg. But it is to be considered that all Amalekites were also Edomites; though all Edomites were not Amalekites. For Amalek was Esau's grandson, by his son Eliphaz (Gen. xxxvi. 15, 16).

Ver. 4.] He relates the matter very orderly; that first the Israelites were routed and fled; and then in the pursuit of them many were slain; and in conclusion, Saul, and Jonathan his son. Which two he only mentions; thinking that David was principally concerned in them.

Ver. 5.] He might easily know that the Israelites were beaten; but not so easily that these were in the number of the slain.

Ver. 6. *As I happened by chance*] One would think by this that he was not a soldier, but a countryman, who had occasion to go that way.

Saul leaned upon his spear;] Endeavouring to run it through his body.

The chariots and horsemen followed hard after him;

So that he feared he should fall into their hands before he could despatch himself.

Ver. 7.] He looked round about him, to see if there were any near him of his servants.

Ver. 8.] He did not dissemble his country, though he knew Saul had no reason to be a friend to it.

Ver. 9. *Stand—upon me, and slay me:*] He would have him lean so hard upon him, with the whole weight of his body, that the spear might run through him; which he had not strength to make it do. This is not a likely story: for Saul, in all probability, would have been as unwilling to be killed by an Amalekite as by a Philistine.

Anguish is come upon me.] The Hebrew word *shabatz* is variously translated. By some *trembling*, by others *convulsions*, by the LXX. *oxóros*, *darkness*. Kimchi saith it was a disease, which some say was the *cramp*: but in Scripture, as Brannius observes (lib. i. De Vestitu Sacerd. Hebr. cap. 17, sect. 9), it never signifies any one of these things, but some ornament in a garment. And therefore our marginal translation is better, "my embroidered coat" hinders the spear from going far into my body: or his "coat of mail," as Diodate translates it: for it consisted of little rings one within another, which made it hard to penetrate. And thus Ralbag among the Jews understands it.

My life is yet whole] He was not mortally wounded.

Ver. 10.] This is contrary to what Saul said just before, that "his life was whole in him" (unless he meant that the Philistines would instantly come upon him and kill him), and it was as false that he slew him; for it appears by the foregoing relation that Saul killed himself; and that not with a spear, but with

was fallen: and I took the crown that *was* upon his head, and the bracelet that *was* on his arm, and have brought them hither unto my lord.

11 Then David took hold on his clothes, and rent them; and likewise all the men that *were* with him:

12 And they mourned, and wept, and fasted until even, for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the LORD, and for the house of Israel; because they were fallen by the sword.

13 ¶ And David said unto the young man that told him, Whence *art* thou? And he answered, *I am* the son of a stranger, an Amalekite.

his sword (xxx. 4).—But this the young man said to excuse himself, if David did not approve the fact. Saul was the first that had the ensigns of royal authority, for the judges had none, but were mere ministers of God (during his pleasure), who was their king and governor. And it is not likely that Saul wore his crown when he was in the fight (for that had been to set out himself a mark for the Philistines to shoot at), but it was carried along with him into the field by some that attended him, to be ready to put on if he had gotten the victory and triumphed. The Jews think that Doeg, his armour-bearer, had it in his custody: who, before he killed himself, gave it to his son (this young Amalekite), and bade him carry it to David, hoping he might thereby ingratiate himself with him.

Ver. 11.] That is, all his attendants. Every one knows that this was a token of very great sorrow, and of a violent passion: which all nations used, as we learn from Homer, Herodotus, Virgil, and other ancient authors.

Ver. 12. *They mourned, and wept.*] The whole company made great lamentations, and shed many tears.

Fasted until even.] Till the evening sacrifice was offered: though Buxtorf (in his *Synag. Judaica*) thinks they abstained from all meat and drink till the stars appeared.

For Saul, and for Jonathan his son.] He had great reason to mourn for Jonathan, who was his great friend; but some think he should have rejoiced to hear of Saul's death, who was his bitter enemy. But there were many reasons for his bewailing his death, as a public person, who was lately reconciled to him; and might possibly have returned to a better mind, if he had lived longer. However, the manner of his death very much affected him; and the more, because he heard perhaps of his going just before to consult a witch, and gave no tokens of his repentance. The Jews say, in both the Talmuds, that he mourned for Saul, as the prince of the great Sanhedrin; and for Jonathan, as the father of it (see Selden, lib. ii.; De *Synedr.* cap. 16, sect. 4).

Ver. 13.] He had told David once before who he was, in the relation he made of his discourse with Saul (ver. 8). But being astonished at the news, he did not attend unto that circumstance, or had forgot it. Besides, a good judge ought to examine things strictly, and not to trust unto the first answer.

Ver. 14.] Who, it is possible, might have recovered, and been carried off by some of his own men; the Philistines, by some extraordinary providence of God, being diverted from their pursuit. And it was the greater presumption of this young man to do it; since one of Saul's own servants durst not venture upon such a fact.

14 And David said unto him, How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the LORD's anointed?

15 And David called one of the young men, and said, Go near, and fall upon him. And he smote him that he died.

16 And David said unto him, Thy blood *be* upon thy head; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the LORD's anointed.

17 ¶ And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son:

18 (Also he bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow: behold, it is written in the book of Jasher.)

Ver. 15. *One of the young men.*] One of the guards of his body.

Go near, and fall upon him.] There was a known law, that no man should be condemned out of the mouth of one witness: and the Jews tell us, that no judge was to sit alone, but to have some other joined with him: and that no man's testimony was to be taken against himself. But this was the singular prerogative of their kings, that they might alone hear any man's cause, and condemn him; and that out of the mouth of one witness, or from his own confession. Of which Maimonides gives this case of the Amalekite as an instance; which he looks upon as an extraordinary example, and as the king's process (see Schieckard, *De Jure Regis*, cap. 4, Theor. 14, and my notes upon Josh. vii. 25). But after all, it looks something hard, that a man should be put to death for doing what Saul himself desired, and when he was sure (if this man said true) that he could not live. Abarbanel therefore thinks, that this man being an Amalekite, David supposed he might kill Saul out of revenge for the slaughter he had made of his people.

Ver. 16.] That is, thou art the cause of thy own death; or, the blood thou hast shed is the reason of thy death.

Ver. 17.] He and his servants had lamented them before (ver. 12), but now David composed a song for a public and universal lamentation.

Ver. 18.] *He bade them teach the children of Judah.*] Among whom he now was, and over whom he first reigned. This comes in as a parenthesis between the former verse and what follows, to show his early endeavours to promote the good of the people.

The use of the bow.] While he made lamentation for the dead, he did not neglect the care of the living, that they might be provided with better means to defend themselves. For they now looking upon him as the king God designed should rule over them, he ordered they should immediately learn the skill of using bows and arrows, in which the Philistines excelled them (see what I have noted, 1 Sam. xxxi. 3). Some indeed make this the title of the following song, which they were to sing among their military exercises; but the former seems a more natural interpretation, which Conradus Pellicanus proposed in the beginning of the Reformation. The Jews, saith he, hitherto used only slings and swords, but now were taught to shoot with bows and arrows; for it did not misbecome them to learn the art of defending themselves from Infidels. And indeed the benefit of having good archers in an army is so great, that Cato took the pains to describe it in his book of Military Discipline, as Vegetius tells us: who says that Scipio hoped for no success in Africa against the Numantines, nisi in omnibus centuriis lectos sagittarios miscuisset, "unless he had mingled some choice archers with every company of

19 The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen!

20 Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.

21 Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain, upon you, nor fields of offerings: for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil.

22 From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty.

23 Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided: they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions.

24 Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights, who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel.

25 How are the mighty fallen in the midst of

soldiers, commanded by a centurion" (lib. i. cap. 15). And as this was done among the footmen, so in the next book he makes it the qualification of a captain of horse, *sagittas doctissime mittere*, "to shoot arrows most skilfully" (lib. ii. cap. 14).

It is written in the book of *Jasher*.] That is, this order of teaching the children of Judah the use of the bow was more largely recorded there. But what book this was is very uncertain: Yet Victorinus Strigelius adventures to say, "Haud dubie fuit historia ecclesiastica, qualis nunc est Eusebiana, aut Theodoretica: "Without doubt it was an ecclesiastical history, like that which we now have of Eusebius or Theodoret" (see my notes upon Josh. x. 13). I should rather say, that *Jasher* signifying *right*, it was a book concerning the right art of making war, upon which subject the ancient Romans wrote many books, particularly Cato, Cornelius Celsus, Frontinus, and Paterculus; which were abridged, as he himself tells us, by Vegetius De Re Militari, lib. i. cap. 8. Procopius Gazæus thinks these words declare, hanc historiam ex multis libris collectam esse, "that this history was gathered out of many prophetic books."

Ver. 19. *The beauty of Israel is slain*.] The flower of the nation, their choice young men; together with Saul and his sons.

How are the mighty fallen!] What a slaughter is made among the valiant men!

Ver. 20. *Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon*.] The city of Gath seems to have been the metropolis of the Philistines' country, and Askelon next to it; where it was in vain to wish this might not be published, for it was done already. Therefore these are only expressions of great sadness and sorrow that this overthrow should be published, which he could not but wish had never been heard of.

Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice.] According to the manner of those countries, where the women celebrated with songs and dances the victory of the men over their enemies (see Exod. xv. 1, &c. Judg. xi. 34).

Ver. 21. *Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, &c.*] Fruitful fields, from whence offerings might be brought to the house of God. These are poetical expressions from the common language of mankind: who are wont to speak with abhorrence of those places, and to curse them, where any calamity hath befallen their friends.

The shield of the mighty is vilely cast away.] They were forced to throw away their shields, that they might run the faster away; which was a great disgrace to them.

The shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil.] As if he had been a common soldier. So these words are generally interpreted, as spoken of Saul. But the words, "as though he had," are not in the Hebrew; where there is only "not anointed with oil:" which may as well relate to the shield, as the Jews interpret it, and thus explain it:—By the holy oil men were set apart for some great office, as

that of priests, and sometimes kings. Now when any person, in a sudden danger of the state, was chosen to be captain-general of their army, they were wont to anoint him; that by this sight he might be animated to fight the Lord's battles courageously. And such a person was called "The anointed of war:" nay, sometimes (they say) their armour was anointed, to increase their confidence, just as the vessels of the tabernacle were which the priests used, unto which they think David alludes in these words. See Guil. Schickardus, cap. 1, Theor. 4. of his *Jus Regium*, Carpovius observes, that these words Isa. xxi. 9, favour this interpretation, and are alleged by Rasi and Rabbag as parallel to this place. But he confesses he can find nowhere that their shields or other warlike instruments were anointed with holy oil, to make them fight with greater boldness.

Ver. 22. *The bow of Jonathan turned not back*.] By this it appears, that Jonathan was a very skilful archer (as perhaps some other great men were), though the common people were not trained up to the use of the bow. Which Jonathan so well managed, that as he always hit his mark, so his arrows pierced into the entrails of the most mighty men.

The sword of Saul returned not empty.] Always did great execution (as we now speak) upon those whom he fought withal.

Ver. 13. *Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives*.] Courteous and kind to their people: which is a great virtue in princes. To David, indeed, Saul expressed a great deal of ill nature: but that proceeded from Saul's jealousy, and fear that he would supplant his family, and place himself in the throne. And this highly advances the glory of David, that he commends his greatest enemy for what was praiseworthy in him: as Cæsar, they say, could not but shed some tears when Pompey's head was brought to him, though we read of nothing that he spake in his praise.

In their death they were not divided.] Jonathan stuck close to his father in the battle; and demonstrated he was engaged in no conspiracy against him, as he had sometime charged him.

They were swifter than eagles.] In pursuing their enemies. For this, I have often observed, was a requisite quality in an excellent warrior: therefore, in the choice of soldiers, Vegetius saith, *Et velocitas requirenda est et robur*; "Both swiftness and strength were to be required" (lib. i. De Re Militari, cap. 8). The great advantages of being a swift runner, he enumerates in the next chapter.

Stronger than lions.] In overthrowing their enemies, when they overtook them.

Ver. 24.] He would have the women bear a part in this lamentation over Saul, who adorned them with the rich spoils of their enemies. The word *other delights* is not in the Hebrew; but the meaning seems to be, that they delighted in fine clothes, which they did not want while Saul lived. And *scarlet* was every where accounted the most precious colour: the

the battle! O Jonathan, *thou wast slain in thine high places.*

26 I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me:

emperor's mantle being of scarlet, as Brannius observes lib. i. cap. 15; De Vestitu. Sacerd. Hebr.

Ver. 25. *O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thy high places.*] Of his own country, which he valiantly defended.

Ver. 26. *I am distressed for thee.*] His grief was great for his death, as the pleasure had been which he took in his company while he lived.

Passing the love of women.] No less ardent, sin-

thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.

27 How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!

cere, and sweet, than the highest conjugal affection. Which ought to be (as Strigelius here glosses) ardent without simulation, sincere without any suspicions; and sweet without morosity or disdain.

Ver. 27. *How are the mighty fallen.*] This is repeated three times in this song: being an interlocutory verse.

The weapons of war perished!] All military glory gone from Israel.

CHAPTER II.

1 David, by God's direction, with his company goeth up to Hebron, where he is made king of Judah. 5 He commendeth them of Jabesh-gilead for their kindness to Saul. 8 Abner maketh Ish-bosheth king of Israel. 12 A mortal skirmish between of Abner's and twelve of Joab's men. 18 Asahel is slain. 25 At Abner's motion Joab soundeth a retreat. 32 Asahel's burial.

1 AND it came to pass after this, that David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And the Lord said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, unto Hebron.

2 So David went up thither, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail Nabal's wife the Carmelite.

3 And his men that were with him did David bring up, every man with his household: and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron.

4 And the men of Judah came, and there they

anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, *That* the men of Jabesh-gilead were they that buried Saul.

5 ¶ And David sent messengers unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, and said unto them, Blessed be ye of the LORD, that ye have shewed this kindness unto your lord, even unto Saul, and have buried him.

6 And now the LORD shew kindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing.

7 Therefore now let your hands be strength-

CHAP. II.

Ver. 1. *David enquired of the Lord.*] By Abiathar the high-priest, as he had often done before (1 Sam. xxvi. 9, and other places).

Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah?] Which was his own tribe, where he had most friends; and therefore it was proper, he thought, to address himself to them, who were best affected to him. But though he had a right to the kingdom by God's designation, yet he would not enter into possession, nor take upon him the administration of affairs, without God's advice and direction.

Go up.] He approved of his going up into that tribe; and thereby gave him hope of success.

Whither shall I go up?] He asked these questions distinctly, as the Jews say the manner was to do, and not two questions at once (see upon 1 Sam. xxiii. 11, and see what I have further noted, xxx. 8).

Unto Hebron.] Which was a principal city in that tribe; and in the middle of it: where the people might more conveniently and easily resort to him, than in Ziklag. Which was his own town by the gift of Achish, and at first in the lot of Judah (see 1 Sam. xxvii. 6).

Ver. 2.] Who being hitherto companions in his troubles, were now advanced to be partakers of his prosperity. This Theogena the wife of Agathocles (as Strigelius observes) made the character of a good wife, who in marriage enters into society with a husband, in all things, both good and evil.

Ver. 3.] He took care to provide for his followers, and their families, according to every one's merit. But this, it is likely, was not done till he was settled:

for to go up with so many armed men, had been to frighten them into compliance.

Hebron.] Which was given to the priests to be a city of refuge (Josh. xxi. 11, 12), and therefore could not contain all David's followers; but only him and his court. The rest were disposed of in the cities depending upon Hebron.

Ver. 4. *The men of Judah came.*] The principal persons, who represented the rest.

They anointed David king.] Who had been anointed privately by Samuel some time ago; but that was only a designation of him to the kingdom: into which he was now solemnly inaugurated by this public unction.

Over the house of Judah.] Who would not presume to know the sense of all Israel: though they hoped they would follow this example; as they afterward did, and anointed him again (ch. v. ver. 3).

The men of Jabesh-gilead—buried Saul.] Which it seems he had not heard of while he was in Ziklag; but now (by some discourse about Saul's death) that noble action was related to him; which is recorded, to their honour, in 1 Sam. xxxi. 11—13.

Ver. 5.] This demonstrates, both the great piety and the great prudence of David. For he testified the true kindness he had for Saul, though his virulent enemy: and by wishing so heartily the men of Jabesh might be rewarded for what they had done, he invited them (who were Israelites on the other side of Jordan) to own him for their king.

Ver. 6.] He doth not content himself merely with praying God to reward them (which he repeats again), but promises that he would take care of them, by defending them from the Philistines, if they should offer

ened, and be ye valiant; for your master Saul is dead, and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them.

8 ¶ But Abner the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host, took Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and brought him over to Mahanaim;

9 And made him king over Gilead, and over the Ashurites, and over Jezreel, and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, and over all Israel.

10 Ish-bosheth Saul's son was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and reigned two years. But the house of Judah followed David.

11 And the time that David was king in

to invade them, for entering their country without leave, and taking from thence the trophies of their victory.

Ver. 7. *Be ye valiant*:] As they had been to a high degree (1 Sam. xxxi. 12). He would not have them discouraged, because they wanted one to head them; for he, being invested with the royal dignity by the tribe of Judah, would look upon himself as bound to protect them also: though they had not owned him for their sovereign.

Ver. 8. *Abner*] A man of the greatest authority in Israel, after Saul was dead, being general of all their forces.

took Ish-bosheth] Called Esh-baal, 1 Chron. viii. 33, as there are several other names which end indifferently, either in *Bosheth*, or *Baal*. For instance, Gideon is called Jerubbaal, Judg. ix. 1, and Jerubesheth, 2 Sam. xi. 21, and Mephibosheth is called Meribbaal, 1 Chron. viii. 34. For *Bosheth* signifies *shame and confusion*; and Baal being an infamous idol, the Holy Scripture makes these names end promiscuously either in *Baal*, or *Bosheth*, or *Besheth*.

Brought him over] The river Jordan.

To Mahanaim:] A place in the tribe of Gad (Josh. xiii. 26). So called from the appearance of a host of angels to Jacob, as he came to Padan-aram, with his household (Gen. xxvii. 1). Here Abner thought he might most securely do what follows, being at a distance from David, under whom he could not promise himself that command and authority, which he hoped to maintain under Ish-bosheth.

Ver. 9. *Over Gilead*:] Over all the tribes on the other side Jordan; which are comprehended under this name.

Over the Ashurites:] The Chaldee paraphrast understands hereby, the tribe of Asher; who, though remote from Mahanaim, were forward to acknowledge him.

Over Jezreel:] A large and noble valley, on the borders of Zebulun, Issachar, and Naphtali; who are all comprehended under this word.

Over Ephraim, and over Benjamin:] Under whom the Simeonites are comprehended.

Over all Israel:] All the tribes on this side Jordan, save the tribe of Judah.

Ver. 10. *Ish-bosheth—was forty years old*] Therefore he was born that very year in which Saul was made king; for he reigned forty years, as St. Paul tells us, Acts xiii. 21.

And reigned two years:] Before there was any hostility between him and David. So Ralbag expounds it, who makes this cohere with ver. 12, it being a mere fancy of the Jews, in Seder Olam Rabba, that the throne was vacant, and there was no king in Israel for five years. Victorinus Strigelius's conjecture is far better; who, after he had given the foregoing interpretation of Ralbag, adds, that after the war

Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.

12 ¶ And Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon.

13 And Joab the son of Zeruiah, and the servants of David, went out, and met together by the pool of Gibeon: and they sat down, the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool.

14 And Abner said to Joab, Let the young men now arise, and play before us. And Joab said, Let them arise.

15 Then there arose and went over by number

broke out between David and Ish-bosheth, and David waxed stronger and stronger (iii. 1), Ish-bosheth being an inactive prince, and unfit to command, Abner took the administration of the government upon himself, and managed the war the other five years which passed before David came to the throne of Israel. These five years the Scripture doth not reckon as a part of Ish-bosheth's reign; because he had the mere name of a king, but no authority at all.

The house of Judah followed David:] Stuck close to him, and were entirely at his command.

Ver. 11.] So long, therefore, Ish-bosheth reigned over Israel. Unless we will suppose, either that the Israelites were five years deliberating whether he or Mephibosheth should be king (whose right it was by the laws of succession), or that he reigning two years immediately after the death of Saul, they were five years deliberating whether they should own David or not: neither of which is probable, as Ralbag thinks; who judiciously observes, that those words, "he reigned two years," are to be joined with ver. 12, "And Abner, the son of Ner, went out," &c. That is, saith he, the first two years of his reign there was no war between the house of Saul and David: and there had been no open war, if Abner had not been the author of it, &c.

Ver. 12. *Abner—and the servants of Ish-bosheth*] The principal officers about the king.

Went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon:] They passed over Jordan into the country of Benjamin, where Gibeon was (Josh. xviii. 25), to fight with Judah and to bring them into the obedience of Saul's son. It is observable, that David did not begin any hostility; but waited to see how God would dispose things in his favour.

Ver. 13. *Went out*:] To oppose the designs of the Israelites; for Joab was the chief commander of David's forces; whom the principal officers of his household attended. The two armies faced one another (as we now speak), being parted only by the pool that was between them.

Ver. 14.] I suppose David had commanded Joab not to begin the quarrel, but only stand upon his defence. For he had sworn to Saul, that he would not cut off his seed; and therefore would not willingly engage against Ish-bosheth (1 Sam. xxiv. 21). He desires that some soldiers might be picked out from the rest, and make the two armies sport, as the gladiators were wont to do in aftertimes among the Romans: whereby also they might make a trial of their courage and strength. So Josephus saith, Abner was desirous to learn, *κόσμος ἀντὶν ἀδυστορίους στρατιώτας ἕξει*, "which of they two had the bravest soldiers."

Ver. 15. *And went over*] The pool of Gibeon.

Twelve of Benjamin:] They still were forward to begin the hostility; and Abner chose this number out of Benjamin, for the honour (I suppose) of his own

twelve of Benjamin, which pertained to Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David.

16 And they caught every one his fellow by the head, and thrust his sword in his fellow's side; so they fell down together: wherefore that place was called Helkath-hazzurim, which is in Gibeon.

17 And there was a very sore battle that day; and Abner was beaten, and the men of Israel, before the servants of David.

18 ¶ And there were three sons of Zeruiah there, Joab, and Abishai, and Asahel: and Asahel was as light of foot as a wild roe.

19 And Asahel pursued after Abner; and in going he turned not to the right hand nor to the left from following Abner.

20 Then Abner looked behind him, and said, Art thou Asahel? And he answered, I am.

21 And Abner said to him, Turn thee aside to thy right hand or to thy left, and lay thee hold on one of the young men, and take thee his armour. But Asahel would not turn aside from following of him.

22 And Abner said again to Asahel, Turn thee aside from following me: wherefore should I smite thee to the ground? how then should I hold up my face to Joab thy brother?

23 Howbeit he refused to turn aside: wherefore Abner with the hinder end of the spear smote him under the fifth rib, that the spear came out behind him; and he fell down there, and died in the same place: and it came to pass, that as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died stood still.

24 Joab also and Abishai pursued after Abner: and the sun went down when they were come to the hill of Ammah, that lieth before Giah by the way of the wilderness of Gibeon.

25 ¶ And the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together after Abner, and became one troop, and stood on the top of an hill.

26 Then Abner called to Joab and said, Shall the sword devour for ever? knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end? how long shall it be then, ere thou bid the people return from following their brethren?

27 And Joab said, Is God liveth, unless thou

tribe, and because they were a valiant sort of people, as appears by the story in Judg. xx.

[Twelve of the servants of David.] Whose valour, no doubt, had been tried in other exploits.

Ver. 16. They caught every one his fellow] That is, the servants of David, last mentioned, caught each of them every one of the Benjamites that was his opposite, by the hair of his head, which they wore very long in those days.

And thrust his sword in his fellow's side:] That is, David's men killed every one of the Benjamites with whom they were engaged: so, some say, Josephus understood it; though I can find no such thing in him.

So they fell down together:] All the twelve men of Benjamin fell down dead together.

Helkath-hazzurim.] The Hebrew words signify, "the field of strong men;" as hard and firm as a rock.

Ver. 17.] The men of Israel, enraged at the loss of their valiant men, maintained a furious fight the rest of that day. But still success followed the men of Judah.

Ver. 18. There were three sons of Zeruiah] She was David's sister: and therefore these were his nephews. All three very valiant men and great commanders, as appears from 1 Chron. xxvii. 7, where the last of them is mentioned as one of David's twelve captains over four and twenty thousand men (see also ch. xi. 26, of that book).

Asahel was as light of foot as a wild roe.] I noted in the foregoing chapter, and in other places, that to be swift of foot to pursue an enemy, was a quality highly esteemed in warriors. And therefore Plato, I remember, would have this to be one of the exercises wherein youth should be trained up, viz. racing: "Ἐπει γοῖν πάντων κοσιμηκότατος ἢ σώματος ὀπίτης πάντως ἢ μὲν ἀπὸ τῶν ποδῶν, ἢ δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν χειρῶν, &c. (lib. viii. De Leg. p. 852, edit. Serani).

Ver. 19.] Being desirous of the glory, either of taking or killing the greatest man in Israel. Nothing could turn him aside to pursue any other design: but he went right forward, having Abner only in his eye.

Ver. 20.] He speaks to him civilly having no mind to kill him.

Ver. 21. Lay thee hold on one of the young men, and take thee his armour.] That he might not return with-

out some spoil he bids him take one of his attendants, his arms and all; and be content with this glory of carrying away such a prisoner. Thus Kimchi expounds it. Others think he bids him try his valour upon one of his servants, and disarm him, and not venture to encounter him, who was an old soldier.

But Asahel would not] Being possessed with a vain desire, of more glory than it was reasonable to expect.

Ver. 22. How then should I hold up my face to Joab] Who was a fierce man, and he knew would study revenge.

Ver. 23. The spear came out behind him:] Pierced quite through his liver and bowels (see xx. 10). So R. Johannes, in the Gemara Sanhedrin, cap. 6, sect. 7, saith the fifth rib is the place where the liver and the gall are seated. He died immediately upon the spot (as we speak), not being able to go so much as one step further. So dangerous it is to confide in a man's own natural strength, or to refuse offers of peace, or despise a flying enemy, as Pellicanus here observes. The old saying was, "If an enemy fly, make way for him."

As many as came to the place—stood still.] Ceased the pursuit: fearing perhaps the same fate; or that Asahel's body should be exposed to any indignity.

Ver. 24.] They were not so nimble as Asahel, and therefore could not overtake Abner: yet so furious, that the death of Asahel could not stop them till they came to this place.

Ver. 25.] Some of this tribe, of which Abner was, and who were valiant people, as I observed before, rallied, as we now speak; and stood in a body, as if they would renew the fight.

Ver. 26. Abner called to Joab.] Who was on the top of another hill (ver. 24).

Shall the sword devour for ever?] There ought to be a measure set to our anger: which ought to go down with the sun as the apostle speaks.

It will be bitterness in the latter end?] In civil wars, as Cicero speaks (in his fourth book of his familiar Epistles), all things are miserable, and nothing more miserable than victory itself: which makes the conqueror do many things against his will, to satisfy those by whom he conquers. Therefore he saith in another place, Extremum omnium malorum est belli

hadst spoken, surely then in the morning the people had gone up every one from following his brother.

28 So Joab blew a trumpet, and all the people stood still, and pursued after Israel no more, neither fought they any more.

29 And Abner and his men walked all that night through the plain, and passed over Jordan, and went through all Bithron, and they came to Mahanaim.

30 And Joab returned from following Abner :

civilis victoria; "victory in a civil war is the greatest of all evils." Such was this; as he puts him in mind in the next words, that they who killed one another were brethren. They were all descended from one common father: and all worshipped one and the same God.

Ver. 27.] He wishes he had been of this mind in the morning; for then there had been no fighting at all, if he had not desired it (ver. 14). So Dr. Lightfoot paraphrases this verse, "If thou hadst not said what thou didst in the morning (Let the young men arise, and play before us), surely the people had gone every one from his brother; and there had been never a blow struck, but that thou didst provoke it."

Ver. 28. *So Joab blew a trumpet,*] Caused a retreat to be sounded.

Neither fought they any more.] Neither at that time, nor any other.

Ver. 29.] They made all the haste they could home: being fearful to trust themselves near to the army that had beaten them. Some think by Bithron is meant

and when he had gathered all the people together, there lacked of David's servants nineteen men and Asahel.

31 But the servants of David had smitten of Benjamin, and of Abner's men, so that three hundred and threescore men died.

32 ¶ And they took up Asahel, and buried him in the sepulchre of his father, which was in Beth-lehem. And Joab and his men went all night, and they came to Hebron at break of day.

the mountain of Bethor, mentioned Cant. ii. 15.

Ver. 30. *Joab returned from following Abner;*] Returning from the pursuit, every one resorted to the company to which he belonged.

There lacked of David's servants nineteen men] This is an argument that the twelve men of Judah, who began the fight in a combat with as many of Benjamin, were not killed: for if they were, then there would have been no more than seven men killed in the battle: which is not probable.

Ver. 31.] This loss was not great in itself: for it is likely David had given order his men should be as sparing as they could, in killing their brethren; who were, he knew, to be his subjects.

Ver. 32.] I think Josephus takes this right: who saith, Joab and his men lodged all night in the place of battle, and buried their dead; and then next morning carried Asahel to be buried among his ancestors. Having buried Asahel, they marched all the next night towards Hebron. Where they gave David an account of all this action.

CHAPTER III.

1 *During the war David waxeth stronger. 2 Six sons were born to him in Hebron. 6 Abner, displeased with Ish-bosheth, 12 revolteth to David. 13 David requireth a condition to bring him his wife Michal. 17 Abner, having communed with the Israelites, is feasted by David, and dismissed. 22 Joab, returning from battle, is displeased with the king, and killeth Abner. 28 David curseth Joab, 31 and mourneth for Abner.*

1 Now there was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: but David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker.

2 ¶ And unto David were sons born in Hebron: and his firstborn was Amnon, of Ahinoam the Jezreelitess;

3 And his second, Chileab, of Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite; and the third, Absalom the son of Maacah the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur;

4 And the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; and the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital;

CHAP. III.

Ver. 1.] Their enmity continuing throughout the whole reign of Ish-bosheth, it is likely there were many bickerings and skirmishes between Israel and Judah: but no pitched battle that we read of. The contrary rather seems to be affirmed in the foregoing chapter, ver. 28. In all their rencounters (as we now speak) David had the better: and it is likely many of the Israelites fell off to him: which very much added to his strength, and weakened the house of Saul.

Ver. 2.] He had no children it seems during his exile: or, if he had, they were daughters. Ahinoam was his wife before Abigail, and brought forth his first-born son; who proved a great affliction to him.

Ver. 3. *Chileab, of Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite;*] Of whom we have no further account any where; only he is called Daniel in 1 Chron. iii. 1. And the Hebrew doctors give this reason of both

names: He called him, say they, when he was born, Daniel (which was his *fundamental*, that is, his primary name), because, said he, *God hath judged or vindicated me from Nabal*. And afterward he called him Chileab, as much as to say, *like to his father*: because in his countenance he resembled David. And this he did, for this reason, to silence the mockers of that age; who said Abigail had conceived by Nabal, whose son this was. For the confuting of which calumny, God was pleased to order that the fashion of his face should be perfectly like to David's.

Absalom the son of Maacah the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur;] We read of the Geshurites in the foregoing book (xxvii. 8), upon whom, it is there said, David made an inroad; and brought away their fair captive, a little before Saul's death. And when he came to Hebron, and she was sufficiently instructed and prepared to be a proselyte, he made her his wife. Thus the Jews tell the story: which doth not seem to be true, because it is said in that invasion he slew

5 And the sixth, Ithream, by Eglah David's wife. These were born to David in Hebron.

6 ¶ And it came to pass, while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, that Abner made himself strong for the house of Saul.

7 And Saul had a concubine, whose name was Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah: and *Ish-bosheth* said to Abner, Wherefore hast thou gone in unto my father's concubine?

8 Then was Abner very wroth for the words of *Ish-bosheth*, and said, *Am I a dog's head*, which against Judah do shew kindness this day unto the house of Saul thy father, to his brethren, and to his friends, and have not delivered thee into the hand of David, that thou chargest me to day with a fault concerning this woman?

9 So do God to Abner, and more also, except,

as the Lord hath sworn to David, even so I do to him;

10 To translate the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan even to Beersheba.

11 And he could not answer Abner a word again, because he feared him.

12 ¶ And Abner sent messengers to David on his behalf, saying, *Whose is the land?* saying also, *Make thy league with me, and, behold, my hand shall be with thee, to bring about all Israel unto thee.*

13 ¶ And he said, *Well; I will make a league with thee: but one thing I require of thee, that is, Thou shalt not see my face, except thou first bring Michal Saul's daughter, when thou comest to see my face.*

all the women. We must look therefore for other Geshurites, whom we find in the north, as the fore-named were in the south (see Deut. iii. 14; Josh. xii. 5). How David came by the daughter of the king of these people, it is not easy to tell. Perhaps he thought it policy to make a friend of the king of Geshur, who lay near to *Ish-bosheth*, and might be a curb to him, and give him a diversion, if he attempted any thing against Judah: and therefore married his daughter.

Ver. 4.] Of the former of these, we read in the beginning of the next book, how his ambition led him to destruction (as Absalom's did), but nothing of the other.

Ver. 5. *Ithream, by Eglah David's wife.*] This only being called his wife (though the rest were so likewise) hath led the Jews into an opinion, that Michal who was his first wife, is here called Eglah: because she was a lovely woman, in whom he much delighted, when he first married her. It is said, indeed, in vi. 23, *she had no child until the day of her death*: but the meaning of that is, she was barren after she had taunted David for dancing before the ark; not that she never had a child before that time.

These were born to David in Hebron.] During the six years and a half that he reigned there. I do not know what weight there is in the observation of Conradus Pellicanus on this place, but leave it to the judgment of the reader: God so dispensed things, that men in those days, of many wives, seldom produced many children, quasi natura reclamante rei indignitatem, as if nature abhorred the indignity of the thing, and approved the conjunction of one man with one woman. He did well to say *seldom*; for we read of one who had threescore and ten sons by many wives (viz. Gideon), though they came to nothing.

Ver. 6.] Went up and down through all the tribes of Israel, to strengthen his interest, and confirm them in their allegiance to *Ish-bosheth*; as the same Pellicanus expounds it.

Ver. 7. *Saul had a concubine.*] By whom he had two sons (xxi. 8). The Jews look upon it as a very great crime for any man, though never so great, to marry the widow of the king: for it was esteemed an affectation of the kingdom; as appears in the case of Adonijah. Therefore *Ish-bosheth* had reason to be angry with Abner, though he was so unseasonably.

Ver. 8.] Abner was grown so haughty, and thought his merit so great, that he thought he might do any thing without reprehension. He thought *Ish-bosheth* used him not as a captain of the host of Israel, but as

if he had been a keeper of dogs. So the word *head* signifies, as the Jews generally explain it. Rasi for instance; "I am treated as if I was a commander that hath only the custody of dogs." To the same purpose Kimchi; and R. Esaias more largely (as Borchart observes), "When I am lord of all Israel, thou hast cast contempt upon me, as if I was only set over a company of dogs." So the Syriac here translates *dog* in the plural: "captain of a pack of dogs." Which was a vile employment, because a dog is generally accounted the vilest animal (Hierozico. par. i. lib. ii. cap. 56). He insolently reckons up his great services to him and to his family, when he could have ruined him, if he had pleased, by making David king as he had done him. He upbraids him with ingratitude, in taking notice of such a small fault (as he accounted it) of lying with Rizpah. For, as Peter Martyr thinks, he did not intend to have her for his wife: but used her as his harlot.

Ver. 9.] These words show he knew very well God had unalterably resolved to bestow the kingdom of Israel upon David; and yet his ambition led him hitherto to oppose not only David, but the Lord himself.

Ver. 10.] A wonderful change! which the study of revenge wrought in him: that he who lately went about the country, confirming the Israelites in their opposition to David, now resolved to bring them all over to him. "Such is the genius of many great courtiers, who are irritated upon slight occasions: and rather rule over kings, than are ruled by them." They are the words of Conradus Pellicanus.

Ver. 11.] He was afraid to provoke him to a higher degree, by answering him again; and therefore now was silent when it was too late.

Ver. 12. *Abner sent messengers to David*] Having thus incensed his master, he thought it not safe to delay the execution of what he had threatened. Yet thought it neither safe nor prudent to go himself to David, until he tried his inclinations by messengers, whom he privately sent to treat with him.

Whose is the land?] This was as much as to say, that he owned him to be lord of all the country, by God's special gift.

Make thy league with me.] He desires all enmities might be forgotten, and that David would make a league of friendship with him: and then he undertook, having a great power over Israel, to make them all his subjects.

Ver. 13. *I will make a league with thee.*] He soon agreed to the motion; with which he could not but be well pleased. But some think he did ill, to make a league with such a wicked man; especially since he

14 And David sent messengers to Ish-bosheth Saul's son, saying, Deliver me my wife Michal, which I espoused to me for an hundred foreskins of the Philistines.

15 And Ish-bosheth sent, and took her from her husband, even from Phaltiel the son of Laish.

16 And her husband went with her along weeping behind her to Bahurim. Then said Abner unto him, Go, return. And he returned.

17 ¶ And Abner had communication with the

elders of Israel, saying, Ye sought for David in times past to be king over you :

18 Now then do it: for the LORD hath spoken of David, saying, By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies.

19 And Abner also spake in the ears of Benjamin: and Abner went also to speak in the ears of David in Hebron all that seemed good to Is-

did not inquire of God, whether he should do it or not. But this is more than any body can tell; for many things were done that are not recorded.

First bring Michal] This was a very reasonable condition, if Abner was able to effect it: both upon David's own account and hers: for she was his first and beloved wife: and she was by force given to another man: who could not lawfully enjoy her; David having given her no bill of divorce. And therefore Phalti, the Jews think, being a good man, never knew her (as I observed on the foregoing book, xxv. 44), so that she lived unhappy, in a double state of separation, from David and from her present husband. There was something of policy also in this demand; that he might ingratiate himself with the Israelites, by showing great love to the house of Saul.

Ver. 14. *David sent messengers to Ish-bosheth*] We do not read what answer Abner gave to David, when he required the forenamed condition of him. But it is probable he let David know, as the truth was, that it was not in his power to bring Michal without Ish-bosheth's consent, whose sister as well as subject she was: at least, it was not safe to attempt it; and therefore he advised him to send to her brother, who could not easily deny what he desired: which Abner also, it is likely, undertook to represent as a most just demand. This counsel of Abner David followed, and it had the success he wished.

Deliver me my wife Michal,] Whom he purchased of Saul with the hazard of his life.

Ver. 15. *Ish-bosheth sent, and took her from her husband.*] He is called "her husband," says the Gemara Sanhedrin (cap. 7, sect. 2), because he loved her with a conjugal affection: though he did not enjoy her. This was an honourable action of Ish-bosheth, to restore David his lawful wife: like to which Strigelius here notes in several great men. Particularly in the famous Scipio, who restored Allucius' wife to him, who had been taken by his soldiers; and Pausanias, general of the Lacedaemonians; who, after the fight at Platea, sent Coa, who was a captive, unto her relations.

Even from Phaltiel] Called Phalti in 1 Sam. xxv. 44. The word *el* is here added, say the Jews, because God interposed all the time he had her to keep them from sin. For he put a sword between Michal and him when he went to bed to her, signifying he should be cut off if he lay with her. Kimchi and Ralbag follow this fancy of the Talmudists: but others dislike it, and think that David had given her a bill of divorce. Unto which he being compelled by Saul's violence, and not doing it willingly, they think it was null; and that David might lawfully take her again, though Phalti had enjoyed her. But Aharbinel confutes both these opinions, and thinks that Saul was not so impious as to take a wife from her husband, and give her to another: nor David in such need of a wife as to send for Michal, if she had lived in wedlock with another man. And therefore he observes, that Saul is not said (in 1 Sam. xxv. 44), to give her to wife unto Phalti, but only to give her; that is, to commit her to

his care and custody in the absence of her husband, that she might live virtuously, and not follow after David. For he supposes Phalti to have been an old, grave, and pious man, who might be trusted with her as he was with the children of Merab, the other daughter of Saul, who sent them to Phalti to be educated, and to bear Michal company. As for his being called *her husband* (in this verse and the next), he observes the word is not *baalah*, but only *ishah*, which is used, he saith, for one that is keeper and overseer of another person.

Ver. 16. *Her husband went with her along weeping*] Being very loath to part with her company, which was delightful to him.

Return.] Abner intended to have the honour of presenting her unto the king: and would not have the old man appear to disturb their meeting with his tears.

Ver. 17. *Abner*] Having seen David, and given him assurance of his fidelity, as David him of his friendship.

Had communication with the elders of Israel,] Went back to persuade all to do as he had done; and by bringing over the great men to David, he doubted not the multitude would follow.

Ye sought for David in times past to be king over you:] For after the slaughter of Goliath he was very gracious in the eyes of all the people, and was much beloved by them (1 Sam. xviii. 5, 16). And when he was forced to fly, a great many of Israel came over to him while he dwelt in Ziklag: of the Benjamites, 1 Chron. xii. 2, &c. and the Gadites, ver. 8, 9, &c. and the Manassites, ver. 19, &c. and after he came to Hebron more went over to him out of all the tribes of Israel, ver. 23, and the following part of that chapter. And it is highly probable, that as soon as Saul and Jonathan were dead, they all generally inclined to make David their king; if Abner, by his great authority, had not set up one of the family of Saul.

Ver. 18. *Now then do it:*] Fulfill your own desires and intentions.

For the Lord hath spoken of David, &c.] We nowhere read these words recorded; but, it is likely, Samuel had often spoken them: if not at length, yet they are included in the words of God to Samuel; when he commanded him to anoint David king over Israel (1 Sam. x. 1, 12), for this was the intention of giving them a king, that he might fight their battles (1 Sam. viii. 29).

Ver. 19. *And Abner also spake in the ears of Benjamin:*] Where he had more interest than among the rest, being of that tribe: whom it was necessary to take some pains withal to gain their affection to David. Therefore he seems to have spoken, not only with their elders, but to have gone through the several families in the tribe: who were much devoted to the house of Saul, and had stuck close to it, and were the first that attempted any thing against David (ii. 15). He went and reported to David privately the sense of all the people. Particularly he related how all Benjamin stood affected to him; whom he brought over

rael, and that seemed good to the whole house of Benjamin.

20 So Abner came to David to Hebron, and twenty men with him. And David made Abner and the men that *were* with him a feast.

21 And Abner said unto David, I will arise and go, and will gather all Israel unto my lord the king, that they may make a league with thee, and that thou mayest reign over all that thine heart desireth. And David sent Abner away; and he went in peace.

22 ¶ And, behold, the servants of David and Joab came from *pursuing* a troop, and brought in a great spoil with them: but Abner *was* not with David in Hebron; for he had sent him away, and he was gone in peace.

23 When Joab and all the host that *was* with him were come, they told Joab, saying, Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he hath sent him away, and he is gone in peace.

24 Then Joab came to the king, and said, What hast thou done? behold, Abner came unto

thee; why *is* it *that* thou hast sent him away, and he is quite gone?

25 Thou knowest Abner the son of Ner, that he came to deceive thee, and to know thy going out and thy coming in, and to know all that thou doest.

26 And when Joab was come out from David, he sent messengers after Abner, which brought him again from the well of Sirah: but David knew *it* not.

27 And when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him quietly, and smote him there under the fifth rib, that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother.

28 ¶ And afterward when David heard *it*, he said, I and my kingdom *are* guiltless before the Lord for ever from the blood of Abner the son of Ner:

29 Let it rest on the head of Joab, and on all his father's house; and let there not fail from the house of Joab one that hath an issue, or that is

so effectually, that they never forsook the house of David when all the rest of the tribes did.

Ver. 20. *Abner came to David*] Now he appeared publicly, and declared himself for David.

David made Abner—a feast.] Not merely as a token of kindness, but to make a league with him (as he had desired, and David promised, ver. 12, 13). Into which it had been an ancient custom to enter by eating and drinking together, Gen. xxvi. 30, xxxi. 44, and other places.

Ver. 21. *I will arise and go, and will gather all Israel*] He intended to bring all the chief men of Israel to own him for their king, as he had done; and promise to be his faithful subjects; which he knew he could effect, because they had already declared their mind in the private conferences he had with them (ver. 17, &c.).

That thou mayest reign over all that thine heart desireth.] That is, over all the tribes of Israel. They parted as good friends do, with wishes of all happiness on both sides.

Ver. 22.] In those times of distraction between Judah and Israel, we may well think their neighbours, who were enemies to both, the Philistines, Edomites, Moabites, and others, made many inroads upon the country to get spoil. When Joab and the great men about David watched, and at this time had overtaken them in their return home, and recovered a great booty from them. Though Abner was not there when Joab returned victorious, yet he seems to be but just gone a little way out of the city (ver. 26).

Ver. 23. *When Joab and all the host*] That is, the captains of the host, or principal officers, were come to give an account of their success. Some officious courtiers informed him of what had passed in his absence: as it is likely they were wont to do of all that the king did. For he that commanded all the forces, had in effect every body else at his command.

Ver. 21.] He chides the king, as if he did not understand his own interest; but was to be taught by him. Which high presumption he was constrained to endure, because of his great power with the military men.

Ver. 25.] It is likely that Joab himself did not believe, that Abner came with a design only to learn how David's affairs stood, and to make his advantage of it: but he would have David believe so, that he

might have the better colour for his wicked design of despatching Abner.

Ver. 26. *When Joab was come out*] He seems to have gone out in a huff: not staying for an answer.

He sent messengers after Abner.] In the king's name, I suppose, as if he had something further to communicate to him: for otherwise it is not credible that Abner would have returned.

Well of Sirah.] It is not certain where this well was: but it is probable not far from Hebron. Josephus saith, twenty furlongs distant from thence.

But David knew it not.] Gave him no such order as he pretended.

Ver. 27. *When Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab*] Who waited for him at the entrance of the city.

Took him aside in the gate] Which being a public place, where men met to do business, and where the courts of judgment sat, it made Abner suspect no danger.

To speak with him quietly,] Especially since he took him by the hand in a friendly manner, to have some discourse with him.

He died.] Immediately, without speaking a word (see the foregoing chapter, ver. 23).

For the blood of Asahel his brother.] This was one reason; but the chief was, his fear that Abner would overthrow him, if he brought all Israel to submit to David: being a man longer versed in military affairs than himself; and who had governed Israel in the time of Saul's distraction, and since Ish-bosheth was made king by him. So Josephus: He was afraid lest Abner should receive from David, *πρωτὴν τράπεζαν*, "the highest place above himself." Upon which he makes this reflection, *ὁράσι περιχαρῆς*, &c. "What will not men dare to do, who are covetous, ambitious, and will be inferior to none, for to obtain what they desire? They will commit a thousand crimes; and rather than lose what they have got, they will not fear to commit greater wickedness."

Ver. 28.] He lifted up his hands to God (as Josephus explains it), and with a loud voice cried out publicly, that God knew he was innocent in this matter; and therefore trusted he would not let him and his kingdom suffer for it.

Ver. 29. *Let it rest on the head of Joab.*] The guilt and punishment lie upon him; who was the sole committer of this murder.

On all his father's house;] His indignation at the

a leper, or that leaneth on a staff, or that falleth on the sword, or that lacketh bread.

30 So Joab and Abishai his brother slew Abner, because he had slain their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle.

31 ¶ And David said to Joab, and to all the people that *were* with him, Rend your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner. And king David *himself* followed the bier.

32 And they buried Abner in Hebron: and the king lifted up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner; and all the people wept.

fact seems to have transported him too far; making him wish all Joab's family might suffer for it; which was against the law of God (Deut. xxiv. 16), that children should not suffer for their father's sin. It may be looked upon, therefore, as a prophetic prediction, rather than as a private imprecation: or as words spoken in a great passion; which made him think the punishment could not be too sore, or too lasting, for so horrid a crime. In the guilt of which Joab endeavoured to involve the king, by sending for Abner back in the king's name (as Josephus takes it), and so might be thought to have killed him by his order.

An issue,] Which was such a very noisome disease, that, by the law of the Jews, it made the very bed on which a man, that had it, lay, or the seat on which he sat, unclean. In short, he was no less abominable among them than a menstruous woman (see Lev. xv.).

A leper,] How filthy he was accounted, see Lev. xiii. where by the law he was secluded from all society.

Leaneth on a staff,] By reason of some great weakness, or lameness; having the gout, as Pellicanus takes it.

Falleth on the sword,] This, in our language, signifies "that maketh away with himself."

Lacketh bread,] Is a beggar, and ready to starve.

Ver. 30.] It seems Abishai was near at hand, ready to assist in the murder; if there had been any need of his help.

Ver. 31. *David said*] To the whole court.

Rend your clothes, &c.] These were all outward expressions of very great sorrow; which Joab himself was forced to make a show of.

David himself followed the bier,] Was the chief mourner. In which the Jews think David's passion made him again exceed his bounds; for Maimonides saith, it was not lawful, by their constitutions, for a king to accompany a dead corpse to the grave: but he ought to mourn at home. This is their doctrine in Sanhedrin, cap. 2, sect. 13, and the Gemara there, cap. 2, n. 5 (see Cocceius' Annotations). But a famous writer among them (Mikotzi) saith it was indifferent: the king might do as David did, if he pleased; for which he quotes R. Jehuda. Therefore, though perhaps it was not commonly done, yet David, to purge himself from all suspicion of this crime, and to show his extreme great grief for it, thought fit to do Abner this public honour (see Guill. Schickardus, in his Jus Regium, cap. 4, Theor. 13). The word we here translate *the bier*, is, in the original, *the bed*: on which persons of quality were wont to be carried forth to their graves, as ordinary people were upon that which we call a *bier*. And kings were sometimes carried out upon beds very richly adorned; as Josephus tells us Herod was, in the latter end of his first book of his Jewish Wars, *Κλίνη μὲν ἄοζύρουτος*, &c. "The bed was all gilded, set with precious stones, and a purple cover curiously wrought," &c. It is

33 And the king lamented over Abner, and said, Died Abner as a fool dieth?

34 Thy hands *were* not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters: as a man falleth before wicked men, so fellest thou. And all the people wept again over him.

35 And when all the people came to cause David to eat meat while it was yet day, David sware, saying, So do God to me, and more also, if I taste bread, or ought else, till the sun be down.

but a fancy that they were wont to follow the *bier*, and not to go before it; to signify that they looked upon their dead friends not as lost, but only gone before them, "*Premissi, non amissi*," as Seneca speaks.

Ver. 32.] By this it appears he was buried in pomp, and with a long train of people attending his corpse, as there did the widow's son in Luke vii. 14. When they came to the grave, and laid the corpse there, it was the custom to make great and loud lamentations; which are sometimes called *howlings* in the prophetic language. And commonly before the word *weeping*, there is mention in Scripture of *lifting up the voice* in doleful cries. This is as ancient as Abraham's time (Gen. xxi. 16); and we find Joseph weeping so loud, upon a different occasion, that all the house of Pharaoh heard him (Gen. xlv. 2, 14, 15). The forms of lamentation are noted by the prophets (Jer. xxii. 18; Micah v. 16).

Ver. 33.] Josephus looks upon what follows as a kind of epitaph upon Abner, whom David buried magnificently, as he speaks, *θάλας δ' αὐτὸν μεγαλοπρεπῶς καὶ πλοταφίως ἐνταφιάμενος ἔδρηνος*, &c. By a *fool* in Scripture is often meant a wicked man, a malefactor; and so the sense, according to the translation, is, Did he die by the hand of justice, for some notorious crime committed by him? Or, Did he die by his own folly? No such matter. But the words may be translated out of the Hebrew, "How like a fool died Abner?" Or, "Should Abner have died like a fool?" That is, what a pity is it, that such a valiant man should die on this fashion! By treachery, without any power to defend himself.

Ver. 31. *Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters.*] He was not a prisoner, but had both hands and feet at liberty, and yet could make no use of them for his own preservation. Victorinus Strigelius thinks that David, in these words, distinguishes him from those criminals, whose hands being tied behind them, are carried to execution; and from those idle soldiers, who, being taken captive in war, have fetters clapped upon their legs, to keep them from running away. He was none of these; neither a notorious offender, nor a coward: but perfidiously murdered by one in seeming friendship with him. But the plain meaning seems to be, that if his enemy had set upon him openly, he had been able to make his part good with him.

As a man falleth before wicked men,] That is, before a secret murderer. Upon this speech of the king, which was mournfully spoken, they were so affected, that it drew tears more plentifully from them.

Ver. 35.] This was a custom among the Hebrews, whose friends were wont to come, after the funeral was over, to comfort those who had buried their dead, and send in provisions to make a feast. It being supposed, that they themselves were so sorrowful, as not to be able to think of their necessary food (see Jer. xvi. 5, 7, 8; Ezek. xxiv. 17; and Grotius upon that place). David resolved to keep a strict and rigid fast,

36 And all the people took notice of it, and it pleased them : as whatsoever the king did pleased all the people.

37 For all the people and all Israel understood that day that it was not of the king to slay Abner the son of Ner.

38 And the king said unto his servants, Know

which did not end till the sun was set. Hence it appears that they buried their dead in the day-time.

Ver. 36. *Took notice of it.*] Of his great grief.

It pleased them.] They were pleased with the honour he had done this great man : whereby he so ingratiated himself with the people, that they were disposed to put a kind construction upon all his actions, as wise and well becoming him.

Ver. 37. *For all the people.*] Of Judah, or all those that were about the king.

It was not of the king to slay Abner.] That he neither ordered it, nor consented to it, nor any way approved it, but was heartily grieved for his death.

Ver. 38. *The king said unto his servants.*] Who, perhaps, were not sensible enough of this loss ; or thought he bewailed it too much. He bids them consider his birth, and his power, authority, and valour, with all his other excellent qualities : and they would not think it strange that he buried him with so much pomp, and mourned so heavily for him.

Ver. 39. *I am this day weak.*] In the Hebrew it is *tender* ; that is, his kingdom was young (as we speak), and not settled and confirmed.

Though anointed king.] Or, as the words may be translated, "and anointed king." That is, not born to a kingdom, but newly called to it, without any hereditary right to the authority ; which made it more slender, than if it had been of long standing. This seems to have been the reason why he did not punish

ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel ?

39 And I am this day weak, though anointed king ; and these men the sons of Zeruiah be too hard for me : the Lord shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness.

Joab for this murder, because he himself was not well established. He had also been very faithful, and stuck close to him in his adversity ; and had a mighty power among the military men (as I said before), and was an excellent soldier himself ; which made him very necessary to David in a time of civil war and discord between Judah and Israel. Therefore prudence made him defer his punishment till a better opportunity. As God himself ordinarily doth not call men to an account immediately for their sins, but takes a time to do it more severely, than if it were done presently.

These men the sons of Zeruiah be too hard for me.] He and his brother had got such an interest in the soldiery, and among the people both in the court and country, that he knew not how to deal with them. Yet he not only sufficiently showed that he detested their actions, but that he did not stand in awe of them. For he commanded Joab to attend Abner's funeral, with his clothes rent, and in sackcloth : and to his face commended Abner highly, and condemned his murder of him (ver. 31, 33, 34), which was a great mortification to him ; and a kind of penance which he made him do for his crime.

The Lord shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness.] He was confident God would punish him as he deserved, if he could not do it himself. And this may be looked upon as a prayer, that God would not suffer him to escape his vengeance.

CHAPTER IV.

1 The Israelites being troubled at the death of Abner, 2 Baanah and Rechab slay Ish-bosheth, and bring his head to Hebron. 9 David causeth them to be slain, and Ish-bosheth's head to be buried.

I AND when Saul's son heard that Abner was dead in Hebron, his hands were feeble, and all the Israelites were troubled.

2 And Saul's son had two men that were captains of bands : the name of the one was Baanah, and the name of the other Rechab, the sons of

Rimmon a Beerothite, of the children of Benjamin : (for Beroth also was reckoned to Benjamin :

3 And the Beerothites fled to Gittaim, and were sojourners there until this day.)

4 And Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son that was

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 1. *When Saul's son heard that Abner was dead in Hebron, his hands were feeble.*] Having lost his supporter and defender ; and hearing he was gone over to David, as appeared by his dying in Hebron.

All the Israelites were troubled.] Because by his death the treaty with David was broken off ; or there was none to manage it with such authority and prudence as Abner had : and they foresaw some great change (which they knew not how it would end) by the loss of this great man. For so Plato observes, from long experience, Ὅταν μὲν κακῶς πράττει πάλιν, ἐξήλα τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς ἀνδρας ἐκ ταύτης τῆς πόλεως ὁ θεός : "When any calamity is to befall a city, God is wont to take away excellent men out of that city."

Ver. 2. *Captains of bands.*] Captains, perhaps, of two companies of guards about the king.

Of the children of Benjamin.] The king's own tribe, which made him repose the greatest trust and confidence in them.

For Beeroth also was reckoned to Benjamin.] Though it was now in the hand of the Philistines, yet it belonged to the tribe of Benjamin (Josh. xviii. 25).

Ver. 3. *The Beerothites fled to Gittaim.*] When Saul was slain, several Israelites left their cities and fled, and the Philistines took possession of them ; among which, this city, it seems, was one forsaken by its inhabitants (1 Sam. xxxi. 7). There was a place called Gittaim, in the same tribe of Benjamin (Nah. xi. 53). But it is not likely that was the place here mentioned : for the Beerothites would, in all probability, fly further off from the Philistines.

Were sojourners there until this day.] When this book was written, they were not returned to their own country : being commodiously settled, I suppose, in the other place. Why this is here related, it is hard to say : perhaps it was to show that these were two soldiers of fortune (as we now speak), whose necessity forced them to seek for a support ; which they met withal at the court of Ish-bosheth, where they came to preferment.

lame of his feet. He was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel, and his nurse took him up, and fled: and it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth.

5 And the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, went, and came about the heat of the day to the house of Ish-bosheth, who lay on a bed at noon.

6 And they came thither into the midst of the house, as though they would have fetched wheat; and they smote him under the fifth rib: and Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped.

7 For when they came into the house, he lay on his bed in his bedchamber, and they smote him, and slew him, and beheaded him, and took his head, and gat them away through the plain all night.

8 And they brought the head of Ish-bosheth unto David to Hebron, and said unto the king, Behold the head of Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul

thy enemy, which sought thy life; and the Lord hath avenged my lord the king this day of Saul, and of his seed.

9 ¶ And David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, and said unto them, As the Lord liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity,

10 When one told me, saying, Behold, Saul is dead, thinking to have brought good tidings, I took hold of him and slew him in Ziklag, who thought that I would have given him a reward for his tidings:

11 How much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house upon his bed? shall I not therefore now require his blood of your hand, and take you away from the earth?

12 And David commanded his young men, and they slew them, and cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged them up over the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-bosheth, and buried it in the sepulchre of Abner in Hebron.

Ver. 4. *When the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan*] That is, the tidings of their death mentioned I Sam. xxxi.

As she made haste to flee,] Being in a very great fright.

He fell and became lame.] This seems to be related to show what it was that emboldened these captains to do that follows: because he who was the next avenger of blood was very young; and besides was lame and unable to pursue them.

Ver. 5.] As the manner was, and still continues, in hot countries.

Ver. 6. *Fetched wheat;*] In the Hebrew, "carrying wheat." Which they either brought into the king's granaries, for the use of his household, or carried forth for the supply of their soldiers, who were maintained at the king's charge.

They smote him under the fifth rib.] They gave him a mortal wound, and nobody suspecting them, they easily made their escape.

Ver. 7. *He lay on his bed in his bedchamber,*] In a private room; into which he was wont to retire from company, when he had a mind to repose himself. The privacy of the place gave them the opportunity to do all this without discovery.

And gat them away through the plain all night.] From Mahanaim to Hebron it was, for the most part, a flat country, till they came to ascend the mountain, on whose side Hebron stood.

Ver. 8.] For they were all now extinguished, except his grandson Mephibosheth, who was of no account because of his lameness.

Ver. 9.] One of them only spake to the king, but related what they both had done, and therefore he directed his speech to them both. Together with his

thankful acknowledgment of God's care of him hitherto, in all his straits, he suggests to them that he needed not the help of such men as they, for his future preservation and preferment by wicked acts.

Ver. 10.] He put them in mind of the story of the Amalekite (ch. i. of this book), which they could not but have heard, and thereby might have learnt what reception they were likely to find with David.

Ver. 11. *A righteous person*] For so Ish-bosheth was, in respect of them: to whom he had done no wrong; but preferred them to a place of trust and honour.

In his own house upon his bed?] This aggravated their crime; and made it vastly different from that of the Amalekite.

Shall I not—take you away from the earth?] As persons unworthy to live; who had slain their master, and he a king, in his own house, when he was taking his repose under their safeguard.

Ver. 12. *David commanded his young men,*] Who were of his guard; ready at hand to execute his commands.

Cut off their hands and their feet,] By David's order no doubt; they having slain their master with their hands, and made their escape from justice with their feet.

Hanged them up] Exposed them in an open, public place.

They took the head of Ish-bosheth, and buried it in the sepulchre of Abner] It seems David had done Abner the honour to make him a particular sepulchre: where he privately interred the head of Ish-bosheth. Whose body, no question, was buried by the Israelites, with such honours as were suitable to his dignity.

CHAPTER V.

1 *The tribes come to Hebron to anoint David over Israel.* 4 *David's age.* 6 *He taking Zion from the Jebusites dwelleth in it.* 11 *Hiram sendeth to David.* 13 *Eleven sons are born to him in Jerusalem.* 17 *David, directed by God, smiteth the Philistines at Baal-perazim,* 22 *And again at the mulberry trees.*

1 THEN came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh.

2 Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the LORD said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel.

3 So all the elders of Israel came to the king

to Hebron; and king David made a league with them in Hebron before the LORD: and they anointed David king over Israel.

4 ¶ David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years.

5 In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months: and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah.

6 ¶ And the king and his men went to Jeru-

CHAP. V.

Ver. 1. *Then came all the tribes of Israel*] That is, ambassadors were sent from every tribe, by a common agreement among them.

We are thy bone and thy flesh.] They were not overcome by the arms, but by the piety and justice of David, to acknowledge him their king: for which they gave several reasons. The first is general; that he was qualified by the law of God (Deut. xvii. 15), which required they should choose one of their brethren, and not a stranger. Now he was of the same blood with them, being descended from the same common father Israel.

Ver. 2. *Thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel:*] They were induced also by his valour and conduct, which he had shown, they well remembered, in the reign of Saul: when he was so successful in many expeditions, that he became the darling of all the people (1 Sam. xviii. 5, 15, 16, 30).

Thou shalt feed my people Israel.] This was the chiefest argument of all; that God they knew had designed him long ago to be their king: having said by the prophet Samuel, that he should feed, that is, rule and govern them, and fight their battles. We do not read these words any where recorded before now! but Samuel having anointed him, no doubt frequently spake of his office, under the name of the *pastor of the people*.

And it is the first time we find a governor described by this name in Scripture: though much used afterward by the prophets, who speak in this language; particularly Ezek. xxxiv. 23, and many other places. * Whence our Lord Christ is called the "good Shepherd," and "the great Shepherd;" that is, ruler of his people: and both the Greeks and the Romans have borrowed this word, to express a supreme governor. And truly such rulers as take care of their people, as a shepherd doth of his flock, are Divine blessings: whom Isaiah calls "nursing fathers," xlix. 23. On the contrary, they who lay heavy burdens on their people, fleecing, or rather flaying them, by cruel oppressions, are called by the prophets "roaring lions, hungry bears, and devouring wolves," Ezek. xix. 2; xxii. 27; Nah. ii. 11, 12; Hab. i. 8; Zeph. iii. 3; Prov. xxvii. 15; "companions of thieves," Isa. i. 23; whales, dragons, or rather crocodiles, Ezek. xxix. 3; Ps. lxxv. 13, 14; leopards, Jer. v. 6, and such-like odious names.

Ver. 3. *So all the elders of Israel came to the king*] He gave the messengers such a kind reception, and so thankfully declared his acceptance of the offer they made him, that, upon their return with his answer, the elders of Israel came to wait upon him. By whom some understand the senators of the great Sanhedrin:

but that is a fancy which I have often confuted. The plain meaning is, that the chief persons of authority in every tribe, came in the name of the rest of that tribe, whom they represented.

David made a league with them] It is not said what the contents of this league or contract was. The Jews think it was principally, that there should be an act of oblivion of all the injuries which the people of Israel had done to Judah, or they to them, in the reign of Ish-bosheth. But this is too narrow a sense: it is more probable, that he assured them he would govern them justly and kindly, according to the law of God; and they promised to obey him sincerely and faithfully, according to the same law.

Before the Lord:] The ark of God's presence was not in Hebron; and therefore it is a question how it could be said, that he made a league *before the Lord*. But see what I have said of this, Judg. xx. 1.

They anointed David king over Israel.] They desired the high-priest to anoint him, whose office it was: and thereby expressed their consent he should reign over them. So Procopius Gazæus interprets these words (as he doth ii. 4), *Ierum suffragiis, &c.* All the tribes again chose him, by their votes, to be their king. He was anointed three times; first by Samuel, in his father's house (1 Sam. xvi. 13); then when the tribe of Judah owned him for their king (ch. ii. of this book, ver. 4); and now when all Israel did the same. For which Abarbanel gives this reason: "David's unction was repeated so often, that it might be the foundation, and root, and principle, of all his posterity;" who needed no unction, being anointed in him: unless there was any controversy about the succession.

Ver. 4.] It is uncertain how old he was when he was first anointed by Samuel; and how long after he came to the court of Saul; and how long he was in exile from it. About which men's opinions are very different: for some think, as the Jews do in Seder Olam Rabba, that he was near nine-and-twenty years old when Samuel first anointed him: and consequently but one year in exile. Others (which is the truer opinion) that he was twenty years old at his first unction, and so almost ten years in exile. But it is sufficient for us to know, what we are here told, that he was thirty years old at his second unction in Hebron, immediately after Saul's death.

Ver. 5.] By this it appears, that immediately after his third unction, he made his attempt upon Jerusalem, as it here follows, otherwise he could not have reigned there so long.

Ver. 6. *The king and his men went to Jerusalem*] His first warlike enterprise, after he was their king, was against Jerusalem, which he resolved to reduce out of the hands of the Jebusites; who hitherto pos-

saalem unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land: which spake unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither: thinking, David cannot come in hither.

7 Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion: the same is the city of David.

8 And David said on that day, Whosoever getteth up to the gutter, and smiteth the Jebusites, and the lame and the blind, that are hated of David's soul, he shall be chief and captain. Wherefore they said, The blind, and the lame shall not come into the house.

essed a noble part of it, viz. the fort of Zion, which they held, though the Israelites dwelt in the other part of the city.

The inhabitants of the land.] That is, of that part of the land (Josh. xv. 63; Judg. i. 21; xix. 10, 11).

Which spake unto David,] When he came to set down his army against the fortress.

Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither.] They imagined their fortress to be so impregnable, that by way of contempt and scorn they told him, the blind and the lame were able to defend it against him and all his forces. So Bochartus translates these words, non huc accedes, &c. "thou shalt not come up hither, but the blind and the lame will drive thee away;" i. e. the most feeble and cowardly among us. Which he thinks is so plain a sense, that he wonders men of great learning should seek for any other (lib. iv. Phaleg. cap. 36). But so it is, a great many, by "the blind and the lame," understand the images of their gods (particularly our learned Gregory hath a whole dissertation about it). As if they had said, Our gods, whom ye call blind and lame, that have eyes and see not, feet and walk not (as it is Ps. cxv.), they shall defend us: and you must overcome them before you overcome us. Luther himself thus explains the sense:—"These blind and lame (saith he) were the idols of the Jebusites; which, to irritate David, they set upon their walls as their patrons and defenders; and they did as good as say, thou dost not fight with us, but with our gods, who will easily repel thee." As for the fancy of R. Eliezer, in his Pirke, cap. 36, it is altogether groundless; which is, that when Abraham bought the burying-place in Machpelah of the children of Heth, he sealed a covenant with them, that when his seed should possess the land of Canaan (as they believed they would), they should not possess the city of Jebus. Which covenant they now engraved upon brazen statues, and set them upon their walls, saying, "Thou canst not enter here, unless thou break the oath of Abraham (see also Bartoloccius, in his Kirjath-sepher, par. ii. p. 89, &c.)."

Ver. 7.] Their taunts and jeers did not discourage David, but he assaulted the fort and took it, and made it his royal seat.

Ver. 8. *David said on that day,]* When the assault was made.

Whosoever getteth up to the gutter, and smiteth the Jebusites, &c.] i. e. "Cuts off their pipes of water," or their cisterns into which the water fell; for the Hebrew word *tzinnor*, which we translate *gutter*, is nowhere found but in this place, and in Ps. xlii. 7, and by St. Jerome is translated *fastula*. But I know not how we come to transpose the words, "he that smiteth the Jebusites," behind the other, which in the Hebrew are first. "He that smiteth the Jebusites, let him throw down into the ditch (which was by the

9 So David dwelt in the fort, and called it the city of David. And David built round about from Millo and inward.

10 And David went on, and grew great, and the Lord God of hosts was with him.

11 ¶ And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons: and they built David an house.

12 And David perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake.

13 ¶ And David took him more concubines and wives out of Jerusalem, after he was come

wall) both the blind and the lame, which David extremely hates." Thus Bochart translates the words in the place above named, which, if it be admitted, there is no need to add those words (out of I Chron. xi. 6) to make out the sense, "he shall be chief and captain;" for the sense is complete without them.

Wherefore they said, The blind and the lame shall not come into the house.] Or, as it is in the margin, "Because they had said, even the blind and the lame, He shall not come into the house." That is, because they had taunted him with the blind and lame, as if they could defend the fort, and hinder him from coming into it; therefore he was highly provoked to wish they might be thrown down headlong from their walls into the ditch. And then by the *house* is meant, neither the house of David, nor the house of the Lord (as many take it), but that very fort wherein the Jebusites had dwelt; from which hereafter they were excluded. And indeed it is a very large word in the Hebrew, signifying any place. If we could admit the fancy of R. Eliezer, that the Jebusites engraved the oath of Abraham upon brazen statues, whereby they pretended that fort was secured to them and their posterity, such an abominable forgery must needs highly incense David, whose soul hated such impudent frauds.

Ver. 9.] The fort was not wide enough to contain the whole court and all his guards, and others that had occasion to come hither: and therefore he built round about it from Millo. Which some take for that low place which lay between the fort and the city, which was now filled with people, and thence called Millo.

Ver. 10.] He proceeded to enlarge his dominions, as well as his royal city. And this was the cause of his great prosperity, that God, who commands all the armies of heaven and earth, directed and blessed him in all his enterprises.

Ver. 11. *Hiram—sent messengers]* To compliment him upon his succession to the throne, and taking Jerusalem. Which was a great honour; for Hiram was a potent prince, and yet courted David's friendship, because he saw how prosperous he was. And this friendship continued all David's days, unto the reign of Solomon. When his son, of the same name, expressed the same affection to him that his father had done to David. Hearing David intended to settle in the fort he had taken, Hiram sent him both materials and artificers to build him a palace. For the Jews being given to feeding cattle, and husbandry, were not very skilful in manufactures.

Ver. 12. *David perceived that the Lord had established him king]* For he had both subdued his enemies, and raised him up friends. It is an excellent reflection which Conradus Pellicanus made long ago upon these words: "This is the greatest grace of a king, that he certainly believes himself to be made a king by God for the sake of the people; and let him

from Hebron: and there were yet sons and daughters born to David.

14 And these *be* the names of those that were born unto him in Jerusalem; Shammuah, and Shobab, and Nathan, and Solomon.

15 Ibhah also, and Elishua, and Nepheg, and Japhia,

16 And Elishama, and Eliada, and Eliphaet.

17 ¶ But when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines came up to seek David; and David heard of it, and went down to the hold.

18 The Philistines also came and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim.

19 And David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up to the Philistines? wilt thou de-

liver them into mine hand? And the LORD said unto David, Go up: for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thine hand.

20 And David came to Baal-perazim, and David smote them there, and said, the LORD hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, as the breach of waters. Therefore he called the name of the place Baal-perazim.

21 And there they left their images, and David and his men burned them.

22 ¶ And the Philistines came up yet again, and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim.

23 And when David enquired of the LORD, he said, Thou shalt not go up; but fetch a compass behind them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees.

often call to mind, the people were not created or ordained by God for the king."

Ver. 13. *David took him more concubines and wives*] The difference between a wife and a concubine, the Talmudists generally say, was, that the latter had neither dowry settled upon her, nor was taken with all the rites and solemnities of marriage: yet was a wife of a lower rank, as well as the former, which had both. See Selden, lib. De Successionibus, cap. 3, and what I have already noted, Gen. xxii. 24, and elsewhere. How many David had of both sorts, it is not certain: but we read of six *wives* he had before, iii. 2, &c. And the Jews, after their way, endeavour to prove from xi. 8, of this book, that he had eighteen in all: which number it was not lawful for the king to exceed, unless he divorced any of them, and took others in their room (see Schickard, De Jure Nepo. cap. 3, Theor. 9; and Grotius, De Jure Belli et Pacis, lib. ii. cap. 5, sect. 9, and my notes on Deut. xvii. 17).

There were yet sons and daughters born to David.] It was looked upon as a piece of political wisdom in princes to endeavour to have many children: that by matching them into many potent families, they might strengthen their interest, and have the more supporters of their authority.

Ver. 14.] These are the very same names with those in 1 Chron. iii. 5, only a little variation in the first.

Ver. 15, 16.] Here are only seven sons mentioned in these two verses, but in 1 Chron. iii. 8, &c., there are nine. Of which Kimchi gives this account; that here he mentions only the sons he had by his *wives*, but there are some added which he had by his *concubines*; which doth not well agree with what there follows (ver. 9).

Ver. 17.] So that now Israel and Judah were united under one head, they thought it behoved them to bestir themselves: whereas they seem to have been quiet while the war lasted between Israel and Judah in the time of Ish-bosheth, hoping they might destroy one another. The Philistines raised all the forces they were able, to find out David and fight him, before he was settled in his new kingdom. The friendship between him and king Achish was so great, that one would have thought they should have lived in peace. But either Achish was dead, or the lords of the Philistines, who were very powerful, overruled him, as they did when they forced him to send David out of their army (1 Sam. xxix. 6, &c.). Intelligence being brought him of their motions, he went from the fort of Zion to some other strong place below, where his army might conveniently have their rendezvous.

Ver. 18.] Which in Josh. xv. 8, we translate the

"valley of giants," lying westward of Jerusalem; which perhaps they thought to assault.

Ver. 19.] Though David went into a strong hold, he did not trust to that, nor intend merely to stand upon his defence; yet would not give them battle till he was encouraged by God to do it. A full assurance of victory took away all fear of their great numbers, which is expressed by their *spreading* themselves in the forenamed valley.

Ver. 20. *David came to Baal-perazim.*] For thither the Philistines marched from Rephaim, where they first pitched: as appears from 1 Chron. xiv. 11.

David smote them there.] Routed their army, and slew a great many of them in that place.

The Lord hath broken forth—as the breach of waters.] Overpowered and scattered them; as waters, when they make a breach in a bank, overflow and carry all before them.

Baal-perazim.] That it might put him and his posterity in mind of God's great power and goodness, which he showed in this place, where the Philistines were put into such a consternation, that they forgot, when they fled, to carry away their gods with them, as it here follows.

Ver. 21. *There they left their images.*] Which they had brought into the field with them, to be carried before their host, as a token of the presence of their gods with them. Thus we read in 2 Chron. xxv. 14, that the Edomites had their gods along with them when they fought with Amaziah. And perhaps they learnt this from the Israelites, who carried the ark (the symbol of God's presence) in their army, when they went to fight with these Philistines; who saw it, and took it, as the Israelites now did their images, 1 Sam. iv. 4, 5, &c. But behold here the difference between the ark and these images. For when the ark fell into the hands of the Philistines, it sorely plagued them, as we read in the foregoing book: but their images had no power to hurt the Israelites, nor secure themselves from being burnt by them, as it here follows.

David and his men burned them.] According to the command of God, Deut. vii. 5.

Ver. 22.] They saw that their all lay at stake, and therefore they mustered up their whole strength, and perhaps procured the assistance of other people, to try their fortune (as we now speak) in another battle. So Josephus relates, that the Syrians and Phœnicians joined them, and came up, *ἐπιτάξιον στρατῶν*, "with an army three times as big as the former."

Ver. 23. *David enquired of the Lord.*] Though he had been so successful, yet he would attempt nothing without God's direction; to whom he knew he owed the former victory.

24 And let it be, when thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself: for then shall the Lord go out before thee, to smite the host of the Philistines.

Thou shall not go up;] That is, not directly, to fight in a pitched battle, as they did before. So the following words explain it.

But fetch a compass behind them;] Where they suspected no danger.

Mulberry trees.] A place well known to David; who was taught by God himself not to expect victory always by main strength; but sometimes to make use of stratagems.

Ver. 24. *In the tops of the mulberry trees,*] In the Hebrew it is *beroshe*, which should not be rendered "in the tops" (for men do not walk on the tops of trees), but "in the beginnings:" in the very entrance of the place, where the mulberry trees were planted; where God intended to make a sound, as if a vast number of men were marching to fall upon the Philistines. There is no doubt but the Hebrew word

25 And David did so, as the Lord had commanded him; and smote the Philistines from Geba until thou come to Gazer.

roshe signifies not only the *head*, but the beginning of any thing. So Bochart observes in his *Phaleg*, lib. iii. cap. 22, as in Nah. iii. 10, *the top* (as we translate it) the head of every street, is the beginning of those streets. And Isa. li. 20, Jer. xxii. 6, Gilead is called "the head of Libanus," because Libanus begins where Gilead ends.

Bestir thyself;] Fall upon the Philistines.

Then shall the Lord go out before thee,] By making such a noise of a mighty host coming to assault them, that they should be amazed, and have no apprehension of David's army coming behind them.

Ver. 25.] He pursued them to the very confines of their own land; for Josephus saith concerning Gazer, *ἔδε ἱστὶν ὄρος αὐτῶν τῆς γαζαρᾶς*, "that it was the border of their country."

CHAPTER VI.

1 David fetcheth the ark from Kirjath-jearim on a new cart. 6 Uzzah is smitten at Perez-uzzah. 9 God blesseth Obed-edom for the ark. 12 David bringing the ark into Zion with sacrifices, danceth before it, for which Michal despiseth him. 17 He placeth it in a tabernacle with great joy and feasting. 20 Michal reproving David for his religious joy is childless to her death.

1 AGAIN, David gathered together all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand.

2 And David arose, and went with all the people that were with him from Baale of Judah, to

bring up from thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of the Lord of hosts that dwelleth between the cherubims.

3 And they set the ark of God upon a new

CHAP. VI.

Ver. 1.] Having defeated the Philistines, and enjoying some peace, he thought it a seasonable time to fetch up the ark, and settle it in an honourable place: and for that end summoned the principal persons in Israel to attend it. Or, as others will have it, the most mighty men in all Israel, to the number of thirty thousand; to be a guard to it, in case any of their enemies should attempt to disturb the solemnity he intended.

Ver. 2. *David—went with all the people*] Not only those thirty thousand, but a vast number of the common people, as we learn from 1 Chron. xiii. 2, 5.

Baale of Judah,] Which is the same with Kirjath-jearim, 1 Chron. xiii. 6, called Baalah, Josh. xv. 9, and Kirjath-baal, Josh. xv. 60, xviii. 14, and here *Baale of Judah*, because (as this place shows) it belonged to that tribe. But some think there is a great difficulty here, where it is said they went from *Baale*, when in 1 Chron. xiii. 6, it is said they went to *Baalah*. But there is no disagreement in these two places: for they must go to it, before they could come from it: and here he speaks of their motion from thence, after they had gone to it.

To bring up from thence the ark of God,] Where it had been a long time in the house of Abinadab, whose son was sanctified to attend it (see 1 Sam. vii. 1).

Whose name is called by the name of the Lord of hosts] Or, "because of which the name is proclaimed, the name of the Lord of hosts." For by reason of the mighty miracles which were done before the ark, the name of the Lord was highly extolled and magnified, not only among the Israelites, but the Philistines. And by this, saith Abarinel, it was made known,

that God dwelt among the Israelites: so that not only the Philistines were affrighted when this ark of God's presence came among them (1 Sam. iv. 7, 8), but the men of Beth-shemesh also (vi. 20).

That dwelleth between the Cherubims.] The learned Lud. De Dieu thinks the most simple and genuine construction of all these words to be, by referring the word *asher* (which) not to the ark, but unto God, and translating them thus: "who is called the name, the name of the Lord of hosts, sitting on the cherubims, upon it." Which, saith he, is an egregious commendation of the ark, that it is the ark of that God, who, being incomprehensible and unbounded in his essence, is called absolutely the name (see Lev. xxiv. 11, 16), even the name of the Lord of hosts, who sitteth on the cherubims over the ark.

Ver. 3. *They set the ark of God upon a new cart,*] Which ought to have been carried upon the shoulders of the Kohathites (Numb. vii. 9); for which reason no wagons were allowed to them, as there were to the rest of the Levites, to carry several parts of the tabernacle. And so David himself saith afterward it ought to be carried, 1 Chron. xv. 2, 15. And so, after the following miscarriage, it is plain from the thirteenth verse of this chapter it was so carried. How they came to forget themselves now, so as to put it upon a cart, one can but conjecture. They seem to have imitated the custom of other nations, who were wont to carry their mysteries in a chest upon a cart, drawn by oxen, or kine, as the Philistines did the ark itself (1 Sam. vi. 7, 8). Who not being punished for putting it upon a new cart, the Israelites followed their example the more securely. And, that they were wont also to carry their mysteries in a great deal of pomp (as David here did, ver. 5) is manifest from abundance of authors.

cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that was in Gibeah: and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drave the new cart.

4 And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab which was at Gibeah: accompanying the ark of God: and Ahio went before the ark.

5 And David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord on all manner of instruments made of fir wood, even on harps, and on psalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals.

6 ¶ And when they came to Nachon's threshing-floor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it.

Sanchoniathon mentions an image in a shrine, in Phœnicia, drawn after the same manner; in Eusebius's Prepar. Evangel. lib. i. cap. 15 (see our very learned Dr. Spencer, p. 816). But that they learnt this from the Jews, not the Jews from them, seems to me most probable: though I can give no account how they came to put the ark now upon a new cart, unless it were in imitation of the Philistines.

In Gibeah:] Or, on the hill, as we read 1 Sam. vii. 1.

Uzzah and Ahio—*drave the new cart.*] It seems Eleazar (who was sanctified to take care of the ark, as we read in the above-named place) was dead, or stayed at home to look after his father, who was now grown aged: so these two took upon them to be the *bubuki* (as Bochart calls them) who drave the oxen.

Ver. 4.] That is, when it was brought out of his house, the people flocked together to attend it. Ahio led the oxen, I suppose; and Uzzah went behind the cart, to take care the ark fell not out.

Ver. 5. *Played before the Lord*] Who was present where the ark was.

Of all manner of instruments made of fir wood.] Where Rasi notes, that these words *beal atze berashim*, do not signify any particular instrument, but (as we translate it) the wood of which the following instruments are made; viz. either fir or box. As for the instruments themselves, it will be to no purpose to describe them. The learned reader may see an account of every one of them, in Bartoloccius's Kirath-sepher, tom. ii. p. 190. &c.

Ver. 6. *Nachon's threshing-floor.*] It is commonly thought that Nachon was the name of a man: but Bochartus thinks it rather the name of a place; so called by anticipation, for the stroke upon Uzzah. For *nacha* signifies to smite, and *Nachon* signifies percussion; so this floor was called ever after "the floor of percussion; because God smote Uzzah in this place. And accordingly in 1 Chron. xiii. 9, it is called the floor of Chidon; which is the very same: for *Chid* signifies destruction.

The oxen shook it.] There is no greater difference among interpreters about the signification of any word, than this word *shaktu*, which we translate *shook it*. That which is nearest to the truth, Bochartus thinks, is our marginal translation, *they stumbled*. Yet this is mere guessing, for it hath no foundation either in the Hebrew or the neighbouring languages. But from the Arabic he takes this to be the sense; that the oxen, coming into a dirty place, stuck in the mire; and could not get out their feet: which Uzzah seeing, and fearing the king and the people, by this accident, might be stopped too long in their procession, "took hold of the ark:" intending, perhaps, to carry it, together with his brethren, to Mount Zion, which was not far off: but this should

7 And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God.

8 And David was displeased, because the Lord had made a breach upon Uzzah: and he called the name of the place Perez-uzzah to this day.

9 And David was afraid of the Lord that day, and said, How shall the ark of the Lord come to me?

10 So David would not remove the ark of the Lord unto him into the city of David: but David carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite.

11 And the ark of the Lord continued in the

have been done at first; and because he did it not, he was punished by God.

Ver. 7. *God smote him there for his error.*] Or, "for his rashness," in touching the ark: some think it was because he was not a Levite, and therefore should not have touched it. But it is pretty plain that he was; being the brother of Eleazar, who was consecrated to look after the ark: which was the office of a Levite (1 Sam. vii. 1). But being a Levite, he was guilty of a double error: first, in not carrying the ark upon his shoulders, together with his brethren; and secondly, in touching it; which he ought not so much as to have seen: but it being covered by the priests, the Levites were to take hold of the staves, and carry it (Numb. iv. 15).

He died by the ark of God.] Or, "before the Lord," as it is expressed 1 Chron. xiii. 10, because the ark was the symbol of God's special presence. Some think he was suddenly choked; others that his arm and his shoulder, upon which he should have carried the ark, were dried up; others that he was blasted with lightning. But all these, and the like conjectures, are uncertain: it is enough to know, that he died suddenly, not from any natural cause, but struck by the hand of God. See Bochartus, in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 13, who truly observes, that though his intention, perhaps, was good, yet that would not excuse an offence against the express law of God. Abarinel also adds this as a cause of his punishment, that he wanted faith in God: who would not have suffered his ark to fall into the dirt; but supported it himself, without Uzzah's help.

Ver. 8. *David was displeased.*] He took it very heavily: and was angry (as the word signifies), that there was any cause for such a breach; that is, such a destruction. For it detracted much from his authority and esteem, to have such an accident in the beginning of his reign, and at such a solemnity of great joy: which was hereby disturbed and interrupted. Perhaps he was troubled, being afraid that he also might suffer, for taking no better care about the carrying of the ark.

Perez-uzzah] In memory of this dreadful stroke: whereby the Levites and all others might be admonished of their duty.

Ver. 9.] By this it appears he had some fear, that he himself was in danger: and therefore durst not bring the ark into his city. Either thinking, in great humility, that he was unworthy to have it so near him: or that he did not sufficiently understand how to treat it. Which he understood better afterward, as we learn from 1 Chron. xv. 2, 13—15.

Ver. 10.] He is not called a Gittite from his being born or dwelling in Gath (which was a city of the Philistines), but from Gath-rimmon, a Levitical city (Josh. xxi. 24, 25). For it is certain Obad-edom was a Levite (1 Chron. xv. 18, 21, 24; xvi. 5), who,

house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months: and the LORD blessed Obed-edom, and all his household.

12 ¶ And it was told king David, saying, The LORD hath blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that *pertaineth* unto him, because of the ark of God. So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David with gladness.

13 And it was so, that when they that bare the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fallings.

14 And David danced before the LORD with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod.

15 So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet.

16 And as the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, Michai Saul's daughter looked through a window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart.

17 ¶ And they brought in the ark of the LORD, and set it in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it: and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD.

18 And as soon as David had made an end of offering burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts.

19 And he dealt among all the people, *even* among the whole multitude of Israel, as well to the women as men, to every one a cake of bread, and a good piece of *flesh*, and a flagon of *wine*,

I suppose, was willing to entertain the ark: resolving to treat it with such reverence, that he might not offend the Divine Majesty.

Ver. 11. *Three months.*] A short time, in comparison with that which it continued at Kirjath-jearim. But all this time it was without the tabernacle. Which from Gilgal being removed to Shiloh, after the death of Eli, was carried to Nob; and after the death of Samuel, to Gibeon: where it remained till Solomon's temple was built, and then carried thither, as we read 1 Chron. xvi. 39, and 2 Chron. i. 3.

The LORD blessed Obed-edom, and his household.] Made them exceeding prosperous in all their affairs.

Ver. 12.] They could not tell to what to impute the extraordinary happiness that attended him, but to his religious care about the ark. David also hoped that God would bless him, and his city, as he had done Obed-edom, and his house.

With gladness.] All the people, I suppose, again accompanied him, playing on all manner of musical instruments, as they did before, ver. 5.

Ver. 13. *When they that bare the ark—had gone six paces.*] Without any mark of God's displeasure, as before, ver. 7.

He sacrificed oxen and fallings.] As a thanksgiving to God for his goodness, upon an altar erected on purpose, on this extraordinary occasion. Some think he repeated these sacrifices seven times, at the end of every six paces. The word we translate *fallings*, is, in the Hebrew, *meri*: whose signification is uncertain. For some take it for a *lamb*, others for a *ram*, and others put a different meaning on it. But Bochartus, with great probability, thinks it was a kind of ox, being commonly joined with oxen in Scripture, not only here, but in 1 Kings i. 9, 19, 25, Isa. i. 11, xi. 6. Nor doth 1 Chron. xv. 26, contradict this, where it is said, they offered *bulls* and *rams*. For those are not the same sacrifices as these, which were offered by David; whereas those in the Chronicles were offered by the Levites (see his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 19).

Ver. 14.] He laid aside his royal ornaments, and was girded only with a simple ephod: which was, I observed upon 1 Sam. ii. 18, an honorary garment, used by those who were no priests. He is said to dance *before the Lord*, because the ark was the symbol of the Divine presence. And from hence, it is probable, the heathen learnt to dance before their gods: as Callimachus mentions the *chori*, and dances of youth at the altar of Apollo. And as there were παιδικῆν χοροῖν, so there were also ἀνδρῶν, and, among the Lacedemonians, of old men also. And

Plato observes, that, among the Egyptians, all kinds of music, and songs, and dances, were consecrated to their gods (lib. iii. De Legibus, p. 799). See that great man, Ezek. Spanhemius's observations on Callim. Hymn. in Apollinem, ver. 8.

Ver. 15.] Such ἀκαλυψίαι, as the Greeks call them, were used before their gods: of which the great man now mentioned, gives a large account in his observation upon Callimachus's hymn ad Delum, ver. 258, where he observes, that ἀκαλύσειν anciently signified to shout for joy: and in like manner the Latin word *ululare* is used by Statius for *exultare*. And this sort of rejoicing is at this day used by the Abyssines, in the evening of our Lord's resurrection: when men and women clap their hands, and dance to several instruments of music, till morning light: and all this in their churches. Which in all likelihood came from the Jews, who still dance in some of their festivals. See Ludolphus, in his comment upon his Historia Ethiopia, p. 381, where he observes, that David, in all probability, did not now dance alone, but in company.

Ver. 16.] Imagining that he debased himself by stripping himself of the ornaments of majesty, and dancing among the common people. But she understood not, as Procopius Gazaeus here glosses, arduis stimulis, "those things of Divine love" which David declared to her afterward.

Ver. 17. *In the midst of the tabernacle*] The ancient tabernacle made by Moses remained still, as I observed before, at Gibeon: from whence David did not think fit to fetch it, because he intended shortly (as Pellicanus well observes) to build a temple to settle it in. For the present, therefore, he only hung some curtains round about it, after the fashion of the tabernacle (see vii. 2).

David offered burnt offerings] To implore the continuance of his mercies to them; and to thank him for those they had received.

Ver. 18.] He prayed God to bless them; and pronounced them blessed in his name.

Ver. 19. *A good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine.*] The Talmudists have a conceit, that the Hebrew word *eshpar*, which we translate "a good piece of flesh," signifies the sixth part of a bullock: deriving it from three words put in one; viz. *chad* one, *shesh* six, and *par* a bullock. But every one sees this is a very forced fancy; and it is not in itself credible, that he could, among such a multitude, deal a sixth part of a bullock to every one; or that they could well carry it away, with the bread and wine. Bochartus more reasonably thinks (as some of the Jews do) the word

So all the people departed every one to his house.

20 ¶ Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, How glorious was the king of Israel to day, who uncovered himself to day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself!

21 And David said unto Michal, *It was before*

is derived from *shapar*, which signifies *decorus*: and so the meaning is, as we translate it, he gave to every one a *handsome* or *decent* portion of flesh (see his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 18).

So all the people departed] Well satisfied with their prince's bounty to them, and his piety to God.

Ver. 20. *David returned to bless his household.*] As he had done the people.

How glorious was the king of Israel to day.] This she spake ironically, by way of derision and contempt.

Who uncovered himself to day] Stripped himself of his royal robes, and put on a linen ephod (ver. 14).

In the eyes of the handmaids of his servants,] The women, perhaps, bare a part in these dances, as they did in Exod. xv., or at least were spectators of all the solemnity: from which none were excluded, though ever so mean.

As one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself.] Throws off all his clothes, and cares not who sees him, nor with what company he dances. This was spoken by way of reproach, that he mixed himself with the multitude; and seems to intimate that he had immodestly exposed himself, as shameless fellows do: which is not credible. But thus in a fit of passion she aggravates this action as very mean, yea, base, and much below himself. For no doubt, David kept himself within the rules of modesty, when he was thus jocund, being about a sacred business: and did according to the command of God, who required the Israelites to rejoice in their feasts (Deut. xii. 7; xvi. 1), not with a furlous, lascivious, and petulant joy, but with a pious and moderate: as having God himself present. And thus Plato observes, lib. vii. De Legibus that some dances are *ἠμωδῶς*, "with modest and decent motions of the body:"

the Lord, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel: therefore will I play before the LORD.

22 And I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight: and of the maid-servants which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour.

23 Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death.

others *παρρησιῶς*, "immodest and wanton." The latter of which none can imagine David would be guilty of before God: but danced with composed and decent, not desultorious and light motions, such as vain fellows are wont to use. For as it is joy that excites men to leap and dance, so Divine joy moves them to do it after a manner becoming to the Divine Majesty.

Ver. 21.] Who had done so much for him, that he thought he could not show himself thankful enough to so great a benefactor. He thought fit to take down her pride, by putting her in mind, how God had rejected all her family, and advanced him to the throne of Israel.

Ver. 22.] He thought nothing too mean for him to stoop unto; if thereby he could do any honour unto God. Otherwise, to dance in the streets before all the people had been very unbecoming the majesty of a king: as Nero (we are told by Suetonius) and Caligula were condemned for it, among the Romans. For among them it was not usual, nor was it done in honour of their gods. Whereas in David's time the greatest persons thus expressed their joy and thankfulness to God, by public leaping, dancing, shouting, and clapping their hands. The more he humbled himself to do honour unto God, the more he was confident he should be magnified, and had in honour by his people. The esteem of the meanness of which, upon that account, he valued far more than all the vain-glorious praises Michal could bestow on him, for taking state upon him, and neglecting God's service.

Ver. 23.] Which is thus explained, in the Gemara Sanhedrin, cap. 2, sect. 8. She had children before this fact, but none after it as long as she lived (see iii. 5). David, perhaps, quite left her bed.

CHAPTER VII.

1 *Nathan first approving the purpose of David to build God an house, 4 after by the word of God forbiddeth him.*
12 *He promiseth him benefits and blessings in his seed.* 18 *David's prayer and thanksgiving,*

1 AND it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and the LORD had given him rest round about from all his enemies;

2 That the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar,

but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains.

3 And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in thine heart; for the LORD is with thee.

4 ¶ And it came to pass that night, that the word of the LORD came unto Nathan, saying;

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Ver. 1.] Enjoyed himself in the palace Hiram had built for him (v. 11), having no disturbance from the Philistines, or other neighbouring nations.

Ver. 2.] Like a religious prince, he spent much of his time in pious meditations: and among other things reflected upon the meanness of God's habitation, in comparison with the splendour of his own. Which he thought ought not to be endured, and therefore resolved to build a stately house for God to dwell in.

Ver. 3.] He spake that as a prudent man, not as a

prophet. For (as Procopius Gazæus here observes) the prophets did not see all things; but those only which the Divine grace revealed to them: as Samuel was ignorant which of Jesse's sons was to be anointed, till God told him. But Nathan had great reason for what he said, because he observed that the Lord had an extraordinary kindness for David, and prospered him in all that he went about. And David withal being a prophet as well as himself, he might presume this intention was suggested to him from God.

Ver. 4.] God would not suffer him long to remain in an error; but corrected it the very next night.

5 Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the Lord, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in?

6 Whereas I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle.

7 In all the places wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me an house of cedar?

8 Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel:

9 And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name,

like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth.

10 Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime,

11 And as since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people, Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the Lord telleth thee that he will make thee an house.

12 ¶ And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.

13 He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever.

Ver. 5. *Tell my servant David.*] He speaks very kindly to him, though he did not approve of his design.

Shalt thou build me an house?] The meaning is, he should not build one. But this manner of speech declared his mind something sharply: to reprove him for his forwardness (without asking God's consent), not only in designing, but in making a vow, that he would forthwith build God a house. For it is probable, that upon Nathan's approving his intention, he made that vow mentioned Ps. cxxiii. 3—5, "Surely I will not go up to my bed, nor give sleep to mine eyes, &c. till I have found out a place for the Lord, a habitation for the mighty God of Jacob."

Ver. 6.] As much as to say, How comest thou to design me a fixed house, since neither I, nor any one else, thought of one from the time you have been a people? But having contented myself with a movable house, consisting of a tent and a tabernacle: in which I was always present to conduct and lead my people from place to place. By a tent is meant the inward hangings of the house, which were of curious work: and by the tabernacle, the boards to which they were fastened; and the badgers' skins, &c. wherewith all was covered.

Ver. 7. *Any of the tribes of Israel.*] That is, "of the judges of Israel," as it is interpreted, 1 Chron. xvii. 6. For the word *shilte* signifies not only tribes but sceptres; and, consequently, supreme governors and rulers: such as the judges were who had the supreme authority in Israel. And so the following words explain it.

Whom I commanded to feed my people Israel.] He did not command the tribes, but the supreme governors of them, to feed, that is, to rule his people and take care of their happiness. Here, again, feeding is governing (as I observed, v. 2), and the Hebrew word for feed being *raga*, as some pronounce it (in the Syriac, *rega*), very learned men thence derive the Latin word *regere* and *reges*: kings being designed by God to be the pastors of their people.

Why build ye not me an house of cedar?] God was the properest judge what house was agreeable to him, and he never signified that he disliked his present, and desired a more stately habitation.

Ver. 8. *So shalt thou say unto my servant David.*] He would not have him think he took it ill that he should design what he never signified to be his desire: but owned him to be his faithful servant, and therefore accepted his pious intentions: as we read expressly 1 Kings viii. 18, which is signified in this message.

I took thee from the sheepcote—to be ruler over my people.] Therefore he needed not to make any doubt, but that God accepted his gratitude in designing to make him a house.

Ver. 9. *I was with thee.*] In the time of his banishment, when he was remarkably preserved by God.

Have cut off all thine enemies.] Both those in Israel and those in the neighbouring countries.

Have made thee a great name.] Famed in all the countries round about as a potent prince and a mighty warrior: and perhaps as a holy prophet, greatly beloved of God and of all his people.

Ver. 10. *I will appoint a place.*] Or, "I have constituted (or established) a place for my people," viz. the land of Canaan.

Will plant them.] Make them take root there; and no longer wander, as they did in the wilderness.

Neither shall the children of wickedness.] The idolatrous people round about them.

Afflict them—as beforetime.] When they were in the land of Egypt.

Ver. 11. *Since the time that I commanded judges.*] In whose days they were sorely afflicted by the Moabites, Canaanites, Midianites, and other people.

Have caused thee to rest.] Given him a quiet possession of the whole kingdom of Israel; which never was in so happy a condition as now. A flourishing people is a great blessing to the king that governs them: and therefore mentioned in this verse, as God's kindness to David. But this promise was with some exceptions, in case they became disobedient: which provoked God to chastise them.

He will make thee an house.] A family, or royal offspring, that shall reign for many generations; which was a special favour of God to David; there being none of the Roman emperors, till the time of Antoninus, whose children from the reign of Julius Cæsar succeeded them in the empire, but only Vespasian.

Ver. 12. *I will set up thy seed.*] To sit upon his throne.

Which shall proceed out of thy bowels.] This shows that he speaks of one who was not yet born, viz. Solomon: and that Absalom, Adonijah, and the rest who pretended to the kingdom, were not designed for it: being already proceeded from him.

I will establish his kingdom.] He reigned a long time himself; and so did his posterity after him.

Ver. 13.] The latter part of this verse can belong to none but the Messiah; if the words for ever be taken in their full extent.

14 I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men :

15 But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee.

16 And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee : thy throne shall be established for ever.

17 According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.

Ver. 14. *I will be his father,*] This the apostle shows is meant of Christ, Heb. i. 5. For though Solomon was called Jedidiah, in token that he was beloved of God, yet, in the complete sense of the word, Christ only is intended; who is "God's beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased."

If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, &c.] This is a mixed prophecy, some part of which belongs to Christ, and the other part to Solomon, and his successors in the kingdom of Israel: who, it is plain, is solely intended in these words. And by "the rod of men, and the stripes of the children of men," is meant gentle correction; such as parents give their children.

Ver. 15.] He promises not to translate the kingdom into another family; as he took it from Saul, to give it to David: but the kingdom shall continue in his line.

Ver. 16.] That is, saith Kimchi, for a long time, between four and five hundred years, which was a rare thing, and seldom known, that the kingly authority continued in any one family so long. But this is chiefly intended of the kingdom of Christ, as Procopius Gazaus here observes: from whence the Jews said (John xii. 34), "We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever." This is confirmed by the rule which Maimonides lays down in his More Nevochim, that though *olam* alone doth not necessarily signify eternally, yet when it is joined with *ath*, either before or after it, it doth so signify. And that is the case here; this kingdom is said to be established *ath olam*: which can belong to none but Christ; for David's kingdom had an end, but Christ's hath none (par. ii. cap. 28).

Ver. 17.] This shows the integrity of the prophet: who was not ashamed to retract his own words when he was better taught of God. And, as Dionysius observes, in an epistle to Novatus, *μείζον ἵσταται τοῦ σφάλματος τὸ κατὸνόημα*, "the correction of his fault was more eminent and remarkable than the fault itself.

Ver. 18. *Then went king David in, and sat before the Lord.*] That is, before the ark: which, as I have often said, was the symbol of his Divine presence. Sitting, among the heathens, was thought a posture proper enough in the Divine service; as Vossius hath observed, lib. ii. De Orig. et Progressu Idololat. cap. 31. Quippe index animi magis compositi, et hoc agentis: "being an indication of a more composed mind, and attending to what they were about." But among the Israelites none were allowed to sit in the temple, except the king: unto whom this was indulged, if we can believe the Talmudists; whose general maxim was this, "It was not lawful for any one to sit in the court of the house of God; but only for the king of the house of David" (see Selden, lib. ii.; De Synedriis, cap. 13, sect. 4). But they have framed this notion merely from this single passage;

18 ¶ Then went king David in, and sat before the Lord, and he said, Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?

19 And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord God?

20 And what can David say more unto thee? for thou, Lord God, knowest thy servant.

21 For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know them.

there being no other place in the whole Scripture to support this assertion, that the king might sit at prayer; but, on the contrary, on the sabbath, and on festival days, when he came to the temple, he stood by the exterior pillar of the inward court of the house of God; as may be learnt from Ezek. xlvi. 1, 2, compared with 2 Kings xi. 14; and 2 Chron. xxiii. 13. Nor is there any other posture of worship mentioned in Scripture, but standing, or kneeling, or falling on the face. And therefore Abarbinel ingeniously confesses, that this is not the opinion of all their doctors, several of which in this forsake the Talmudists; and allege a weighty reason for it: because the angels themselves, who are higher than kings, are not permitted to sit before the Lord: but Isaiah saith, vi. 2, that the seraphim stood about the throne; and Micaiah saith, he saw the host of heaven stand before the Lord, 1 Kings xxii. 19, and see Zech. iii. 7. From which they conclude, if there be no sitting allowed above, by what right was it granted to the kings of David's family here below? Many great men therefore translate the Hebrew word *jashab*, not *sat*, but *remained before the Lord*; particularly Vetalus, upon 1 Chron. xvii. 16. And others, who allow the king might sit in the temple, yet confess he might not sit at prayer; and therefore expound this place thus: "He took his seat in the tabernacle before the ark;" and then he made the following prayer, standing up, as the manner was, when they worshipped God.

Who am I, O Lord God?] He begins his address to God, in a very becoming manner; with a most profound debasement of himself, and confession of his own unworthiness, to receive such blessings as God had already bestowed on him.

Ver. 19.] Next, he magnifies the loving-kindness of God, who did not think it enough that he had made him a great king, but promised his posterity, and at last the Lord Christ, should sit upon his throne. So Abarbinel himself expounds these words, "a great while to come;" intimating, saith he, the Messiah, the son of David. He acknowledges there was no example of such kindness to be found in this world; where kingdoms are not perpetuated, as Abarbinel observes; but this is the manner of angels, who always continue in their dignity.

Ver. 20.] There was nothing he could desire beyond this (see 1 Chron. xvii. 18). But he thought he might leave all to God, who loved him and took care of him (for that is to *know him*) as his faithful servant.

Ver. 21. *For thy word's sake,*] For God, he knew, would fulfil his own promise made by Samuel and by Nathan; and to the making of which he had no other motive but his own good will; from whence alone all the great things proceeded which he had done for him.

To make thy servant know them.] That David might know how much God loved him by what he did for him.

22 Wherefore thou art great, O LORD God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears.

23 And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods?

24 For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever: and thou, LORD, art become their God.

25 And now, O LORD God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said.

Ver. 22. *Wherefore thou art great, O Lord God.*] He could not therefore but acknowledge his omnipotent power and the greatness of his goodness, which bestows such benefits upon unworthy creatures. According to what Hannah had said in her song, wherein she prophesied of him (1 Sam. ii. 2).

According to all that we have heard] Which their forefathers had reported of the wonders he had done by Moses and Joshua, and in the time of the Judges.

Ver. 23.] He seems to imitate the words of Moses in Deut. iv. 7, 34.

To make him a name.] That all the world might know how powerful he was.

To do for you great things—for thy land.] To introduce them into the land of Canaan.

From the nations and their gods?] Some understand by gods their rulers: but their gods were no more able to save the nations whom he drove out, than their kings and rulers were.

Ver. 24.] This is the sum of the covenant (as P. Martyr observes) between God and them: that they should be his obedient people, and he would bless them, and bestow all manner of good things upon them.

Ver. 25.] After his thankful acknowledgments, he makes his humble prayer to God, that he would perform his promise to him. For though he did not doubt of it, yet it became him to make it his request.

26 And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The LORD of hosts is the God over Israel: and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee.

27 For thou, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee.

28 And now, O Lord God, thou art that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant:

29 Therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee: for thou, O Lord God, hast spoken it: and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever.

Ver. 26.] Yet he did not desire it merely for his own sake; but that God might be glorified in what he did for him: and men might always acknowledge that the God of Israel was the Lord of heaven and earth; and faithful in his promise to the house of David.

Ver. 27. That he might not be thought too bold in his request, he professes he should not have taken this confidence, if God himself had not encouraged it, by his own most gracious promise to him.

Ver. 28.] He professes his belief of the unchangeableness of God's nature, and of the truth of all that he said: upon which he relied with an unshaken faith.

Ver. 29.] Since God had been so gracious as to make such promises, and his word could not fail; he grows more confident to repeat his petition, which he had made before. Which is not the vain repetition, condemned by our Saviour: but proceeded from the abundant affection of a heart devoutly affected; which could not sufficiently acknowledge the goodness of God, and express his full assurance that he would fulfil his word. To this purpose Abarbanel; David did not multiply prayer for want of faith, because he distrusted the power of God; or thought his will was mutable; or that he doubted of his prophecy concerning him: but rather, this shows that he steadfastly rested assured of all this.

CHAPTER VIII.

1 David subdueth the Philistines and the Moabites. 3 He smiteth Hadadezer, and the Syrians. 9 Toi sendeth Joram with presents to bless him. 11 The presents and the spoil David dedicateth to God. 14 He putteth garrisons in Edom. 16 David's officers.

1 AND after this it came to pass, that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them: and David took Metheg-ammah out of the hand of the Philistines.

CHAP. VIII.

Ver. 1. *After this—David smote the Philistines.*] In the beginning of his reign they invaded him twice (v. 17, 22). But now David invaded their country, and made a conquest of it; and brought it into subjection to the Israelites.

Metheg-ammah] That is, the famous city of Gath, and the territories thereof (as it is expounded, 1 Chron. xvii. 1), which is called Metheg-Ammah, because it stood upon mount Ammah: and was as a

2 And he smote Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; even with two lines measured he to put to death, and with one full line to keep alive. And so the

bridle to the whole country, whereby it was kept in obedience. So our translators understand the word *Metheg* in the margin of our Bibles. But R. Solomon takes it for a good, or a staff; this city domineering over the Philistines. For we read of no king in any of their other cities; either in Gaza, or Ashdod, or Ekron, or Askelon; but only in this: where Achish formerly reigned, but, it is likely, was dead. There are several other interpretations in Bochart's Hierozoicon, lib. ii. cap. 18, par. i.

Moabites became David's servants, and brought gifts.

3 ¶ David smote also Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates.

4 And David took from him a thousand chariots, and seven hundred horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen: and David houghed all the chariot horses, but reserved of them for an hundred chariots.

Ver. 2. *He smote Moab.*] Now was fulfilled the prophecy of Balaam, (Numb. xxiv. 17.) Having conquered the whole country, he took an exact survey of every part of it. Laying level their strong holds and fortified places, and he divided the country into three equal parts; condemning two of them to be destroyed. A third part he preserved, that he might not be quite dispeopled. This severity, the Jews say, he exercised because they had slain his parents, and his brethren, whom he committed to the custody of the king of Moab during his exile (1 Sam. xxii. 3, 4). But, in truth, because the Moabites had always been implacable enemies to the Israelites: their kindness to David, before mentioned, proceeding from their hatred to Saul.

Brought gifts.] And paid David a constant tribute, which continued all his days, and in the reign of Solomon: and after the kingdom was divided, it was paid to the kings of Israel: till after the death of Ahab they refused to pay it, as we read 2 Kings iii. 4, 5.

Ver. 3. *Hadadezer.*] Who is called also Hadazer: for the change of these two letters, *daleth* and *resh*, is very frequent, as Bochart hath shown in many instances, par. ii. Hierozoicon, lib. ii. cap. 7. Nicolaus Damascenus, in a fragment of his, recorded by Josephus (lib. vii. Antiq. cap. 6), simply calls him Adad: which was a common name of the kings of Syria: who, according to the manner of the eastern princes, took their titles from the celestial bodies, as Sir John Marsham observes; and Adad was the name of the most glorious of them, viz. the sun, as Macrobius tells us: who truly saith, it signifies *unus*, one.

King of Zobah.] Zobah was a part of Syria, whose eastern border was Euphrates, as the western was the land of Canaan, and the kingdom of Damascus. It is frequently called *Aram-zobah* in Scripture; of which Bochartus, in his *Phaleg*. lib. ii. cap. 7, where he observes the nearness of Zobah to Judea, from the frequent wars the Israelites had with that people, in the days of Saul, 1 Sam. xiv. 47, and David, ch. x. of this book; and Solomon, 2 Chron. viii. 3, and they of Damascus came to help them, which is a sign they were near them (ver. 5, of this chapter), and Rezin fled from thence to Damascus (1 Kings xi. 21). And especially he observes, that the cities Solomon built in the wilderness, viz. Palmyrene, and others (1 Kings ix. 17, 18), are said to be in Hamath, 2 Chron. viii. 4, which shows the situation of Zobah.

As he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates.] That is, as David went to extend the limits of his kingdom (according to the ancient prophecy, Gen. xv. 18) towards the river Euphrates, he smote this king, who came out, perhaps, to oppose him. See 1 Chron. xviii. 3, where it is said, "he went to establish his dominions by the river Euphrates:" which seems to relate to David, not to Hadadezer.

Ver. 4. *A thousand chariots.*] The word *chariots* is not in the Hebrew: but it is well supplied by our translators, out of 1 Chron. xvi. 4, in which book many things are explained which are briefly related here.

5 And when the Syrians of Damascus came to succour Hadadezer king of Zobah, David slew of the Syrians two and twenty thousand men.

6 Then David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus: and the Syrians became servants to David, and brought gifts. And the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went.

7 And David took the shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadadezer, and brought them to Jerusalem.

Seven hundred horsemen.] Here again is an ellipsis, as in the foregoing words: for in 1 Chron. xviii. 4, it is said seven thousand. But as after a *thousand* something is to be understood, viz. *chariots*: so after *seven hundred* something is to be understood, viz. *captains* (as Abarbine) explains it), under whom a great many others served, so that commanders and soldiers made in all, seven thousand. Such an ellipsis is observed in this very book, v. 8, "whosoever smites the Jebusites, and the blind, and the lame," &c. It is not said what shall be their reward; which is plainly mentioned 1 Chron. xi. 6. where it is said, *he shall be chief* (see L'Empereur on Bava-kama, cap. 7, sect. 7).

David houghed all the chariot horses.] Here again is the same ellipsis, for there is no word in the Hebrew for *horses*. Yet the meaning can be nothing else, but that he cut the hamstrings of the horses that drew their chariots, and made them unserviceable hereafter (see Josh. xi. 9). Thus, in x. 18, David is said to have slain seven hundred chariots; that is, the horses of so many chariots: and in Ps. lxxviii. 18, by "the chariots of the Lord," some understood *horsemen*: and lxxvi. 6, "the chariot and horse," &c.; that is, as well the horses that drew the chariot, as they that rode in it (see Bochartus, in his *Hieroz.* par. i. lib. ii. cap. 6).

But reserved of them for an hundred chariots.] For his guard, I suppose, not for war: God having commanded them not to multiply horses, Deut. xvii. 16 (see there).

Ver. 5. *When the Syrians of Damascus came to succour Hadadezer.*] For they were neighbours to him, as I observed on ver. 3.

David slew of the Syrians two and twenty thousand.] Which facilitated the conquest of their country: which follows in the next verse.

Ver. 6. *Syria of Damascus.*] *Aram-Jamasch*, which we translate "Syria of Damascus," was that part of Syria which lay between Libanus and Antilibanus; whose chief city was Damascus, situated in a valley called by several names in Scripture, as Bochartus notes; viz. Hoba, Gen. xiv. 15, the valley of Aven, and Beth-eden, i. e. the place of pleasure, Amos i. 5, and Hadrach, Zech. ix. 1. It was watered by five rivers; the two principal of which descended from Mount Hermor, viz. Abana and Parpar (2 Kings v. 12). The last of which ran by the walls of Damascus; the other ran through it, and divided the city into two parts.

The Syrians brought gifts.] In token of their subjection to him.

The Lord preserved David.] Kept him from all the dangers to which he was exposed in these wars.

Ver. 7.] The Hebrew particle *el*, which we translate *on*, may better be translated *with*; that is, in the custody of Hadadezer's servants, who were officers in his treasury: for it is not likely they brought them into the field of battle.

Ver. 8.] These two cities are called by very different names in 1 Chron. xviii. 6, though perhaps of the same signification in the language of that country, with these in the Hebrew language. Or there were four cities, perhaps, from whence he took much brass; two here

8 And from Bethah, and from Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, king David took exceeding much brass.

9 ¶ When Toi king of Hamath heard that David had smitten all the host of Hadadezer.

10 Then Toi sent Joram his son unto king David, to salute him, and to bless him, because he had fought against Hadadezer, and smitten him : for Hadadezer had wars with Toi. And Joram brought with him vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and vessels of brass :

11 Which also king David did dedicate unto the LORD, with the silver and gold that he had dedicated of all nations which he subdued :

12 Of Syria, and of Moab, and of the children of Ammon, and of the Philistines, and of Amalek,

and of the spoil of Hadadezer, son of Rehob, king of Zobah.

13 And David gat him a name when he returned from smiting of the Syrians in the valley of salt, being eighteen thousand men.

14 ¶ And he put garrisons in Edom ; throughout all Edom put he garrisons, and all they of Edom became David's servants. And the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went.

15 And David reigned over all Israel ; and David executed judgment and justice unto all his people.

16 And Joab the son of Zeruiah was over the host ; and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder :

17 And Zadok the son of Ahitub, and Ahime-

mentioned, and two in the book of Chronicles. It is the opinion of some learned men, that these cities were situated at the foot of the mount Libanus, between Emath and Damascus : which mount, they say, abounded with brass. But Bochartus could find no mention of the brass of Libanus in any ancient or modern writer. And the kingdom of Zobah lying about Palmyra, he takes the city called Berothai to be the same with that which Ptolemy calls Βαροθαια in Arabia Deserta ; which is very remote from Libanus (par. ii. Hierozoicon, lib. vi. cap. ult).

Ver. 9.] This city was also in Syria, and was called afterwards Epiphania, as St. Jerome says, and lay north of Judea (see Bochart, in his Phaleg. lib. iv. cap. 37).

Ver. 10. Joram] Called Hadoram, 1 Chron. xviii. 10. Unto King David,] At Jerusalem, I suppose.

To salute him, and to bless him,] To congratulate his good success in the war with Hadadezer ; and to wish him continued prosperity.

For Hadadezer had wars with Toi.] And was too hard for him.

Joram brought with him vessels of silver, &c.]. As a present to king David : whose friendship he sought by this embassy.

Ver. 11. Which also king David did dedicate unto the Lord.] As he did what he took from Hadadezer. These words seem to import, that he was so far from multiplying silver and gold to himself (which Moses forbade, Deut. xvii. 16), that he put all this spoil, or the greatest part of it, into God's treasury : for the building of the temple, which he designed, and his son was to accomplish (vii. 13).

Ver. 12.] Here he reckons up all the countries, besides Hadadezer's, from whence he brought spoil to the treasury of God.

Ver. 13. David gat him a name when he returned from smiting of the Syrians.] His victory over that people (mentioned ver. 5), when they came to succour Hadadezer, gained him a great reputation, as a potent prince, and a mighty warrior.

In the valley of salt, being eighteen thousand men.] There is nothing in the Hebrew answering to the word being : which therefore should be translated, "in the valley of salt eighteen thousand men." That is, he slew of the Edomites so many, besides the two-and-twenty thousand of the Syrians. So we read expressly 1 Chron. xviii. 12, and in the title of the sixtieth Psalm it is said, they were Edomites, not Syrians, who were slain in this valley. Only in that place of the Psalms, there is mention of no more than twelve thousand slain : which makes some think it speaks of a distinct battle from this. But Abishai, who began the fight, perhaps, slew six thousand, and then

Joab, coming in with his reserve, slew twelve thousand more ; which, in all, make eighteen thousand. By the valley of salt, Epiphanius understands the Dead Sea, which was formerly a famous valley, or rather it was a valley near that sea. But neither of these opinions has any good foundation, as Salmasius shows : who takes this valley of salt to have been in the country of Edom, where this battle was fought ; and to be called by this name, either from the salt springs which were therein, or from the salt that was digged up there (see his Exercit. Plinianæ, cap. 35, p. 613, 614).

Ver. 14. He put garrisons in Edom ;] Having conquered the whole country, he garrisoned the strongest places in it, with his own men ; to keep them in subjection to him. Some of the Jews translate these words, "he put captains or commanders in Edom ;" that is, great men to govern them, and, as his deputies, to keep them under and raise tributes, &c.

The Lord preserved David.] God's providence continued still over him to protect him, as formerly (ver. 6), in all these expeditions.

David reigned over all Israel ;] He had no disturbance at home, whilst he made wars abroad : but all Israel obeyed him. And having finished his foreign wars, he applied himself to the civil government of his people, according to the law of God : which he executed duly by himself, or by his judges. Or rather, while he was engaged in so many wars abroad, he did not neglect his people at home ; but took care that justice should be administered to them. And so he performed both parts of such a king as the Israelites desired (1 Sam. viii. 20).

Ver. 16. Joab—was over the host ;] According to the promise made to that person, who should first enter the strong fort of Zion, when he assaulted it (1 Chron. xi. 6).

Recorder ;] The Hebrew word *nazkir*, importing something of keeping in memory, or bringing to remembrance, moved our translators to render it recorder or remembrancer, as if he wrote the acts of every day, which afterward were digested into annals. But this, sure, was not so considerable an employment as to make him that had it the prime civil officer in the kingdom, as Joab was the military. Therefore Victorinus Strigelius takes him to have been the chancellor of the kingdom : which is more likely than their opinion, who take him for the master of requests, who presented petitions, and put the king in mind of them.

Ver. 17. Zadok—and Ahimelech—were the priests ;] These two were the chief of the family of priests ; next to the high-priest, which was Abiathar : called second priests in 2 Kings xv. 18. The former was of the family of Eleazar (1 Chron. vi. 5), the other of

Iech the son of Abiathar, *were* the priests; and Seraiah *was* the scribe;

18 And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was over*

both the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David's sons were chief rulers.

Ithamar. And Zadok is put first, as more acceptable to David than the other: and therefore, it is likely constantly attended at court; the family of Eli now beginning to decline, as in the next reign the other was advanced to the high-priesthood, and Abiathar and his posterity quite thrown out (see Selden, lib. i. De Success. ad Pontific. cap. 4). Cornelius Bertram hath a peculiar conceit, that as Abiathar was always acknowledged by David as God's high-priest, and accordingly took care of the ark at Jerusalem, so Zadok, as principal priest among the rest, was set over the tabernacle at Gibeon. But Abarbanel's opinion is farthest from truth, that Zadok was now high-priest, and Abiathar but his vicar: which is directly against the Scripture, which shows Abiathar to have been high-priest until the days of Solomon. Yet to justify this, he thinks fit to tell a fabulous story out of Joana, and other books, which say that David removed Abiathar from his office when he fled from Absalom. For commanding him to inquire of God for him, by *urim* and *thummim*, God was pleased to give him no answer; but Zadok inquiring, had an answer. Whereupon David concluded the Spirit of God was gone from Abiathar, and that it was time to fulfil the prophecy against the house of Eli: and so thrust him out of his office. For which they have no other ground but this, that David spake first to Zadok, chap. xv. of this book, ver. 21 (see J. Wagenseil upon Sota, p. 1603, 1609).

Seraiah was the scribe;] Secretary of state, as we now speak; or, as others imagine, clerk of the council, who set down all acts and decrees; others, the keeper of the public accounts. But the Hebrew word *sopher* (which we translate *scribe*) importing something of learning (as the word *scribe* in the New Testament doth), I take him to have been his prime counsellor in the law, who always attended him. Constantine L'Empereur thinks there were two sorts of scribes, an ecclesiastical and a civil; and here understands the latter; and would have him signify no more than the *nuster-master* of the army (see his Annot. on Bertram De Repub. Jud. p. 383, &c.).

Ver. 18. *Benaiah—was over both the Cherethites and the Pelethites;*] Or, the *Crethites* and the *Plethites*, as some pronounce these words. What they were is variously conjectured. The most idle conceit is that of some of the Jewish doctors, who take them for the members of the great Sanhedrin, nay, for *urim* and *thummim* (see Selden, lib. ii. De Synedr. cap. 15, p. 601, and cap. 16, p. 668). Certain it is that they were soldiers, as appears from xv. 18, xx. 7, 1 Kings i. 31, where they are mentioned as present at the proclaiming king Solomon against Adonijah; which could not have been done safely without some armed force; and if they were not the persons, there were none. Yet they were not common soldiers, but the constant guards of David's person: like the *Prætorian bands* among the Romans. So Josephus calls them *καταφυλακες*, "keepers of the body," who never departed from the place where the king was: as we may be satisfied by this, that they had a peculiar commander, and were not under Joab, the captain of the host; but are distinguished from his soldiers, xx. 6, 7. Some make them men of a gigantic stature, but I know no ground for that; though, no doubt, they were proper men, as we speak, robust, and of tried fidelity; who, in the rebellion against David, did not desert David, but stuck close to him (xv. 18).

It is further probable, that they were selected out of a certain nation or family. For the Cherethites inhabited part of Palestine, and were indeed the same with the Philistines, as I observed upon 1 Sam. xxx. 14, and see Zeph. ii. 5. The Pelethites, it is likely, were a family in Israel: for we find two of the name of Peleth mentioned in Scripture: one of the tribe of Reuben, Numb. xvi. 1, another of Judah, 1 Chron. ii. 33. Their arms were bows and arrows, and slings, if we may believe the Chaldee interpreter, who calls them archers and slingers; as Procopius Gazens calls them *jaculatores et sagittarios*. Which may be confirmed by this conjecture, that the Philistines having sorely galled the Israelites, in the fatal battle with Saul, by their archers, David took care not only to have his people instructed in the use of the bow, but also procured some archers from the Cherethites, who were a part of the Philistines to be his guard: as some princes now get the Switzers (see my notes upon 1 Sam. xxxi. 3, and upon the first chapter of this book, ver. 18). The number of them may be probably gathered from the targets and shields of gold that Solomon made, which were five hundred (1 Kings x. 16, 17), and were for the use of his guard (2 Chron. xii. 9—11), and kept in the guard-chamber.

They that would see more of them, may look into a little treatise of Optius, which is wholly upon this subject: and Fortunatus Sacchus treats largely of them in his *Myrothecium*, iii. cap. 16—18, where he hath this singular opinion, p. 181, that the Cherethites were inferior to the Pelethites: but, I think, with reason concludes, that they were the king's domestics and lay in his palace, or about it, in the night: which he gathers from 1 Kings i. 33, where David bids Nathan, and Zadok, and Benaiah, take with them the servants of their lord, and make Solomon king; and accordingly they took the Cherethites and the Pelethites with them (ver. 38); and from the story of that brave man Uriah, who would not go to his own house to his wife, when Joab and the host lay in the field; but went and slept at the door of the king's house "with the servants of his lord;" that is, with these Cherethites and Pelethites (ch. xi. of this book ver. 9).

David's sons were chief rulers;] So the Hebrew word *cohen* often signifies, not only a *priest*, but a *prince*; as many learned men have observed; particularly Hackspan, in his *Miscellanea*, lib. i. cap. 5, sect. 15, but especially Selden, lib. ii. De Synedr. cap. 16, p. 671, &c. where he shows, that the Hebrew word signifies *any minister*, either of God or of man: as, in the twentieth chapter of this book (ver. 26), Ira, the Jairite, is said to be a *cohen*, which we translate *chief ruler* about David: and so the Chaldee, and the Spanish Jews, a *principal officer*. But by the law, neither he nor David's sons could be priests. There can be therefore, no doubt of this, that they were the principal officers in the court of David, the prime ministers of his household: such as, among us, are the lord high-chamberlain, steward, treasurer, &c. as appears from 1 Chron. xviii. 17, where this matter is thus explained, they were at the hand of the king; waiting on him, as chief officers in his court, or, as Cornelius Bertram explains it, *publicos et primarios ministros*, "the public and principal ministers of state" (see Bochartus, lib. ii. Canaan, cap. 17). And this was the reason, they say, of Absalom's discontent, that he was not one of these *Αἰθάραυ*; or, had not a place according to his mind.

CHAPTER IX.

1 *David by Ziba sendeth for Mephibosheth.* 7 *For Jonathan's sake he entertaineth him at his table, and restoreth him all that was Saul's.* 9 *He maketh Ziba his farmer.*

1 AND David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake?

2 And *there was* of the house of Saul a servant whose name *was* Ziba. And when they had called him unto David, the king said unto him, *Art thou Ziba?* And he said, Thy servant *is he.*

3 And the king said, *Is there not yet any* of the house of Saul, that I may shew the kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan had yet a son, *which is lame on his feet.*

4 And the king said unto him, *Where is he?* And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he *is* in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lo-debar.

5 ¶ Then king David sent, and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lo-debar.

6 Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he

fell on his face, and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant!

7 ¶ And David said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually.

8 And he bowed himself, and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?

9 ¶ Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul and to all his house.

10 Thou therefore, and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in *the fruits*, that thy master's son may have food to eat: but Mephibosheth thy master's son shall eat bread alway at my table. Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.

CHAP. IX.

Ver. 1.] Having ended his wars, and settled his kingdom and court, now he considers what private obligations he had; especially to the house of Saul, but above all to Jonathan. For he promised Saul with an oath, that he would not cut off his seed (1 Sam. xxiv. 21, 22), and had made a covenant of friendship with Jonathan and his posterity for ever; confirmed also by an oath (1 Sam. xx. 14—17, 42; xxiii. 18).

Ver. 2. *Ziba.*] He had been employed in some business in Saul's family; but being a Canaanite (as some of the Jews will have it), he did not recover his liberty with the death of Saul, but still continued in servitude under David. He was in such an inferior station that David did not know him; though some among his courtiers did.

Ver. 3.] Here David, like a good man, and a worthy friend, and a noble prince, thinks how he may perform his promise to Jonathan, 1 Sam. xx. 14, where he obliged himself to show *the kindness of the Lord*, that is, great kindness to his posterity.

Ver. 4.] A place on the other side Jordan, in mount Gilead (see xvii. 27), where, it is likely, his friends thought him safe; being far from David; whom they looked upon as an enemy (see ver. 7).

Ver. 5.] It is likely he sent Ziba to bring him to court, and to assure him of the king's kindness.

Ver. 6. *When Mephibosheth.*] Called also Meribbaal, 1 Chron. viii. 34; ix. 40.

He fell on his face.] As the manner was when men came into the presence of the king, or the king's son: for thus David himself did to Jonathan (1 Sam. xx. 41). The king spake in a very friendly manner to him: and he answered as humbly.

Ver. 7. *Fear not.*] This intimates that he had apprehensions David might have an evil eye upon him as one that had a pretence to the kingdom.

And will restore thee all the land of Saul.] Which he had purchased before he was king, or acquired afterward, or was descended to him from his father: but

had been confiscated (as D. Kimchi observes) to the king's exchequer, because Ish-bosheth and the house of Saul had rebelled against David, who was the Lord's anointed. And accordingly afterward David gave all this land to Ziba, when he accused Mephibosheth of treason against him, xvi. 4 (see Selden, De Successione. ad Leges Hebræorum, cap. 25, fol. 89).

Thou shalt eat bread at my table.] As one of his own children (ver. 11).

Ver. 8. *He bowed.*] In token of his thankfulness. *Such a dead dog as I am?*] This is a high expression of his unworthiness of any favour. For a dog was accounted a vile and unclean creature, and a dead dog was of no use at all. See iii. 8, 1 Sam. xxiv. 15, where David spake thus to Saul, as Helena (Bochart observes) did to Hector. There being no greater expression of humility than this, for one to be so abject as to call himself a dog. In like manner, he that calls another so (as Abishai doth Shimei, and Ulysses doth the wooers, to whom he calls *ἄ ξίρες*, Odys. x.), expresses the utmost contempt of him.

Ver. 9.] Some understand by *his master's son* the son of Mephibosheth (called Micha, ver. 12), because Ziba was not to provide for Mephibosheth himself, who was to be maintained by the king at his royal table. But it may as well be thought to be meant of Mephibosheth, who had this estate given him for such uses as he should think fit to appoint.

Ver. 10. *Thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him, &c.*] This may seem to favour what was said before, that he was to manage the land for the benefit of Micha the son of Mephibosheth, and his household, who were to be maintained out of the product of it: but the following words, I think, show the contrary.

But Mephibosheth thy master's son shall eat bread alway at my table.] Now he declares publicly what he had said privately to Mephibosheth. Who being the person here plainly called *his master's son* (i. e. the son of Jonathan), it inclines me to conclude that he is understood before by that name; whose family was

11 Then said Ziba unto the king, According to all that my lord the king hath commanded his servant, so shall thy servant do. As for Mephibosheth, *said the king*, he shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons.

12 And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose

to be maintained by the fruit of the estate that David gave him, though he himself was to eat always with David.

Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.] Who were sufficient to manage a very great estate.

Ver. 11.] Those words, *said the king*, are not in the original text; so that these words may be thought to be Ziba's; who said he would keep a table for Mephibosheth also, if David pleased, and entertain him royally, the land being sufficient to afford it. But I do not see how he could call it *my table*; which must be the language of David; who now repeated what he had said before, that Ziba should take no care of Mephibosheth.

Ver. 12. *Micha.]* Who had many sons, from whom issued a numerous progeny, which lasted

name was Micha. And all that dwell in the house of Ziba were servants unto Mephibosheth.

13 So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame on both his feet.

many generations (1 Chron. viii. 34, 35, &c., ix. 40, 41, &c.).

All that dwell in the house of Ziba were servants unto Mephibosheth.] And consequently accountable to him for all that they received out of the estate; which it appears by this, was settled upon him.

Ver. 13.] Ziba went to take care of his land, which was at Gibeah of Benjamin, but Mephibosheth stayed with the king, that he might partake of his bounty. Though he could not go, yet he was carried thither; for so the words may be translated, "though he was lame," &c. This defect and blemish did not hinder him from being entertained by the king with the greatest kindness; which procured him, though despicable in his person, honour from the people, as one in great favour with their king.

CHAPTER X.

1 David's messengers, sent to comfort Hanun the son of Nahash, are villainously entreated. 6 The Ammonites, strengthened by the Syrians, are overcome by Joab and Abishai. 15 Shobach, making a new supply of the Syrians at Helam, is slain by David.

1 AND it came to pass after this, that the king of the children of Ammon died, and Hanun his son reigned in his stead.

2 Then said David, I will shew kindness unto Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father shewed kindness unto me. And David sent to comfort him by the hand of his servants for his father. And David's servants came into the land of the children of Ammon.

3 And the princes of the children of Ammon

said unto Hanun their lord, Thinkest thou that David doth honour thy father, that he hath sent comforters unto thee? hath not David rather sent his servants unto thee, to search the city, and to spy it out, and to overthrow it?

4 Wherefore Hanun took David's servants, and shaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle, *even* to their buttocks, and sent them away.

5 When they told it unto David, he sent to

CHAP. X.

Ver. 1. *The king of the children of Ammon died.]* Who, it appears by the next verse, was Nahash: to whom Saul gave a very great defeat at Jabesh-gilead (1 Sam. xi.).

Hanun his son reigned in his stead.] For it seems that was an hereditary kingdom, as most were in those countries and times.

Ver. 2. *I will shew kindness unto Hanun—as his father shewed kindness unto me.]* All generous minds are full of gratitude and compassion, as Strigelius here observes out of several heathen authors. But there is no example of it greater than in David, who remembers ancient benefits received from Nahash, and pitied his son who had lost such a father. What those benefits were is uncertain. Some of the Jews say he fled to him, when he durst not stay with Achish, and he received him kindly; others, that he entertained his relations, when the king of Moab, to whom David committed them, slew some of them: but it is most probable, that, being an enemy to Saul, who had given him a great overthrow, he proved a friend to David when he was persecuted by him, and sent him relief and assistance, and perhaps offered him his protection.

David sent to comfort him by the hand of his servants] According to the present custom among princes, who send some of their courtiers to condole

the loss of those with whom they live in friendship. *Ammon.]* Where they had audience of Hanun, and delivered their message: which his court sinistrously interpreted, as appears by the next verse.

Ver. 3. *The princes of the children of Ammon]* Who bare a great sway in all public affairs.

Said unto Hanun, &c.] They measured his affection by their own: who having no kindness for David, imagined he had as little for them. Nothing so well meant but may be ill interpreted, and is wont to be so by men who love nobody but themselves. They persuade him that these ambassadors came only to observe where the city was weakest, and might be most successfully assaulted and taken.

Ver. 4. *Shaved off one half of their beards,]* He was not only very credulous, but very ill natured; for otherwise he would have civilly dismissed them, whatsoever his courtiers suspected, or kept them in an honourable custody till the truth had been discovered. But this was the highest disgrace that could be put upon them: for all people thought their hair a great ornament, and never shaved their heads or their beards but in case of mourning: which was forbid to the Israelites (Lev. xix. 27; Deut. xiv. 1). And therefore, when he had caused one half of their beards to be cut off, they abhorred to cut the other; which made them look ridiculously (see Isa. xv. 2; Jer. xli. 5, xlviii. 37). We learn what a foul disgrace, yea, a heavy punishment, this was in ancient times, from

meet them, because the men were greatly ashamed: and the king said, Tarry at Jericho until your beards be grown, and then return.

6 ¶ And when the children of Ammon saw that they stank before David, the children of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians of Beth-rehob, and the Syrians of Zoba, twenty thousand footmen, and of king Maacah a thousand men, and of Ish-tob twelve thousand men.

7 And when David heard of it, he sent Joab, and all the host of the mighty men.

8 And the children of Ammon came out, and put the battle in array at the entering in of the gate: and the Syrians of Zoba, and of Rehob, and Ish-tob, and Maacah, were by themselves in the field.

9 When Joab saw that the front of the battle

was against him before and behind, he chose of all the choice men of Israel, and put them in array against the Syrians:

10 And the rest of the people he delivered into the hand of Abishai his brother, that he might put them in array against the children of Ammon.

11 And he said, If the Syrians be too strong for me, then thou shalt help me: but if the children of Ammon be too strong for thee, then I will come and help thee.

12 Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God: and the LORD do that which seemeth him good.

13 And Joab drew nigh, and the people that were with him, unto the battle against the Syrians: and they fled before him.

Nicolaus Damascenus, mentioned by Stobæus, tit. 42, who says, that among the Indians the king commanded the greatest offenders to be shaven, *κελεύει περιτρίσαι ὡς ἐσχάτης τιμωρίας*, as the heaviest punishment he could inflict upon them. And Tacitus saith, that there were few adulteresses among the ancient Germans, whose punishment was left to the husbands: and they were wont to cut off their hair, and turn them naked out of doors, and whip them through the streets (see Georg. Ritterhusius *De Jure Asylum*, cap. 10). And at this day this is the greatest indignity that can be offered to any man in Persia, to cause his beard to be shaved off: as Tavernier relates in his Indian travels, p. 121, where he tells us the sopher caused an ambassador of Aurengzebe to be thus used, telling him he was not worthy to wear a beard, and thereupon commanded it to be shaved off. Which was just like this act of Hanun. And Aurengzebe most highly resented this affront that was offered him in the person of his ambassador, as David did this which was offered him in his.

Cut off their garments in the middle,] Long garments down to the heels were worn in those countries, especially by honourable persons: and therefore the king of Ammon still put a further indignity upon them, in cutting their garments short, even to the middle: whereby those parts were exposed which required to be covered. For the Israelites did not wear breeches, as we do: so that their long garments being cut to the middle, their nakedness might be seen (see Isa. xx. 4).

Ver. 5. *He sent to meet them,*] Therefore he sent, no doubt, clothes to cover them, together with the following advice.

Tarry at Jericho] Which was the first place to which they came in the land of Canaan: and now a private village, where they might obscure themselves, till they were fit to appear in public.

Until your beards be grown,] For it was a reproach in that country to have no beard. And though it was well known how they came to be deprived of them, yet it was not fit that persons of their quality should appear unlike all other men.

Ver. 6. *When the children of Ammon saw that they stank before David,*] They wanted not intelligence how heinously David resented the barbarous usage of his ambassadors; which is expressed by a phrase, which signifies that they were become very odious to him (see Gen. xxxiv. 30).

Sent and hired the Syrians of Beth-rehob,] They distrusted their own strength, and therefore hired auxiliary forces of their neighbours: particularly those of Beth-rehob, which was a city belonging to the Ca-

naanites rather than the Syrians (as Bochart observes), who were only borderers upon it.

Zoba,] Concerning Zobah, see viii. 3.

Maacah] Maacah also was a city in Palestine, beyond Jordan, in the tribe of Manasseh, as Rehob was in the tribe of Asher (Josh. xiii. 11, xix. 28), but the Canaanites kept them out of the possession of both (Josh. xiii. 13; Judg. i. 31). Therefore Bochartus confutes those who think Aram Maacah was the country of Comagena: for though Aram commonly signifies Syria, which was divided into many countries, yet the Scriptures show these places were not in Syria. But the people of them were called Syrians, because they imitated their manners; as the woman in the gospel is called Syrophenician, though she was a woman of Canaan, Matt. xv. 22; Mark vii. 26 (see his *Phaleg*. lib. ii. cap. 6, latter end).

Of Ish-tob] Or, of the men of Tob: a country unto which Jephthah fled from his unkind brethren (see Judg. x. 3).

Ver. 7.] He did not think it prudent to stay till they assaulted him in his own country, but went and invaded theirs.

Ver. 8.] They drew up their army either before Rabbah, the metropolis of their country, or before Medeba (in the borders of it), where their confederates were pitched (1 Chron. xix. 7). They kept their mercenary forces in the field, and would not let them come into their cities.

Ver. 9. *The front of the battle*] In the Hebrew, *the face of the battle*, &c. i. e. they had divided their forces; the Syrians appearing before him, and the Ammonites behind him. Joab also, like an expert commander, presently divided his army into two bodies, and picked out the best soldiers to engage the Syrians, who, it seems, were the strongest, or most valiant.

Ver. 10.] He was also an experienced captain, who seems to have to deal with that body of the enemies which was behind them, as Joab with those before him.

Ver. 11.] Send a detachment, as they now speak, from the strongest body, to that which proved weaker.

Ver. 12.] These words were not spoken, I suppose, to Abishai alone; but to all the army by their officers; that they might not be disheartened at the sight of such numerous forces, as in a manner encompassed them; but be so much the more resolute, for the preservation of their country. If they did their duty, he trusted God's providence would favour them: however, it would be some comfort, that they had done their best.

Ver. 13.] He did very prudently in assaulting the

14 And when the children of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fled, then fled they also before Abishai, and entered into the city. So Joab returned from the children of Ammon, and came to Jerusalem.

15 ¶ And when the Syrians saw that they were smitten before Israel, they gathered themselves together.

16 And Hadarezer sent, and brought out the Syrians that were beyond the river: and they came to Helam; and Shobach the captain of the host of Hadarezer went before them.

17 And when it was told David, he gathered

all Israel together, and passed over Jordan, and came to Helam. And the Syrians set themselves in array against David, and fought with him.

18 And the Syrians fled before Israel; and David slew the men of seven hundred chariots of the Syrians, and forty thousand horsemen, and smote Shobach the captain of their host, who died there.

19 And when all the kings that were servants to Hadarezer saw that they were smitten before Israel, they made peace with Israel, and served them. So the Syrians feared to help the children of Ammon any more.

mercenary army first; for they that are hired to fight generally have a great care to save themselves; having no regard to the cause for which they fight.

Ver. 14. *Saw that the Syrians were fled.*] On whom they principally relied.

Then fled they also before Abishai.] They seem not to have struck a stroke; but provided also for their safety, in the city near to which their army was drawn up. Here is no account of the number of the slain, which, I suppose, were few or none, because they did not fight, but flee. The year also seems to have been so far spent, that it was not a season fit for laying a siege to the city (see the next chapter, ver. 1).

Ver. 15.] Fearing David would fall upon them for assisting his enemies, they resolved to be beforehand with him; and therefore levied a new army to invade him.

Ver. 16. *Hadarezer*] Who was the king of Aram-zobah in Mesopotamia.

Beyond the river:] i. e. Beyond Euphrates; which was the bound of his territories eastward (see viii. 3).

Helam:] A place, I suppose, on the borders of Hadarezer's country, westward.

Shobach—went before them.] Commanded both his forces and theirs which came to his assistance.

Ver. 17. *When it was told David, he gathered all Israel together.*] In this expedition David seems to have commanded his army in his own person.

The Syrians set themselves in array against David.] They seem to have begun the fight.

Ver. 18. *David slew the men of seven hundred chariots*] That is, seven thousand men, who belonged to those seven hundred chariots, as it is explained in 1 Chron. xix. 18.

Forty thousand horsemen.] In that place of the Chronicles it is said "forty thousand footmen." Which teaches us how to explain the words here; viz. that they were mixed together, horse and foot: and that in all there were slain forty thousand of them, part horsemen and part footmen.

And smote Shobach—who died there.] Was slain upon the spot (as we speak); being a valiant man who chose to be killed, rather than fly.

Ver. 19. *When all the kings that were servants to Hadarezer*] There were several petty kings that were subject to Hadarezer; who was the most powerful prince thereabout.

They made peace with Israel, and served them.] As, I suppose, Hadarezer himself also did: whereby God fulfilled his promise to Abraham (which was renewed to Joshua) of enlarging the dominion of his posterity, as far as Euphrates (see Gen. xv. 18; Josh. i. 2—4).

The Syrians feared to help the children of Ammon any more.] But left them to shift for themselves: insomuch that, as it follows, David conquered their country.

CHAPTER XI.

1 While Joab besieged Rabbah, David committeth adultery with Bath-sheba. 6 Uriah, sent for by David to cover the adultery, would not go home neither sober nor drunken. 14 He carrieth to Joab the letter of his death. 19 Joab sendeth the news thereof to David. 26 David taketh Bath-sheba to wife.

1 AND it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him,

and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem.

CHAP. XI.

Ver. 1. *After the year was expired.*] In the Hebrew, "at the return of the year:" that is, in the spring-time, he sent forth his armies to do that which he could not do in the conclusion of the former year; when the season was not fit for action, as I observed upon the fifteenth verse of the foregoing chapter. For the year ending with the month Adar, the next year began in the month Nisan: which was a fit time to march into the field to make war; and so commonly employed, that it seems to have had its name (as Bochartus observes) from *Nisim*: which signifies military ensigns, which were wont to be advanced in that month. And, in like manner, the month we call March, had its name among the Romans from

Mars, their god of war: because then they began their military expeditions (see his Hierozoicon, par. I. lib. ii. cap. 50).

At the time when kings go forth to battle.] These words to battle, are added for explication's sake: but they are not in the Hebrew; in which language to go forth signifies to go forth to war (see Gen. x. 11; Isa. xliii. 13; Zech. xiv. 3, and other places, mentioned by the same great man, par. ii. lib. iv. cap. 2).

David sent Joab—and all Israel;] All his soldiers.

They destroyed the children of Ammon.] Laid waste their country and killed all the people they could meet with.

Besieged Rabbah.] The royal city of the Ammonites (Deut. iii. 11).

But David tarried still at Jerusalem.] He com-

2 And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon.

3 And David sent and enquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bath-sheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?

4 And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house.

5 And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, I am with child.

6 ¶ And David sent to Joab, saying, Send me

mitted the care of this war to Joab, and did not himself go out to fight: as he had done before against Hadarezer.

Ver. 2. *In an eveningtide*] In the afternoon when the sun was declining.

That David arose from off his bed,] Where he had lain down to sleep, in the heat of the day; as the manner was in those countries (iv. 5).

And walked upon the roof of the king's house:] To take the fresh air: for their roofs were flat (see Deut. xxii. 8).

He saw a woman washing herself;] In her garden, where she bathed; or in her chamber, the casements being open. The first is most probable: and that she washed to cleanse herself from such legal impurities as are mentioned Lev. xv. 19, which is more likely than that she did it for pleasure, or merely to cool herself in a hot day, as some understand it. The fourth verse sufficiently explains this matter.

The woman was very beautiful] Of a delicate shape, and lovely countenance and complexion. Thus Jupiter is said to have seen Proserpina washing herself, and exposing her whole body to his view: which inflamed his lust after her.

Λουμένης ὄλον εἶδος εἰδόμετο Περσεφόνης.

As Nonnus hath it in his Dionys. (see Spanhemius ad vers. 53, Callim. Hymn. in Læværum Palladis).

Ver. 3. *David sent and enquired after the woman.*] That if she was a single woman he might take her for his wife.

Is not this Bath-sheba,—the wife of Uriah the Hittite?] This seems to be the answer of him who was sent to inquire about her, that he need not trouble himself any farther, for she was another man's wife. Who is called a Hittite, because he was so by nation, but a proselyte to the Jewish religion: and for his valour made one of the king's guard among the Cherethites and the Pelethites, which was the reason, perhaps, that he had a house so near the king's.

Ver. 4. *David—look her;*] Notwithstanding he was informed she was another man's wife, he sent messengers to her to invite her to his palace: into which he received her. This was a very great crime, being done deliberately and advisedly: and here is recorded for several great ends and purposes. First, that the best men may be sensible in what need they stand continually of the Divine assistance: which, therefore, they ought to pray for earnestly, and watch as well as pray, that they fall not into temptation. And we should all learn from hence, that they are but men whose examples are set before us; and therefore we must live by rule, and not merely by example. And that we ought to take heed of sloth and idleness: being always well employed, and not giving ourselves liberty to gaze upon temptations.

For she was purified from her uncleanness:] Which

Uriah the Hittite. And Joab sent Uriah to David.

7 And when Uriah was come unto him, David demanded of him how Joab did, and how the people did, and how the war prospered.

8 And David said to Uriah, Go down to thy house, and wash thy feet. And Uriah departed out of the king's house, and there followed him a mess of meat from the king.

9 But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and went not down to his house.

10 And when they had told David, saying, Uriah went not down unto his house, David said unto Uriah, Camest thou not from thy journey?

shows the reason why she conceived so quickly (see Grotius).

She returned unto her house.] Early in the morning, I suppose, that she might not be discovered. The Talmudists are so desirous to excuse their ancestors from all blemishes, that they say David committed no sin in lying with Bath-sheba: but only in causing Uriah to be killed. For, when any man went to war, he gave his wife, they pretend, a bill of divorce: so that if he was killed in the war, it was not adultery in another man, who lay with her, as soon as the bill was given. This monstrous opinion is seriously maintained by R. Samuel Laniado against Abarinel; who honestly acknowledges, and strenuously proves, David was guilty of a very foul adultery: which was the more criminal, because it was with the wife of a faithful servant of his, who then served him in his wars (see Buxtorf, De Sponsal. et Divort. sect. 43, &c.; and Selden, in his Uxor. Hebraica, lib. iii. cap. 19, p. 441).

Ver. 5.] She was afraid of infamy, and, perhaps, of the severity of her husband; who might cause her to be stoned: and therefore prays David to consult her honour and her safety.

Ver. 6. *Joab sent Uriah to David.*] With an account of the state of the war; which David, it is likely, desired.

Ver. 7.] Some think (particularly P. Martyr) that these were such ordinary questions, as betrayed this was not the business for which he commanded him to be sent: but the last words import, that after the common questions of Joab's and the people's health, he inquired how the siege went on; what approaches they had made to the city; what hopes they had of taking it; in what time; with other things of like nature, which were of importance.

Ver. 8. *Go down to thy house, and wash thy feet.*] As the manner of travellers was: this being a great refreshment after their journey.

There followed him a mess of meat from the king.] In token of his extraordinary favour and kindness to him; and that, eating freely of good cheer, he might be the more desirous to enjoy the company of his wife. Abarinel thinks this was a very sinful contrivance of David, to endeavour to have his child thought the child of Uriah: or, at least, it was very much below his dignity, he thinks, to have one of his own progeny pass for an ordinary man.

Ver. 9.] Like a true soldier, he lay all night in the guard-chamber (with the Cherethites and Pelethites), and not with his wife. By which means God's providence so ordered it, that the crime of this prince (who had been so admirably instructed in his duty) should not be concealed, as he intended.

Ver. 10.] They that carried the mess of meat after him gave David this information: who still pretended

why then didst thou not go down unto thine house?

11 And Uriah said unto David, The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents; and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? as thou livest, and as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing.

12 And David said to Uriah, Tarry here to-day also, and to-morrow I will let thee depart. So Uriah abode in Jerusalem that day, and the morrow.

13 And when David had called him, he did eat and drink before him; and he made him drunk; and at even he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, but went not down to his house.

14 ¶ And it came pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah.

15 And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die.

16 And it came to pass, when Joab observed the city, that he assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men were.

17 And the men of the city went out, and fought with Joab: and there fell some of the people of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died also.

18 Then Joab sent and told David all the things concerning the war;

19 And charged the messenger, saying, When thou hast made an end of telling the matters of the war unto the king,

20 And if so be that the king's wrath arise, and he say unto thee, Wherefore approached ye so nigh unto the city when ye did fight? knew ye not that they would shoot from the wall?

21 Who smote Abimelech the son of Jerub-

kindness to him, and great care of him: telling him he expected no service of him here; especially after a journey.

Ver. 11. *The ark, &c. abide in tents;*] It seems they still continued the custom which we read of 1 Sam. iv. 4, of carrying the ark into the field, as a token of the Divine presence with them, and favour to them: and that they might consult the Divine Majesty in any difficult cases.

My lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields;] Where they lay upon the ground in their tents. It is an idle conceit of Laniado, before mentioned, that Uriah was guilty of treason, in calling Joab *my lord*, in the presence of David: for which he pretends David might lawfully put him to death.

As thou livest, and as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing.] These are not two oaths, but the repetition of the same: which was pronounced with such vehemence, that David's heart, it might have been expected, should have been deeply touched, to think how he had abused so brave a man: and made him reflect how vilely he indulged himself in sinful pleasure, whilst this man and the rest gloriously endured all manner of hardships, and refused the most innocent pleasure, for the service of their country: but he was so corrupted for the present, that he was troubled to find Uriah so true a soldier.

Ver. 12.] He still pretended more kindness to him in giving him time to rest himself after his journey: and perhaps pretended, also, that he himself could not sooner finish his despatches.

Ver. 13. *And when David had called him, &c.*] Invited him to supper the night before he went away. The Hebrew word doth not certainly signify that he was quite drunk; but that he drank so much, that he was very merry. However, Plutarch observes, that brave men, even when they have drunk too much, preserve their modesty and gravity: just as good horses are orderly, even when their reins are let loose. This was an addition to David's sin, that he endeavoured to intoxicate Uriah, and therefore make him forget his oath before mentioned.

Ver. 14.] Who, if he suspected any thing of the adultery, as some think he did (and therefore resolving it should be discovered, would not go home to his wife), yet was so trusty a servant, he would not open the letter, to find what was in it.

Ver. 15.] Thus one sin begets many, depriving

men of the use of their understanding. For he might better, as Abarinel observes, have told Uriah the truth, and begged his pardon, and obliged him to stay with him until the child was born, and then secretly put it out to nurse; whereby the matter might have been so managed, that it should not have been commonly divulged, or not certainly believed. But his eyes were blinded: and his very nature was altered, and become base and degenerate, now he had given himself up to sensuality. For he that formerly spared Saul, when he could have destroyed him, and no one have known who did it, seeks the death of a faithful servant after a most unworthy manner.

Ver. 16.] Ordered him to attack a part of the city which he knew would be valiantly defended: or, to make good a breach, out of which the best men they had in the city would issue out against them. Joab was herein also deeply guilty, in complying with such a command: unless we suppose that he might imagine Uriah had committed some great crime; for which David, consulting Uriah's honour, would not punish him openly.

Ver. 17. *The men of the city went out, and fought with Joab;*] They seem to have made a sally out of the city upon the Israelites, when they saw they were preparing for an assault.

Uriah the Hittite died also.] This was a further aggravation of David's sin, that he not only exposed an innocent and a valiant faithful servant to be killed, but other persons also with him, who might have lived to do good service to their country: for it is not to be imagined that one person alone was set in the forefront, where the service was hottest (as David ordered, ver. 15), but there was a party of stout men with Uriah, whom he led on.

Ver. 18.] How it was managed, and what ill success they had in one engagement.

Ver. 19.] Especially this last action.

Ver. 20.] All good kings are careful to preserve their subjects; and therefore it must be supposed David would be angry when he heard of this loss; till he reflected upon the reason why they were exposed to such danger.

Ver. 21. *Who smote Abimelech the son of Jerubesheth?*] These are still the words the king might be supposed to say; How came Abimelech to lose his life? Was it not by venturing too near the wall? He calls him the son of Jerubbesheth, who in the book of Judges is called the son of Jerubbaal: of

besheth? did not a woman cast a piece of a mill-stone upon him from the wall, that he died in Thebez? why went ye nigh the wall? then say thou, Thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.

22 ¶ So the messenger went, and came and shewed David all that Joab had sent him for.

23 And the messenger said unto David, Surely the men prevailed against us, and came out unto us into the field, and we were upon them even unto the entering of the gate.

24 And the shooters shot from off the wall upon thy servants; and *some* of the king's servants be dead, and thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.

which see upon the second chapter of this book, ver. 8.

Why went ye nigh the wall?] Having such an example, to make you more cautious.

Thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.] Which he knew would soon pacify him.

Ver. 22.] The whole process of the war hitherto, but more particularly the event of the last engagement, as it here follows.

Ver. 23.] The account he gives of the last action is this; that the Ammonites made a sally, and were too hard for the Israelites, whom they put into some disorder; but they, plucking up their courage, rallied again and beat the Ammonites back, following them to the very gate of their city.

Ver. 24. These shooters were either archers or such as managed the machines (which perhaps they had in those days, as they had afterward among the Romans), out of which they shot arrows and stones. Vitruvius says, that out of their *catapultæ* and *scorpiones* they shot arrows, and out of their *ballistæ* they shot stones. Others say the quite contrary, as Goteschalchus Stewecius shows, in his learned commentary on the fourth book of Vegetius, lib. De Re Militari, p. 416, &c.

Ver. 25. *Let not this thing displease thee.*] That is, be not disheartened by this loss. David showed no

25 Then David said unto the messenger, Thus shalt thou say unto Joab, Let not this thing displease thee, for the sword devoureth one as well as another: make thy battle more strong against the city, and overthrow it: and encourage thou him.

26 ¶ And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband.

27 And when the mourning was past, David sent and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD.

sign of displeasure, expecting to hear the news he desired of Uriah's death.

For the sword devoureth one as well as another.] Makes no distinction between good and bad.

Make thy battle more strong against the city.] He would have this defeat make them more resolute, to assault the city with greater force, till they were masters of it.

Encourage thou him.] i. e. Joab and his soldiery.

Ver. 26.] But not long: for then David could not have taken her soon enough into his house to cover his adultery. The common time was seven days (1 Sam. xxxi. 7).

Ver. 27.] This whole business *was evil in the eyes* of God (as the words are in the Hebrew), not only his adultery, and the murder of Uriah; but also his taking Bath-sheba to be his wife. For according to the Hebrew doctors, it was utterly unlawful for any man to marry the wife of one whom he had defiled. Which hath made some of the Jews so laborious to excuse David from the crime of adultery. For Laniado himself acknowledges, that if David had committed adultery with Bath-sheba, she had been perpetually prohibited, and unlawful to him, as his words are. But though this ought not to have been done, yet, being done, the marriage held good; and the children he afterward had by her were legitimate (see Buxtorf. De Sponsalibus et Divortis, sect. 43).

CHAPTER XII.

1 *Nathan's parable of the ewe lamb causeth David to be his own judge.* 7 *David, reproved by Nathan, confesseth his sin, and is pardoned.* 15 *David mourneth and prayeth for the child, while it lived.* 24 *Solomon is born, and named Jedidiah.* 26 *David taketh Rabbah, and tortureth the people thereof.*

1 AND the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor.

CHAP. XII.

Ver. 1. *The Lord sent Nathan unto David.*] To awaken him out of his sleep, and give him a sight of his sins.

There were two men in one city.] This was a prudent and respectful way of awakening David by an apposite parable: which was so managed, that the prophet did not condemn David, but made him condemn himself. And many have very pertinently observed from hence, that there is never more use of wisdom and discretion than in the contrivance of reprehension; especially of princes and great persons, whom the ministers of Christ ought to admonish and reprove in an humble and reverend representation of their sins to them, not with rude expostulations of them, and declamations against them. It is not

2 The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds:

3 But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nou-

necessary to apply every word of this parable to David's case (as the beginning of it is exactly fitted), because in parables several things are added, which serve only to make them decorous and handsome. Yet Abarbinel (as I shall show in the conclusion of it) hath endeavoured to give an account of every part of it.

Ver. 2.] As David had many wives and concubines, with which he might have been well satisfied.

Ver. 3. *Save one little ewe lamb.*] Perhaps Uriah had only one wife, with whom he contented himself, or rather was highly pleased, she being mild and gentle as a lamb.

Which he had bought.] They frequently purchased their wives in those days; giving to their parents a sum of money for them (see Selden, lib. ii. De Uxore Hebr. cap. 20)

rished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter.

4 And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.

5 And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the

Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die:

6 And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.

7 ¶ And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul;

8 And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had

And lay in his bosom,] That is, was exceeding dear to him, and beloved by him. This is a resemblance not unlike the truth, unto those who understand how fond many persons were anciently, not only of lambs, but of several other creatures, which they suffered to eat with them at their tables, and to lie with them in their beds, as Bochart shows in his Hieroz. par. i. lib. ii. cap. 43.

Ver. 4. There came a traveller unto the rich man,] This may be applied to David's straggling affection, which he suffered to wander from his own home, and to covet another man's wife. The Jewish doctors say it represents that which they call *jetza kara*, "the evil disposition," or desire that is in us, which must be diligently watched and observed when we feel its motions. For they have this ingenious observation concerning it, in Bereschith Rabba and other books: "In the beginning it is but a traveller; but in time it becomes a guest; and in conclusion, is the master of the house." For he, say they, who is called a traveller in the beginning of this verse, is called *ish*, a man, in the conclusion, of it.

To dress for the wayfaring man] Wherewith he might have satisfied his appetite.

But took the poor man's lamb,] He touches not in this parable upon the murder, for that was committed to cover the adultery, which led the way to the other crime. And Abarinel gives a reason why it is not mentioned in his explication of the parable: which is this:—The rich man, saith he, plainly signifies David; his flocks and herds, David's wives and concubines: the poor man represents Uriah, who, he thinks, was a widower, and had several children alive by a former wife, when he married Bath-sheba. Whom he compares to a lamb which he bought, because he solemnly espoused her; and with tender affection he cherished her, and she grew up with him, and with his children, which he had by his former wife. This lamb being taken by the rich man from the poor, to gratify a wanton appetite, signifies David's taking Bath-sheba and lying with her. And it would have made the resemblance more complete, if he had added, that the rich man killed the poor man, from whom he took the lamb. But this is omitted, Abarinel thinks, in the parable, that David might not readily apprehend Nathan's meaning; and so be induced unawares to pronounce a sentence of condemnation upon himself. And then he had a fixed opportunity to show him, that if the rich man who took away the poor man's lamb deserved death according to his own judgment, how much more did he deserve it, who had not only taken another man's wife, but also caused him to be slain by the enemies of Israel!

Ver. 5.] Punishments sometimes extended beyond the law, because of the great atrocity of the crime.

Ver. 6. He shall restore the lamb fourfold,] This was agreeable to the law (Exod. xxii. 1).

Because he did this thing,] Because he took away

the lamb, he condemned him to make restitution fourfold: and because he had no pity (it being his only lamb), he condemned him to die. Kimehi will have it, that the word signifies twice fourfold; because it is in their dual number: so that this punishment also is beyond the law. But all the ancient interpreters are against him. But the Jews here observe that these words were ominous: so many of David's sons perishing, as he said the rich man should restore lambs, viz. the child he had by Bath-sheba, Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah (see Bochartus, in his Hieroz. par. i. lib. ii. cap. 40).

Ver. 7. Thou art the man,] Who had pronounced a dreadful sentence against himself. Though reproofs of men in authority are to be managed very mannerly, as to the form wherein they are delivered; yet as to the matter they are to be plain and downright, so that they may be made sensible of their guilt.

I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul,] Who sought to hinder his advancement to the kingdom, by destroying him. Thus he aggravates David's sin, from the obligations he had to God: who had preferred him to the highest dignity, when he was in a low, and sometimes a desperate condition.

Ver. 8. Thy master's house,] His kingdom.

Thy master's wives into thy bosom,] For the wives of a king went along with his lands and goods unto his successor: it being unlawful for the widow of a king to be wife to any but a king; as appears by the story of Adonijah. But this doth not signify that David married any of them; but only that they were delivered into his possession, as all other things belonging unto Saul were. So Maimonides: and more than this, the Jewish doctors say, no subject might have so much as the horse of the king, no more than his sceptre and crown: much less his widow, or one divorced by him, who was to remain a widow to the day of her death. So the same Maimonides: The wife of a king is to be married to none else; for even the king cannot legally marry the widow of his predecessor, or one divorced by him (see Selden, lib. i. De Uxore Hebr. cap. 10, and Carpzovius upon Schiecard's Jus Regium, p. 411). But there are those who to avoid all controversy about this matter, interpret the word *nase*, not *wives*, but mere *women*, belonging unto Saul.

Gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah,] Dominion over all the twelve tribes.

I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things,] He need not have asked, and God would have given him all that he could reasonably desire; but he ought not to have taken what he pleased himself. The Jews refer this to the wives he would have given him: and gathered from hence, that their king might have eighteen wives, and no more (see upon Deut. xvii. 17). But it is evident these words, "such and such things," do not signify a certain number of any thing, but indefinitely other benefits of any kind

been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things.

9 Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.

10 Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.

11 Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun.

as Theod. Hackspan observes out of many like places, particularly Isa. vii. 20, (see his Disput. 4. n. 3).

Ver. 9.] These words, and David's own confession (ver. 13), might have ashamed the Talmudists, one would think, from framing excuses for David's sin, and absolving him from any guilt. Bartoloccius hath given a large account of their lewd prevarication in this matter, in his Kirjath-sepher, tom. ii. p. 102, 103, &c.

Thou hast killed Uriah] For he contrived his death, which was as bad as if he had killed him himself.

Hast taken his wife] After he had first committed adultery with her.

Hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.] This highly aggravated his crime, as Abarbinel observes, that he caused them to be slain by the professed enemies of God; who triumphed in the slaughter of so great a man. And in this, Laniado himself confesses David sinned, though in nothing else.

Ver. 10. *The sword shall never depart from thine house;*] That is, as long as he lived there should be slaughter in his family. Which was fulfilled in the violent death of his children, Amnon, and Absalom, and (about the time of his death) Adonijah.

Because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah] Which appears by this repetition, was a very great offence, but not greater than his adultery, as Procopius Gazæus thinks it was.

Ver. 11. *I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house.*] That is, his own family: which was notoriously fulfilled in Absalom's conspiracy against him.

He shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun.] For Absalom had a tent spread in the house-top, and there went in unto them (xvi. 21, 22). Which is said to be done before David's eyes, because, though he did not see it, yet it was done so publicly that he could not but know it, and yet was not able to hinder it.

Ver. 12.] For it was notorious to all how David fled in haste from his son, and left his concubines behind him (xv. 14—16).

Ver. 13. *I have sinned against the Lord.*] This confession was made in a few words; but, no doubt, with many sobs and great grief, compunction and contrition of heart.

Nathan said unto David.] Not presently, but after he had bewailed his sin so bitterly that his repentance appeared to be hearty.

Thou shalt not die.] He was guilty of death upon a double account, as an adulterer and as a murderer, as Procopius Gazæus observes. But upon his repentance the prophet pronounces an absolution to him

12 For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.

13 And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.

14 Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.

15 ¶ And Nathan departed unto his house. And the Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick.

16 David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted and went in, and lay all night upon the earth.

thus far, that he should be pardoned the guilt and part of the punishment. That is, he should not perish eternally (as Rasi and others interpret the words *thou shalt not die*), nor here suffer the death he had deserved. For though when God gave them a king like other nations, he did not intend that he should be above all law, and not be bound to the laws he himself had given (as Abarbinel observes), yet he was not subject to the punishment of the law, which no magistrate could inflict, because he was the supreme: but God reserved his punishment to himself, and threatens to inflict it when inferior officers could not. Which threatening did not take away from him the power of pardoning and releasing the punishment, but he left that entire to himself, and here uses it; but in such a manner, that he freed David only from the punishment of death, and the loss of his kingdom: otherwise he was to suffer a great many and sore calamities as long as he lived (see J. Benedict. Carpzovius upon Schieckard's Jus Regium, cap. 2, Theor. 7. p. 137). Whereby it appears how false the doctrine of the Talmudists is concerning the power of the great Sanhedrin, who they say had power to scourge their kings, &c. Which we never find was attempted, though Saul and David, and especially Manassah, committed most heinous sins, which deserved severe correction.

Ver. 14.] This was an additional punishment, to be inflicted presently: because his sin was highly aggravated, in that the nations about them might thereby be tempted to have him and his Divine law in great contempt: which they saw no more regarded by the best men that professed it. Or they might blaspheme God as a respecter of persons, who had rejected Saul, and yet kept David on the throne, who had done worse than he. Or the Ammonites, perhaps, insulted over Israel and their God, when they had killed Uriah and others with him. Yet Procopius Gazæus here well observes, there was some mercy mixed with this punishment; for if the child had lived, it would have been a standing monument of his adultery: and therefore it may be thought, that in favour of David, God took him away, that he might remove his reproach. But this verse suggests a wonderful thing to us, that David remained many months insensible of what he had done (so bewitching is sensual pleasure); for the child begotten in adultery was born before Nathan came to rouse him out of his lethargy.

Ver. 15.] Of some sudden severe distemper: which appeared, at first, as if it were mortal.

Ver. 16. *David therefore besought God*] He thought the threatening might not be absolute: the will of God being not always manifested entirely at once,

17 And the elders of his house arose, and went to him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them.

18 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice: how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead?

19 But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead.

20 Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his

apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat.

21 Then said his servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread.

22 And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live?

23 But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.

24 ¶ And David comforted Bath-sheba his

but he reserves still something to himself. As when he commanded Abraham to offer his son, and when he told Hezekiah he should die.

Went in,] To his closet, I suppose, or some place of retirement.

Lay all night upon the earth.] Humbling himself greatly for his sin, which had deserved this, and far sorer punishment. Salvian (in his second book, De Gubern. Dei) describes this admirably:—He put off his purple, saith he, threw away his royal ornaments, laid down his diadem, wholly stripped himself of his kingship, and appeared as a penitent, in a squalid, rueful garb; fasting, lying on the ground, confessing, mourning, repenting, deprecating, &c. and yet, with all his humiliation and compunction, he could not obtain a revocation of this punishment. By this and the story of Absalom, it appears that David was a great lover of his children, many of which proved great afflictions to him.

Ver. 17. The elders of his house] The principal officers belonging to the court.

Went to him, to raise him up] By their earnest entreaties, to have a care of his own health.

Neither did he eat bread with them] As he was wont to do at other times, when the principal persons of the court sat at table with him. But it is not to be thought that David ate nothing all the time the child was sick, but only after he began to despair of his life; or perhaps all the time he ate nothing till the evening; and then abstained from all delicate food, and contented himself with coarser fare.

Ver. 18. On the seventh day, that the child died.] Either the seventh day after its birth, before it was circumcised, or the seventh after it fell sick. This was the first beginning of the Divine animadversion upon him (as Salvian speaks), fuit utique primum, sed non solum, "it was indeed the first, but not the alone:" for there followed a long train of exceeding great troubles.

The servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead:] Thus they whispered and reasoned among themselves, so that he might not hear them, as appears by the next verse.

Ver. 19. When David saw that his servants whispered.] He guessed what the matter was. They would not acquaint him with it abruptly, for fear he should fall into too great a passion.

Ver. 20. Then David arose, and changed his apparel.] Put off the habit of a mourner, and prepared himself decently to appear before God. For it is certain the Jews were wont to wash before they went into the house of God, either their whole body, or their hands: which was usual among the gentiles

also. And some have imagined the Jews learnt it from them; because we find no mention of it, as they say, till the time of Judith, xii. 7 (see Dr. Spencer, dissert. 3, cap. 2, sect. 11). But that is a mistake; it being mentioned not only here in this place, but in the book of Psalms, xxvi. 6. For God having anciently commanded them to wash themselves, before they appeared in his presence at Mount Sinai (Exod. xx. 20), they thence, it is likely, concluded it was fit to prepare themselves for all their holy assemblies after the same manner.

Came into the house of the Lord.] This was done like a truly good man, who, before he would go to his own house, went to God's, and there gave him thanks, we may suppose, for the pardon of his sin, and not cutting him off as he had done his child. He acknowledged also the justice of God, and did not complain of his severity. He submitted to his holy will, and besought him, perhaps, that the remaining afflictions might be moderated, and made profitable to him.

Then he came to his own house;] I suppose he was in some retired room of his own house, where he lay upon the earth mourning, and would not eat: from whence he would not remove to any other part of it, till he had been first at the house of God, and there worshipped.

Ver. 21.] His great officers, who sat at the table with him, I suppose, said this.

Ver. 22.] They thought him preposterous in mourning while the child was alive, and cheering up himself when it was dead. But he shows what reason he had for both: it being possible God might be so kind as to reverse the sentence of death which he had pronounced against the child, upon David's humiliation, repentance, and earnest prayer to him for mercy.

Ver. 23.] But now God's will being declared to be absolute, it was in vain to solicit for the child's life; which he could not hope to see restored by fasting and prayers, or any other means: but he must rather prepare to go to it, than think of bringing it back to him. Maimonides says that they did not lament infants who died before they were thirty days old, but carried them in their arms to the grave, with one woman and two men to attend them; without saying the usual prayers over them, or the consolations for mourners. But if an infant was above thirty days old when he died, they carried him out on a small bier, and stood over him in order, and said the prayers and consolations. If he was a year old, then he was carried out upon a bed. This custom Gierus thinks David followed, in making no mourning for his child.

wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her: and she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon: and the Lord loved him.

25 And he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet; and he called his name Jedidiah, because of the Lord.

26 ¶ And Joab fought against Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and took the royal city.

27 And Joab sent messengers to David, and said, I have fought against Rabbah, and have taken the city of waters.

28 Now therefore gather the rest of the peo-

ple together, and encamp against the city, and take it: lest I take the city, and it be called after my name.

29 And David gathered all the people together, and went to Rabbah, and fought against it, and took it.

30 And he took their king's crown from off his head, the weight whereof was a talent of gold with the precious stones: and it was set on David's head. And he brought forth the spoil of the city in great abundance.

31 And he brought forth the people that were

when it was dead; though there is no ground to think such customs as Maimonides describes were used in these early days (see L. De Luctu Ebræorum, cap. 3).

Ver. 24. *David comforted Bath-sheba*] Who, no doubt, was deeply afflicted for the loss of her child: which was a strong bond while it lived, to tie David's affection to her; but being dead, she might fear he would no longer have any concern for her, but perhaps divorce her, as having been the occasion of great evil to him. It is observable, that there is not one word said of Bath-sheba in all this relation, either concerning her guilt or her punishment. She was punished, I suppose, in the calamities that befel David; who enticed her, not she him, to commit the foul sin of adultery, and was innocent in the murder of Uriah.

Went in unto her,] Which it was not lawful to do, as Maimonides observes, while the days of mourning lasted; for then they might not so much as marry, though they did not lie together. But those days being ended, he enjoyed her company. The same Gierus hath collected a great deal to this purpose in the forenamed book, cap. 21.

Solomon:] Some think his mother first gave him this name, as soon as he was born.

The Lord loved him.] As the Lord told him, it is likely, by Nathan the prophet: who comforted him, after his great humiliation, with this good hope, that notwithstanding his sin God would have a kindness for this son, and make him very famous. Such is the wonderful goodness of God to truly penitent sinners, who testify the sincerity of their repentance by humble submission to whatsoever punishments God thinks fit to inflict upon them (as David did to the death of the former child), and thereby incline the Divine goodness to show further mercy to them.

Ver. 25. *He sent, and he called his name Jedidiah,*] But David hereupon sent to give his child another name; signifying the love which he was assured God had to him. But the Scripture never calls him by this name, but always Solomon: which name the people loved, because he built the house of the Lord in peaceable times.

Because of the Lord,] Because he had so graciously declared his love to him. For the name imports, as is noted in the margin of the Bible, "beloved of the Lord." Victorinus Strigelius translates the first words of this verse thus: Traddit eum in manum Nathan, &c. "he committed him to the hand of Nathan the prophet," that he might educate him and bring him up in piety, and in the knowledge of all things necessary for a prince to be acquainted withal. For the most excellent natures are apt to err in many things (as he observes) without learning; and therefore, though Hercules had a very great genius, yet he was put into the hands of learned men to instruct him, as appears by the verses of Theocritus, which recite his masters. Thus Alexander was brought up by Aris-

tot in all manner of learning: and if Constantine, together with his piety, had not been furnished with a great deal of knowledge, he could not have managed the cause of Christ against the Arians so well as he did in the council of bishops.

Ver. 26.] That part of the city where the royal palace was; which lay upon the water that ran by the city, as the next verse seems to interpret it. It is not to be imagined that Joab continued the siege so long, as till David had two children by Bath-sheba: but this was done after the death of Uriah; when David commanded them to make their assault stronger against the city (xi. 25).

Ver. 27.] That part of this city which lay upon the water: the other part, which was the heart of the city, being yet untaken. But it being supplied with water from this part, of which Joab had got possession, it could not hold out long, but would be forced to surrender, because Joab cut off their water from them. So Josephus understood it, τὴν ἰδέαν αὐτοῖς ἀπεριμένονος, lib. vii. cap. 7. And thus some learned men translate the last words of this verse, by adding the particle *mem* before *eth*, "He took from the city the waters."

Ver. 28.] As, from the conquest of Africa, Scipio was called Africanus. By this it appears, that though Joab had many faults, yet he loved his prince, and endeavoured to raise his glory.

Ver. 29. *David gathered all the people together,*] All that were fit for war.

Went to Rabbah,—and took it.] The army being reinforced with such great recruits, they did not merely block up the city to starve it, and force it to surrender, but took it by storm, and permitted the soldiers to plunder and take the spoil of it; as Josephus writes διαπράσαι τοῖς στρατιώταις ἄφρηκεν.

Ver. 30. *He took their king's crown*] This was the king's part of the spoil: and the Talmudists also say, that all the household stuff of the conquered king belonged to the king that was victorious (see Grotius, lib. iii. De Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 23, sect. 24.)

The weight whereof was a talent of gold] Or rather, the price, or value of it: as the Hebrew word frequently signifies, and not only *weight* (see Bochartus, in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 37, p. 380). And so it is to be taken here; for who was able to carry on his head such a weight as a talent, which they say was a hundred and twenty-five pounds?

With the precious stones:] Which made the value of it so great. Josephus here saith, that there was one stone of great price, ἐν μέσῳ, "in the middle" of the crown; which he calls a sardonix. The original of which fable Bochartus hath ingeniously conjectured in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. v. cap. 7, where he mentions other conceits of the Jews about this stone.

He brought forth the spoil of the city in great abundance.] This passage is thus rendered by Josephus, πολλά δὲ καὶ ἄλλα σκεῖνα λαμπρὰ καὶ ποσόντα εὗρεν ἐν

therein, and put *them* under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brickkiln: and thus did

he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon. So David and all the people returned unto Jerusalem.

τῆ πόλι. "He found more and other prey in the city very splendid, and of great price."

Ver. 31. *Put them under saws, &c.*] Some of the inhabitants he caused to be sawn in sunder; over others horses drew harrows with great iron teeth; others were drawn over sharp sickles, or sharp stones, which perhaps he means by *brickkilns*: for so some interpreters understand it, that he dragged them through the place where bricks were made; and there grated their flesh upon the rugged pieces of broken bricks. Though some will have this word *malten* to signify the place where the Ammonites offered their sacrifices to their god Moloch, or Maleom (as he is often called), and made the people there to pass through the fire. So the Vulgar translates it *fornacem Moloch*, "the furnace of Moloch." This dreadful punishment was to terrify other countries from violating the right of nations, by abusing public ambassadors. Though many have thought it too severe, and looked upon it

as an argument, that David did this in the state of his impenitence; when the mild and gentle Spirit of God was departed from him, and he was become cruel and furious, as well as lustful.

Thus did he unto all the cities] This will not let us think that he punished so cruelly only those who advised the using of his ambassadors shamefully, or applauded it (as many it is likely did, that lived in Rabbah), for he treated all the cities in the country in the same rigorous manner.

So David and all the people returned unto Jerusalem.] After they had brought all the country into subjection to him, and secured the possession of it. For it is not likely all the country people, women and children, were thus used; but only the military men, who had levied war against David, and called the Syrians to their assistance, and since put him to the trouble and charge of a long siege of Rabbah.

CHAPTER XIII.

1 Amnon loving Tamar, by Jonadab's counsel feigning himself sick, ravisheth her. 15 He hateth her, and shamefully turneth her away. 19 Absalom entertaineth her, and concealeth his purpose. 23. At a sheep shearing, among all the king's sons, he killeth Amnon. 30 David grieving at the news is comforted by Jonadab. 37 Absalom flieth to Talmai at Geshur.

1 AND it came to pass after this, that Absalom the son of David had a fair sister, whose name was Tamar: and Amnon the son of David loved her.

2 And Amnon was so vexed, that he fell sick for his sister Tamar; for she was a virgin; and Amnon thought it hard for him to do any thing to her.

3 But Amnon had a friend whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimeah David's brother: and Jonadab was a very subtil man.

CHAP. XIII.

Ver. 1.] Now began a sad scene to be opened, of the calamities which Nathan foretold David should befall his house (xii. 10). It is the common opinion of the Jews, that in the war king David had with the king of Geshur, he took his daughter captive; who being very beautiful, he lay with her once (as they fancy the law, Deut. xxi. 11, allows), and begat of her this daughter. And, afterward, she becoming a proselyte, he married her; and begat Absalom. So this daughter being begot while her mother was a gentile, they fancy she was not his legal child; and consequently Amnon might have married her (see Selden, lib. v. De Jure Nat. et Gent. cap. 23, and Cocceius upon the Sanhedrin, cap. 2, n. 8, annot. 7, of which more upon ver. 13, see there).

Ver. 2.] The passion of his mind disordered his body, because he could not compass his desire: for she being a virgin, was under a strict guard (as virgins used to be), so that it was difficult for him to enjoy her company. For *to do any thing to her*, signifies to do what he desired: as *to do* signifies not only in the Hebrew, but in other languages.

Ver. 3. *David's brother*:] That is, his cousin-german, who are often called brothers in Scripture.

Jonadab was a very subtil man.] To find means to compass an end.

4 And he said unto him, Why art thou, being the king's son, lean from day to day? wilt thou not tell me? And Amnon said unto him, I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister.

5 And Jonadab said unto him, Lay thee down on thy bed, and make thyself sick: and when thy father cometh to see thee, say unto him, I pray thee, let my sister Tamar come, and give me meat, and dress the meat in my sight, that I may see it, and eat it at her hand.

6 ¶ So Amnon lay down, and made himself

Ver. 4. *Being the king's son,*] And the eldest son who was next heir to the crown (iii. 2).

Lean from day to day] In the Hebrew the words are "morning by morning." For whatsoever diversions he might find in the day, he had restless nights, which made him look pale and wan when he arose.

Wilt thou not tell me?] For men are not wont to hide any thing from their friends.

I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister.] From these words the Jews are wont to argue, that Tamar was nothing of kin to Amnon; for he calls her not his sister, but his brother Absalom's sister. But this is a very frivolous observation, for in the next two verses he calls her *my sister*; and ver. 7, David calls him *her brother*: and see ver. 11.

Ver. 5. *Lay thee down on thy bed, and make thyself sick.*] He advises him to feign himself to be so ill, that it constrained him to keep his bed. Instead of doing the true office of a friend, he flatters his passion to his utter undoing.

When thy father cometh to see thee,] As he knew he would when he heard of his sickness: for, as I observed before, he was a great lover of his children.

Let my sister Tamar come, and give me meat.] He would have him pretend that his stomach was so nice and squeamish, that he could like nothing that his servants dressed; and therefore desired his sister, who

sick: and when the king was come to see him, Amnon said unto the king, I pray thee, let Tamar my sister come, and make me a couple of cakes in my sight, that I may eat at her hand.

7 Then David sent home to Tamar, saying, Go now to thy brother Amnon's house, and dress him meat.

8 So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house; and he was laid down. And she took flour, and kneaded it, and made cakes in his sight, and did bake the cakes.

9 And she took a pan, and poured them out before him; but he refused to eat. And Amnon said, Have out all men from me. And they went out every man from him.

10 And Amnon said unto Tamar, Bring the

meat into the chamber, that I may eat of thine hand. And Tamar took the cakes which she had made, and brought them into the chamber to Amnon her brother.

11 And when she had brought them unto him to eat, he took hold of her, and said unto her, Come lie with me, my sister.

12 And she answered him, Nay, my brother, do not force me; for no such thing ought to be done in Israel: do not thou this folly.

13 And I, whither shall I cause my shame to go? and as for thee, thou shalt be as one of the fools in Israel. Now therefore, I pray thee, speak unto the king; for he will not withhold me from thee.

14 Howbeit he would not hearken unto her

understood how to make delicate dishes, might come and prepare something he could relish.

Ver. 6. *Amnon lay down.*] He easily followed bad counsel, to attain a bad end.

Let Tamar my sister come, and make me a couple of cakes] She was peculiarly noted, I suppose, to be very curious in making these *lebiboth*, as the Hebrew calls them: which the Greeks translate *κολυριδας*, and are by interpreters thought a delicious sort of cakes: though some take *κολυρις* to have been an excellent broth, or some other supping meat, which cannot be meant here, because she is said, ver. 8, "to bake the cakes."

Ver. 7.] He suspected no fraud; and Jonadab was so wicked as not to discover it, and thereby prevent the mischief.

Ver. 8.] She showed herself an obedient daughter, and a kind sister.

Ver. 9. *She took a pan.*] Wherein they had been baked.

Poured them out before him] Into a dish.

He refused to eat.] Pretending he had no appetite.

Have out all men from me.] He commanded all his servants that attended him to leave him alone; that he might take some rest.

Ver. 10.] He removed, I suppose, into an inner room (where he thought he might more privately enjoy her), and pretended to be so refreshed by the change, that his stomach was come to him. Her innocence made her think herself safe; especially with a brother.

Ver. 11.] She sat down, it is likely, suspecting no evil, upon his bedside to minister unto him: which gave him the opportunity to lay violent hands upon her.

Ver. 12. *Nay, my brother, do not force me;*] She having not strength enough to get from him, resists him with strong reasons: praying him to consider first that she was his sister. Unto which relation she hoped he would have such a reverence, as not to meddle with her, though she were willing: much less offer violence to her, which was abominable to do to a stranger.

For no such thing ought to be done in Israel.] whatsoever other nations did (among whom idols were worshipped with filthy lusts), she prays him not to defile the church of God, whose glory was holiness and purity. The Jewish doctors say, this gave such a scandal, that the people began to speak thus one to another: If the king's daughter be thus used, what will become of the children of private men? And if men be so bold with chaste women, what will there be with those that are wantonly inclined?

this time, they say, a decree was made, that two young people should not be alone together (Gem. Sanhedrin, cap. 2, n. 8).

Do not thou this folly.] That is, this wickedness. She prays him to consider the foulness of the sin; which would highly provoke the Divine Majesty.

Ver. 13. *And I, whither shall I cause my shame to go?*] She beseeches him, beside the sin against God, to consider the disgrace it would be to her: who should not be able to look any body in the face; nor would any body think of marrying her.

Thou shalt be as one of the fools in Israel.] Utterly lose his reputation; and be looked upon as a man void of all sense of religion, honour, or humanity.

For he will not withhold me from thee.] The Jews commonly fancying that she being begot, as I said before, of a captive woman before David married her, there was no such kindred between her and Amnon, but that he might lawfully have her to wife. But others think, that she, being a young woman, unacquainted with the law, imagined that they who had not the same mother might lawfully marry; or that the power of the king was so great, that he might dispense with the law in this case: or rather, she said any thing that came into her mind, which she thought might deliver her from the present danger: and this I take to be the truest interpretation. For Abarinel hath at large confuted the opinion of her being begotten of Maacah before marriage, when she was a gentile. For, as the Scripture saith no such thing, so he thinks it altogether improbable, that such a man as David would have any thing to do with her, till she became a proselyte. And therefore, he saith, she spake these words, not as if she thought it lawful for the king to give her to Amnon for his wife; but that she might get rid of his solicitations by fair speeches. For she having urged him with the foregoing arguments, viz. the heinousness of the action itself, the dishonour it would be to her, and no less reproach to himself, and he persisting still blindly in his wicked resolution, she adds these words to give him hope, that he might have satisfaction without acting so brutishly, if he did but ask his father's consent. As if she had said, If thou art so sick with love, that thou art ready to die, speak to the king, unto whom thy life is very dear, and he will preserve it, by granting thy desire: for though by the law thou canst not enjoy me, yet he will rather choose to let me have thee, than see thee die. This, saith Abarinel, is the sense of these words, "he will not withhold me from thee." Which she said to withhold and divert him from his sin at that time. Which R. Samuel Laniado doth endeavour to support the forenamed opinion of our doctors) doth but very weakly oppose (see Bux-

voice: but, being stronger than she, forced her, and lay with her.

15 ¶ Then Amnon hated her exceedingly; so that the hatred wherewith he hated her was greater than the love wherewith he had loved her. And Amnon said unto her, Arise, be gone.

16 And she said unto him, *There is no cause: this evil in sending me away is greater than the other that thou didst unto me.* But he would not hearken unto her.

17 Then he called his servant that ministered unto him, and said, Put now this woman out from me, and bolt the door after her.

18 And she had a garment of divers colours upon her: for with such robes were the king's daughters that were virgins apparelled. Then

his servant brought her out, and bolted the door after her.

19 ¶ And Tamar put ashes on her head, and rent her garments of divers colours that was on her, and laid her hand on her head, and went on crying.

20 And Absalom her brother said unto her, Hath Amnon thy brother been with thee? but hold now thy peace, my sister: he is thy brother; regard not this thing. So Tamar remained desolate in her brother Absalom's house.

21 ¶ But when king David heard of all these things, he was very wroth.

22 And Absalom spake unto his brother Amnon neither good nor bad: for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar.

23 ¶ And it came to pass after two full years,

torf. De Sponsal. et Divortiis, sect. 20, and my notes upon ch. iii. 3).

Ver. 14.] As the nightingale in Hesiod sung in vain to the ravenous hawk (as Strigelius glosses upon these words), so Tamar said all this to a deaf man, who was wholly under the power of his furious lust, which would not suffer him to mind either God, or men, or himself.

Ver. 15. *Then Amnon hated her exceedingly;*] The Jews are much concerned to give a reason of this hatred. And Rasi and others say, that in her struggling with him to resist his attempt upon her, she hurt those parts wherewith he offended: which extremely enraged him. This is not improbable; but others think it a better account to say, that she reproached him so bitterly with what he had done, that he could not endure to hear it; and perhaps his own conscience began to fly in his face.

Arise, be gone.] He doth not so much as speak one kind word to her, nor call her sister (as Pellicanus observes), but in a rude manner bids her be gone, as if she had been a common strumpet.

Ver. 16. *There is no cause:*] For this hard usage. *This evil—is greater than the other that thou didst unto me.*] It was not a greater sin, but it did her the greater mischief, because it published her shame, and made that known to all which was done secretly.

But he would not hearken unto her.] This was very barbarous, to thrust her out of doors immediately, and in the day-time, without consulting how to cover, if it were possible, so foul a fact. So Josephus, He would not let her stay till night, but commanded her to be put out while it was day-light, *ἵνα καὶ μάρτυς ἴδῃ αἰσχυρῆς κατανύσσῃ*, that she might meet with witnesses of her shame.

Ver. 17.] This was a new violence to her, to be turned out of doors with such contemptuous language, as if she had been an impudent intruder.

Ver. 18. *She had a garment of divers colours*] This was such a garment as Joseph, the beloved son of Jacob, wore (see upon Gen. xxxvii. 3).

His servant brought her out.] A high contempt of a king's daughter, which they knew her to be by her apparel, if by nothing else. But their dependence on their master overruled all the respect due to her.

Ver. 19. *Tamar put ashes on her head, and rent her garment*] Both these were expressions of the greatest grief, which she was not able to suppress.

Laid her hand on her head, and went on crying.] Bewailing her calamity. "Laying her hands on her head" was also a token of great trouble and grief; she covering thereby her face, as one ashamed. Thus Jeremiah saith, the children of Israel should go forth

from Assyria, "with their hands upon their head;" (xi. 37) that is, saith Abarbanel, "like a woman who bewails her misfortune; and there is none to deliver her." St. Jerome and Theodoret more plainly, they shall go forth with their hands on their heads, in signum pudoris et doloris, "in token of their shame and of their grief." Spreading forth their hands is the same (Lam. i. 17).

Ver. 20. *Absalom her brother*] Unto whose house she went.

Hath Amnon thy brother been with thee?] A modest expression for the foul rape he had committed: at which he conceived great indignation; and therefore, in scorn, doth not call him her brother Amnon, but *Amnon*. So the words are in the Hebrew, "Hath Amnon thy brother been with thee?"

But hold now thy peace, my sister:] He seems to desire her to put up the injury in silence; that it might not bring too much disgrace on their family; but, indeed, that he might dissemble the revenge he intended, upon occasion, to take of him.

So Tamar remained desolate] She would see nobody, I suppose, but only those that waited on her in her brother's family.

Ver. 21.] But, out of his great indulgence, inflicted no sort of punishment upon him, that we read of: *προσβιτατος γαρ ἦν υἱὸς αὐτοῦ* (as Josephus observes), "for he was his eldest son," which made him spare him.

Ver. 22. *Absalom spake unto his brother Amnon neither good nor bad:*] Never said a word to him about this matter, when they met together.

For Absalom hated Amnon,] Though he hated him in his heart, yet he never expressed the least resentment. So the particle *ki* should be translated, not *for*, but *though*. By this means Amnon was lulled asleep into a belief that Absalom would not trouble him for what he had done, because he did not threaten, nor so much as expostulate with him, nor take any notice of what had passed. Though in reason he ought to have been more afraid, that he was meditating a terrible revenge; according to the fable of the little mouse, who, when the dunghill cock came into the parlour, clapping his wings, and making a great noise, was very much affrighted at it, but minded not the cat which came gently creeping towards her; whom her mother chid for her folly, telling her there was no danger from the fluttering, clamorous cock; but from the silent cat she was to expect present death. So Victorinus Strigelius glosses upon this place.

Ver. 23. *After two full years,*] In all which time Absalom had said nothing to Amnon about his abused

that Absalom had sheepshearers in Baal-hazor, which is beside Ephraim: and Absalom invited all the king's sons.

24 And Absalom came to the king, and said, Behold now, thy servant hath sheepshearers; let the king, I beseech thee, and his servants go with thy servant.

25 And the king said to Absalom, Nay, my son, let us not all now go, lest we be chargeable unto thee. And he pressed him: howbeit he would not go, but blessed him.

26 Then said Absalom, If not, I pray thee, let my brother Amnon go with us. And the king said unto him, Why should he go with thee?

27 But Absalom pressed him, that he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him.

28 ¶ Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon; then kill him, fear not: have not I commanded you? be courageous, and be valiant.

29 And the servants of Absalom did unto Amnon as Absalom had commanded. Then all the

king's sons arose, and every man gat him up upon his mule, and fled.

30 ¶ And it came to pass, while they were in the way, that tidings came to David, saying, Absalom hath slain all the king's sons, and there is not one of them left.

31 Then the king arose, and tare his garments, and lay on the earth; and all his servants stood by, with their clothes rent.

32 And Jonadab, the son of Shimeah David's brother, answered and said, Let not my lord suppose that they have slain all the young men the king's sons; for Amnon only is dead: for by the appointment of Absalom this hath been determined from the day that he forced his sister Tamar.

33 Now therefore let not my lord the king take the thing to his heart, to think that all the king's sons are dead: for Amnon only is dead.

34 But Absalom fled. And the young man that kept the watch lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came much people by the way of the hill side behind him.

35 And Jonadab said unto the king, Behold,

sister; that he might think he was ignorant of it, or did not regard it, or had forgot it.

That Absalom had sheepshearers in Baal-hazor,] For the time of sheep-shearing was a kind of harvest in those countries; and therefore full of joy; which they expressed by making a feast upon those days. We read of it early in the book of Genesis, viz. of Laban's going to shear his sheep (xxx. 19); and Judah, after his mourning for his wife's death, went to refresh himself at a sheep-shearing with his friends (xxxviii. 12, 13). And it was at a time of such joy, that David sent to Nabal for some relief (1 Sam. xxv. 8).

Ver. 24.] He had no mind the king should go; but invited him, to avoid all suspicion.

Ver. 25. Nay, my son, let us not all now go,] For he seems to have invited all his family; when he sought him and his servants to go with him.

He would not go, but blessed him.] Gave him thanks for his invitation, and prayed God to bless him.

Ver. 26. Let my brother Amnon go with us.] To cover his design, he pretended, I suppose, a special kindness, for him: or at least, desired the king to do him the honour, to let him have the company of his eldest brother.

Why should he go with thee?] Being the next person in the kingdom to the king, it is likely David thought it would make the entertainment too chargeable.

Ver. 27.] Who might have taken exceptions, if Amnon alone had been entertained by him: therefore his importunity prevailed to have the company of them all.

Ver. 28. When Amnon's heart is merry with wine,] And had no thoughts of any danger.

Smile Amnon; then kill him.] He encourages them to hope, that he, being the king's son, and next heir to the crown when Amnon was gone (for Chileab seems now to be dead), would stand between them and danger of being called to an account for what they did.

Ver. 29.] Fearing he might destroy all the royal family; for ambition was as strong in him as revenge; which appeared afterward in his endeavours to dethrone his father. *Mules* began to be much in use in David's days (as Bochart observes), who appointed Solomon to be carried on his own mule, and declared

king (1 Kings i. 33). And Solomon had a present of them made to him (1 Kings x. 23). And they were not used only to ride on, but for carriage of burdens (1 Chron. xii. 40), and to draw chariots, as the LXX. understand Isa. lvi. 20 (see Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 19).

Ver. 30.] He that saw Amnon killed, presently ran away in a great fright, imagining all the king's sons were so served.

Ver. 31.] This was a natural expression of great grief, to throw themselves not upon their beds (as Mainonides observes), but upon the ground. Otherwise, they turned their beds upside down, and so lay as hard as if they lay upon the ground (see Gierus De Luctu Heb. cap. 18. sect. 8).

Ver. 32. Jonadab,—said,] Who was noted before to be a very subtle man (ver. 3), and understood all the intrigues (as we now speak) about the court.

For Amnon only is dead:] This he spake not from any certain intelligence he had received from Absalom's house; but from rational conjecture, out of what he had learnt concerning Absalom's resentment.

For by the appointment of Absalom this hath been determined] He had talked, I suppose, among his familiars, that he would take a time to revenge the injury done his sister, though for the present he took no notice of it. Which Jonadab, being a prying man, had some way or other discovered.

Ver. 33.] He affirms this with the greater confidence, because he never heard (though he was of a very inquisitive temper) of any quarrel Absalom had with the rest of the king's sons, but only Amnon.

Ver. 34. But Absalom fled.] With all his servants who committed the murder. For he soon found it was not in his, nor any body's power, to protect them.

The young man—looked,] Round about him.

There came much people by the way of the hill side behind him.] They did not think fit to keep the direct road from Baal-hazor to Jerusalem (for what reason we cannot now know), but went about; so that they came not before the watchman, but behind him.

Ver. 35.] Hearing a company was coming, he went out, it is likely, to descry who they were; and seeing the king's sons, made haste and carried David the good news.

the king's sons come : as thy servant said, so it is. 36 And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of speaking, that, behold, the king's sons came, and lifted up their voice and wept : and the king also and all his servants wept very sore.

37 ¶ And Absalom fled, and went to Talmai,

Ver. 36. *The king's sons came,*] They trod upon Jonadab's heels, as we now speak.

Lifted up their voice and wept :] See iii. 32. But we read of no public funeral and lamentations which he made for him, as he did for Abner.

Ver. 37. *But Absalom fled, and went to Talmai,*] For no city of refuge in his own country could give him protection, having committed a designed murder; therefore he fled out of the kingdom to his mother's father (see iii. 3).

David mourned for his son every day.] Either for the loss of Amnon or for Absalom : who was lost, as to any comfort he could have from his company. It seems to be meant of the latter : for it is said he was comforted for Amnon : and therefore his continued affliction for three years together was upon the account of Absalom.

Ver. 38.] This is repeated to show, that he found

the son of Ammahud, king of Geshur. And David mourned for his son every day.

38 So Absalom fled, and went to Geshur, and was there three years.

39 And the soul of king David longed to go forth unto Absalom : for he was comforted concerning Amnon, seeing he was dead.

such favour with his grandfather, that he went no further; but continued with him three years in safety. Geshur, it appears, from xv. 8. was a part of Syria.

Ver. 39. *The soul of king David longed to go forth unto Absalom :*] He had a vehement desire to see him. Though some, even of the ancients, translate the words, "he ceased to pursue after Absalom:" as if he had at first endeavoured to seize him, either in his flight to Geshur, or afterward, when at any time he went abroad. But ours appears to be a true translation, from the beginning of the next chapter; where David's heart is said to be *towards Absalom*.

And he was comforted concerning Amnon,] He was unwilling to want the comfort of both his sons; and since it was impossible to bring Amnon back again, he longed to bring back Absalom : but he had committed so horrid a crime, that he durst not venture to restore him in his favour.

CHAPTER XIV.

1 *Joab, suborning a widow of Tekoah, by a parable to incline the king's heart to fetch home Absalom, bringeth him to Jerusalem. 25 Absalom's beauty, hair, and children. 28 After two years, Absalom by Joab is brought into the king's presence.*

1 Now Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the king's heart was toward Absalom.

2 And Joab sent to Tekoah, and fetched thence a wise woman, and said unto her, I pray thee, feign thyself to be a mourner, and put on now mourning apparel, and anoint not thyself with oil, but be as a woman that had a long time mourned for the dead :

3 And come to the king, and speak on this manner unto him. So Joab put the words in her mouth.

4 ¶ And when the woman of Tekoah spake to the king, she fell on her face to the ground, and did obeisance, and said, Help, O king.

5 And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, I am indeed a widow woman, and mine husband is dead.

6 And thy handmaid had two sons, and they strove together in the field, and there was none to part them, but the one smote the other, and slew him.

7 And, behold, the whole family is risen

CHAP. XIV.

Ver. 1. *Joab—perceived that the king's heart was toward Absalom.*] That he longed to see him, and have him restored to his own country; if it could be contrived by some handsome pretence for it : which Joab therefore endeavoured to bring about, knowing he was dear to the people, as well as to David : and he might by his reduction ingratiate himself with Absalom, whom he looked upon as next heir to the crown.

Ver. 2. *Joab sent to Tekoah.*] A city in the tribe of Judah (2 Chron. xi. 5, 6), but at a distance from Jerusalem : and the further off the better for his purpose; because the case which the woman was to represent to the king, could not easily be inquired into, if he desired to know the truth. The Jews say it was in the tribe of Asher; the place where the prophet Amos was born.

Fetched thence a wise woman.] A woman was the fittest for this purpose; especially a widow : who was proper to move compassion. And a grave woman, as Josephus calls her (πρεσβύτες), was still more proper.

Be as a woman that had a long time mourned for the dead :] Who put on no ornaments, nor used any ornament; but appeared in a sordid neglected condition.

Ver. 3. *So Joab put the words in her mouth.*] And, in all probability, introduced her into the king's presence; and then left her to manage the matter with him, according to her prudence. Or, as seems to be suggested (ver. 21), he stood by at some distance, whilst she addressed herself to the king.

Ver. 4. *She fell on her face*] This was the humblest posture of reverence.

Help, O king.] Relieve a poor distressed widow.

Ver. 5.] Which made her the greater object of pity.

Ver. 6.] This, and the foregoing, and the next verse, represent her condition as very lamentable : that she had lost her husband, and one of her sons, and was in danger to be deprived of the other; which was all she had.

Ver. 7. *Deliver him that smote his brother,*] Put him to death, as the law required (Numb. xxxv. 18, 19).

We will destroy the heir also.] These words, if

against thine handmaid, and they said, Deliver him that smote his brother, that we may kill him, for the life of his brother whom he slew; and we will destroy the heir also: and so they shall quench my coal which is left, and shall not leave to my husband *neither* name nor remainder upon the earth.

8 And the king said unto the woman, Go to thine house, and I will give charge concerning thee.

9 And the woman of Tekoah said unto the king, My lord, O king, the iniquity *be* on me, and on my father's house: and the king and his throne *be* guiltless.

10 And the king said, Whosoever saith *ought* unto thee, bring him to me, and he shall not touch thee any more.

spoken by the kindred, show it was not love to justice, but a desire to have the inheritance, which moved them to prosecute the murderer.

So they shall quench my coal which is left,] Deprive me of the little comfort of my life which remains (and is in a manner buried as a coal in the ashes), and ruin my family.

Shall not leave to my husband neither name nor remainder] Utterly extinguish her husband's memory. In all this she intended to frame a case as like to David's as she could devise; by determining which in her favour, he might judge how much more reasonable it was to preserve Absalom. But there was a wide difference between her case and his, how plausible soever their likeness might appear. For her son she pretended was slain in a scuffle with his brother, which was no premeditated murder, as Absalom's was. It was also in the field, where there were no witnesses whether it was wilful or not: whereas all the king's sons saw Amnon barbarously murdered by his brother. And in this last passage the difference is as great as in any; for David's family was not in any danger to be extinguished, if Absalom were lost also: he having many children, and also many wives, whereby he might have more. And therefore in that likewise this case differed from her's who was a widow.

Ver. 8.] He promises he would take care the matter should be thoroughly examined, and justice done her.

Ver. 9.] She desires a speedy sentence might be given in her favour, which, if it proved wrong by her misinforming the king, she prays the guilt might light on her and her family, and the king and his be innocent.

Ver. 10.] If any one endeavoured to lay hold on her son, he bids her bring that person before him (for which he commanded his officers to be assistant to her), and he would punish him so that none should dare to meddle with him any more.

Ver. 11. *Let the king remember the Lord thy God,]* She seems to desire him to confirm what he had said by an oath. For men swore by remembering (or making mention of) the name of the Lord. Others think she only prays him to remember how merciful and gracious God is, and had been to himself, even in pardoning the murder of Uriah.

The revengers of blood to destroy] In the Hebrew, *to multiply to destroy*: that is, after she had lost one son, to take away the life of the other, as the next words explain it.

Let them not destroy my son,] Or, "let them not destroy my son," which remains.

11 Then said she, I pray thee let the king remember the Lord thy God, that thou wouldest not suffer the revengers of blood to destroy any more, lest they destroy my son. And he said, *As the Lord liveth*, there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the earth.

12 Then the woman said, Let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak *one* word unto my lord the king. And he said, Say on.

13 And the woman said, Wherefore then hast thou thought such a thing against the people of God? for the king doth speak this thing as one which is faulty, in that the king doth not fetch home again his banished.

14 For we must needs die, and *are* as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect *any* person: yet

As the Lord liveth,] Though it was a bold request in the woman to desire him to confirm what he said by an oath; yet, such was his pity to her, that, to send her away entirely satisfied, he solemnly swears he would preserve her son. He should not suffer the least harm upon this account.

Ver. 12.] Now she designed to open her meaning in this parable, and plainly desire the king to make her case his own. But it would take up some time, and therefore she bespeaks his favour to hear her patiently.

Ver. 13. *Wherefore then hast thou thought such a thing]* As that which she had hitherto been speaking of.

Against the people of God?] Who were in danger to lose Absalom, the heir of the crown; which was far worse than the private loss of her son.

For the king doth speak this thing as one which is faulty,] In the sentence he had pronounced for her, he had condemned himself, because he had not called Absalom from his exile. This looks like too bold a speech: but the sense is no more than this; Do not judge otherwise in thy own case, than thou hast done in mine. For all the world allows (as Strigelius here observes) the reasonableness of that saying, "Odi sapientem qui sibi non sapit." Her reasoning indeed was infirm, his case and hers being very unlike upon several accounts, which I before observed. But though the supposed killing of her son was casual, but Amnon's murder designed; and she had no more sons, and David had many, &c. yet David perceiving how the people stood affected towards Absalom (otherwise he knew this woman durst not have spoken after this manner), and it being his own desire, as much as theirs, to have him recalled, he overlooked all the differences there were in his case, and did not go about to show her the weakness of her discourse.

Ver. 14. *For we must needs die, and are as water spill on the ground,]* She pleads for further pity towards him, from the consideration of our common mortality; and represents that death comes on apace, and we need not hasten it: and when we are dead, we can no more be recovered, than water when it is spilt on the ground, which is presently sucked up and seen no more. This is also a weak, though plausible argument; for by this reasoning all malefactors should be spared, because it will not be long before death cuts them off: but when we have a mind to a thing, all reason seems strong to persuade us to it. Some apply this to his mourning for Amnon; as if she had said, Dost thou still weep for thy other son? he must have died; and now he is gone,

doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him.

15 Now therefore that I am come to speak of this thing unto my lord the king, it is because the people have made me afraid: and thy handmaid said, I will now speak unto the king; it may be that the king will perform the request of his handmaid.

16 For the king will hear, to deliver his handmaid out of the hand of the man that would destroy me and my son together out of the inheritance of God.

17 Then thine handmaid said, the word of my lord the king shall now be comfortable: for

thy tears cannot call him to life again. But this is not probable, because it is said in the conclusion of the foregoing chapter, "He was comforted concerning Amnon, seeing he was dead."

Neither doth God respect any person:] If this be a right translation, the meaning is, that David himself was mortal, though a great king. But I think the Hebrew words, *issa nephesh*, never signify respect to persons; but the word *panim* is used in that sense, not *nephesh*, which signifies the soul, as the other doth the face, or countenance. Therefore these words should be translated, "God doth not take away the soul or life." She argues from the sparing mercy of God, who doth not presently inflict the punishment of death when men have deserved it. And perhaps she had in this a particular respect to Absalom, whom God had not cut off, but let him live; and therefore she desires David to imitate God.

Yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him.] Or, according to the foregoing words, "But he doth devise means," &c. God provided many cities of refuge, she means, to which he that slew another unawares might flee; where, though he was banished from his habitation for a time, he was not quite expelled, but might return again after the death of the high-priest. From whence she argues, that kings being the images of God, nothing could more become them than clemency and mercy; in mitigating the punishment of offenders, though there was just cause of anger against them. Which still was short of the present case; for God was not so merciful as to provide for the safety of a wilful murderer. But such specious arguments are good enough, when men are willing to be persuaded: and nothing more moving than the example of God, who doth not delight in the death of a sinner.

Ver. 15. *It is because the people have made me afraid.*] This sounds as if the people talked so discontentedly about Absalom's banishment, that it was another motive to her to make this address to the king. But it doth not seem to me to be likely that the people were dissatisfied, because he was not recalled: but rather David was afraid the people would be dissatisfied if he did recall him. I said indeed before (ver. 13), that David imagined by her speech that they were desirous of his return from banishment; but he did not think so before: and whatsoever their desires might be, they did not express any discontent because he was not; for then there would not have been any need of this woman to bring that about which he desired more than they. Therefore I think the last words should be translated, not *because*, but "though the people made me afraid." That is, those she advised withal told her it was too bold an attempt: but this did not discourage her; because she presumed the king would be so good as to give her a favourable audience, and not

as an angel of God, so is my lord the king to discern good and bad: therefore the Lord thy God will be with thee.

18 Then the king answered and said unto the woman, Hide not from me, I pray thee, the thing that I shall ask thee. And the woman said, Let my lord the king now speak.

19 And the king said, *Is not the hand of Joab with thee in all this?* And the woman answered and said, *As thy soul liveth*, my lord the king, none can turn to the right hand or to the left from ought that my lord the king hath spoken: for thy servant Joab, he bade me, and he put all these words in the mouth of thine handmaid: for

be angry with her, since what she said was well intended. So the next word is to be translated *but, not and*.

I will now speak unto the king;] That is, notwithstanding the fears which some put into her, she resolved to make this petition; and she gives her reason for it in the next verse.

Ver. 16.] Clemency and kindness are the properties of good kings; and such she saith she knew the king to be, who would take pity upon her and her son, &c. whose preservation her life was bound up. And when she calls the land of Israel the *inheritance of God*, who dwelt among them there, she secretly puts the king in mind how dangerous it was to let Absalom (unto whom she had adventured to apply her case) to continue in an idolatrous country; where God was not worshipped, as he was in the land of Israel.

Ver. 17. *The word of my Lord the king shall now be comfortable.*] Thereupon she grew confident that the king's answer would be according to her heart's desire: it being the highest glory of a prince (as the emperor Titus was wont to say) not to send any petitioner away sad and sorrowful. And indeed, the king's great patience, in attending to so long an address, might make her presume to receive a gracious answer.

To discern good and bad:] To discern between just and unreasonable petitions, as discern as patiently to hear both those things which are grateful, and those which are less acceptable. And therefore she doubted not of such a kind answer as the angels bring, who are messengers of Divine mercy.

The Lord thy God will be with thee.] To direct him to judge aright and show mercy. There is a great deal of artifice in all this. For to presume upon the kindness of another, and to expect gracious answers from their noble qualities, is very moving; men being very loath to defeat those who think so highly of them, according to that of Aristotle, in the second book of his Rhetoric, "We love those that admire us."

Ver. 18. *Let my lord the king now speak.*] As much as to say, and I will answer truly.

Ver. 19. *Is not the hand of Joab with thee in all this?*] His prudence made him suspect that a woman durst not have adventured upon this speech, but by the counsel and contrivance of some greater person. And none more likely than Joab, whom he knew to be a cunning man and a friend to Absalom.

As thy soul liveth, &c.] As much as to say in our language, *it is even so*. And therefore she did not seek by any windings or turnings this way or the other to dissemble the matter, but plainly confessed it, as it follows. Concerning the phrase, "turn to the right hand or left," see upon Gen. xxiv. 49.

He put all these words in the mouth of thine handmaid.] The sense of them, which he left her to manage to the best advantage.

20 To fetch about this form of speech hath thy servant Joab done this thing: and my lord is wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all *things* that are in the earth.

21 ¶ And the king said unto Joab, Behold now, I have done this thing: go therefore, bring the young man Absalom again.

22 And Joab fell to the ground on his face, and bowed himself and thanked the king: and Joab said, To-day thy servant knoweth that I have found grace in thy sight, my lord, O king, in that the king hath fulfilled the request of his servant.

23 So Joab arose and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem.

24 And the king said, Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face. So Absalom returned to his own house, and saw not the king's face.

25 ¶ But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him.

26 And when he polled his head, (for it was at every year's end that he polled it; because *the hair* was heavy on him, therefore he polled

Ver. 20. *To fetch about this form of speech hath thy servant Joab done this thing.*] The meaning is, Joab instructed her, that having obtained pardon for her son, she should turn about the face of her speech (as the words are in the Hebrew) another way, and transfer it to Absalom, as a parallel case with her own. And so Josephus expresses her sense, lib. vii. Antiq. cap. 8, "When she had thanked the king for his pity towards her, she said, But that I may be more certain of thy clemency, receive thy own son into thy favour, for how is it possible for me not to doubt of the favour thou promisest me, when thou still suffereest thy own son to lie under thy indignation for the like fault."

My lord is wise,—to know all things that are in the earth.] That is, in the whole kingdom, where nothing could be hid from him, but he knew all men, and their counsels; and likewise knew what was fit to be done in answer to their desires. She still persists in her admiration of the king, that she might the more incline him to grant her request.

Ver. 21.] The king turned from her to him (who seems to have stood in some part of the room while she delivered her petition), as the principal agent in this business, whom he was pleased to gratify in his request.

Ver. 22. *Joab fell to the ground*] As the woman did when she entered into his presence to present her petition (ver. 4).

Thanked the king.] For favours are to be no less humbly acknowledged than humbly begged.

To-day thy servant knoweth that I have found grace in thy sight.] He looked upon it as a mark of the king's great kindness, who was not angry, but granted so bold a request, in which he was mistaken: for though he passed by the murder of Amnon, yet he remembered Joab's murder of Abner to his dying day.

Ver. 23.] St. Ambrose mentions this as an instance of the wonderful affection which parents have to their children, though degenerate and wicked: by which we may raise our thoughts to comprehend a little of the inconceivable love of our heavenly Father (as Strigelius here meditates) towards his own eternal Son, and towards mankind for his sake.

Ver. 24. *The king said.*] When he heard he was come to Jerusalem.

Let him not see my face.] His affection to him did not so blind his eyes, but he still saw it would not be for his honour to let him come into his presence.

So Absalom returned to his own house.] This intimates as if he came not only to Jerusalem, but to the king's court.

Saw not the king's face.] Which was some humiliation to him, and put him upon repentance; for he saw he had not a full pardon, being not entirely restored to the king's favour. The people also were convinced by this how detestable his crime was in the

king's account; and that he would not easily pass by the like in any other person, since he could not endure the sight of a son, whose hand was defiled with the blood of his brother.

Ver. 25.] For his father and mother were both very lovely persons: but this proved the occasion of his ruin; for he grew proud, because he was so much admired; and forgetting his cruel murder of his brother it tempted him to rely upon the favour of the people in committing of a greater crime, which was the seeking the life of his father.

Ver. 26. *For it was at every year's end that he polled it.*] It is not certain that he cut his hair once a year, for the words in the Hebrew are, "from the end of days to days," without any particular designation of the time. And therefore the Targum translates it, *at stated times*; that is, when it grew too heavy, which might be once in two years, more or less, as Bochartus observes.

He weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels] In those days hair was accounted a great ornament, and the longer it was the more it was esteemed. And therefore no wonder Absalom nourished his with much care, and let it grow to great length, which made him look more like a goodly person. Inasmuch that, in after ages, they were wont to use art (as perhaps they did now) to make the hair grow, and grow thick and strong (as the same Bochartus hath shown), and they anointed their hair also with fragrant oils, of myrrh, cinnamon, and such-like; and after that powdered it with the dust of gold: all which made it very ponderous. So that Absalom's hair weighed, when it was cut off, two hundred shekels: which he demonstrates was no more than three pounds and two ounces of our weight. This is not at all incredible, considering that he let it grow as long as he was able to bear the weight of it; which was increased, it is likely, by such additions as I have mentioned: for a king's son would not want any thing that might add to his splendour. Josephus also informs us, that such ostentation was in use among the Jews in those days; for, speaking of the noble guard which attended king Solomon, with long hair flowing about their shoulders, he saith that they scattered in their hair every day *ψήγματα τού χρυσίου*, "little particles of gold," which made their hair shine and sparkle by the reflection of the sun's rays upon the gold. As for their interpretation, who think that Absalom's hair did not weigh thus much, but was sold for two hundred shekels, Bochartus shows how absurd it is to imagine a king's son would sell his hair, or that any one would buy it, especially at that rate, there being no perukes worn in those days. And besides, the text confutes it, "he weighed the hair of his head," &c. whereas, if it had been sold, the buyer would have weighed the money, not Absalom; as Abraham did when he bought the field of Ephron (Gen. xxiii. 16), and Jeremiah when he bought the

it:) he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels after the king's weight.

27 And unto Absalom there were born three sons, and one daughter, whose name was Tamar: she was a woman of a fair countenance.

28 ¶ So Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, and saw not the king's face.

29 Therefore Absalom sent for Joab, to have sent him to the king; but he would not come to him: and when he sent again the second time, he would not come.

30 Therefore he said unto his servants, See, Joab's field is near mine, and he hath barley there; go and set it on fire. And Absalom's servants set the field on fire.

field in Anathoth, xxxiii. 9 (see his epistle to Michael Fœukellius, at the end of the third edition of his *Geographia Sacra*).

Ver. 27.] How the LXX. in the Vatican edition came to add here, that Tamar was afterward the wife of Rehoboam, and bare him Abijah, I cannot tell, but I suppose it was from some Jewish tradition.

Ver. 28.] He lived privately, having the company only of his own family. For it is likely he was, by the king's command, confined to his house, where he had few visitants, being under the king's displeasure.

Ver. 29.] He did not employ his privacy so well as he should have done; but had ambitious designs in his head, if he could be restored to the king's favour, and enjoy greater liberty; for which he intended to make Joab his intercessor. Josephus thinks that Joab only took time to consider whether he should do what was desired: but Absalom was in haste, and could not endure any delay, and therefore did as follows. Or, perhaps, Joab thought he had done enough, and was afraid the king might be angry if he pressed him further.

Ver. 30.] He had those still about him who were ready to execute any command, though never so unjust; as they did when he bade them kill Amnon. And it appears by this what a daring person Absalom was, who durst affront such a man as Joab after this manner.

Ver. 31.] This carried Joab presently to his house, to expostulate with him about the damage he had done him: for which we do not find he offers any satisfaction: which may make it seem strange that so furious a man as Joab should not immediately revenge himself, by ordering his field to be burnt, or some such way: but he was so wise as to consider, that being

31 Then Joab arose, and came to Absalom unto his house, and said unto him, Wherefore have thy servants set my field on fire?

32 And Absalom answered Joab, Behold, I sent unto thee, saying, Come hither, that I may send thee to the king, to say, Wherefore am I come from Geshur? *it had been good for me to have been there still:* now therefore let me see the king's face; and if there be any iniquity in me, let him kill me.

33 So Joab came to the king, and told him: and when he had called for Absalom, he came to the king, and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king: and the king kissed Absalom.

the king's son he might some time or other be reconciled to his father, and do him a prejudice.

Ver. 32. *I sent unto thee.*] He seems to have no sense of any injury he had done Joab, but thought he had just cause to complain that he would not come to him.

Wherefore am I come from Geshur?] These were words too insolent to be sent to the king; therefore one would think he only expressed himself thus to Joab.

It had been good for me to have been there still.] He might have found means to return thither, if he had not had other designs in his head; which made him desire to have his full liberty.

If there be any iniquity in me, let him kill me.] He could not but know there was iniquity in him: he pretends, if the king would not pardon it, he had rather die than not see his father's face.

Ver. 33. *So Joab came to the king, and told him.*] These passionate expressions, that he was weary of life, while he continued banished from the king's presence; nay, that he desired to die, so he might but see him, moved Joab to intercede for him, and David to receive him into his favour.

He came to the king, and bowed himself.] Begging pardon, as Josephus explains it, for the sin he had committed.

The king kissed Absalom.] In token of reconciliation. Josephus saith the king raised him up from the ground, *καὶ τὸν γενομένου ἀμνηστὴν ἐπαγγέλλεται*, "and promised him an oblivion of what was past." Which was a great weakness in David: for impotent persons become more wicked by a full pardon of their offences; as Absalom did. Who being thus received into the king's favour, became more gracious with the people: who before looked upon him as an excommunicated person, and would have nothing to do with him.

CHAPTER XV.

1 Absalom, by fair speeches and courtesies, stealth the hearts of Israel. 7 Under pretence of a vow he obtaineth leave to go to Hebron. 10 He maketh there a great conspiracy. 13 David upon the news fleeth from Jerusalem. 19 Itai would not leave him. 24 Zadok and Abiathar are sent back with the ark. 30 David and his company go up mount Olivet weeping. 31 He curseth Ahithophel's counsel. 33 Hushai is sent back with instructions.

1 AND it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him.

CHAP. XV.

Ver. 1. *After this,*] When he thought he had established himself in his father's good affection.

2 And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king

Absalom prepared him chariots and horses.] He took great state upon him, and made him, as we now speak, a splendid equipage: being royally attended, as the next heir to the crown (for we hear nothing of Chi-

for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel.

3 And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee.

4 Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!

leab, who it is likely was dead), designing to draw the eyes of the people to him. Who, as they were much in love with his beauty, so were mightily taken with his unusual fine sight of chariots and horses; which the law did not allow: but David was so indulgent that he took no notice of it.

Ver. 2. *Absalom rose up early,*] He accustomed himself to rise betime in the morning, to make a show of his great care for the public good.

Stood beside the way of the gate.] Not of the king's palace, some think, but of the city, where was the seat of judgment. But since he speaks of coming to the king for judgment, it is likely he sat in his own palace, at the gate of which Absalom was wont to stand.

Came to the king for judgment.] Who reserved all weighty causes for his own hearing; and appeals were made to him from the other courts, as Corn. Bertram observes, cap. 10. De Republ. Judæia.

Of what city art thou?] He kindly inquired where he dwelt; and, it is likely, what he was, and of what family, &c. as if he intended to take a particular care of him.

Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel.] That is, of such or such a tribe, and of such a city in that tribe as he named to him.

Ver. 3. *See, thy matters are good and right;*] He was so officious as to look into their cause awhile, and examine it; flattering every one into an opinion, that in his judgment he had right on his side. So that if their cause went against them, they might conclude that if Absalom had been judge, it would have gone otherwise.

But there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee.] The king he pretended was old, and unfit to judge causes, until some others had first heard them, and opened the matter to him. And his sons (who, being principal officers in his family, see ch. viii. ult. were the fittest to bring business to him) were men of pleasure, and did not mind public affairs. Thus he struck not only at his father, but at all his brethren; and principally, it is likely, at Solomon; who he was afraid would be preferred before him by his father, being a beloved son, and born of an Israelite, whereas he was begot of a stranger, the daughter of the king of Geshur. Who, it is probable, might put him upon this course; and his banishment for three years had also exasperated him: and his being secluded for two years more from seeing his father, was so far from bringing him to any sense of his guilt, that it more enraged him against his father, and all his family.

Ver. 4.] Though he was admitted to come to court, and see the king, yet he had no office there, as the rest of the king's sons had: which he took ill, and endeavoured the people should do so too; by magnifying his care, if he were in authority, to do them speedy justice.

Ver. 5. *When any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance.*] To honour him as the king's son.

He put forth his hand, and took him,] About the neck, I suppose, in token of great familiarity and kindness

5 And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him.

6 And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

7 ¶ And it came to pass after forty years, that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the LORD, in Hebron.

And kissed him.] A most vile piece of flattery: but people are pleased with such unwonted compliments. For so Plato observes, that when any person intended to make himself a tyrant in a popular state, he no sooner entered upon the government, but προσηύει τε και ἀπαύεται πάντας ὃν ἀν περιτροχάζει, "he smiled upon all, and kindly saluted them, where-soever he met them:" avowing that he hated tyranny, and promising great things, both privately and publicly, και πάντα ἰδεως τε και πατρως εἶναι προσκοιταται, "seeming to be mild, gentle, and fatherly unto all" (lib. viii. De Republ. p. 566. edit. Serrani).

Ver. 6. *On this manner did Absalom to all Israel*] He continued this course a long time; till he had inveigled the people, and gained their hearts to him. For, as Aristotle observes in his Politics (lib. v. cap. 4), all changes in commonwealths are made by one of these two ways, ὅτε μὲν διὰ βίας, ὅτε δὲ δι' ἀπάτης, "either by force and violence, or else by deceit and craft." Now there is not a more famous instance in history of the latter than this of Absalom, who, by flattering speeches, and large promises, cunningly alienated the hearts of the people from his father.

So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel,] Robbed his father of the affections of the people, and possessed himself of them: some admiring his beauty and gallantry; others his courtesy and civility: others being taken with his magnificent promises of the noble things he would do, if he were their king. Just as Virgil saith, in book vii. of his Æneids, that Turnus drew the hearts of some to follow him in the wars, because he was a most graceful person; others, because he was descended from an ancient royal race; and others were moved by the noble acts he had done (ver. 473, 474).

"Hunc decus egregium formæ movet atque juventæ,
Hunc atavis reges, hunc claris dextera factis."

Thus Absalom was young and wonderfully beautiful, descended from kings by his father and mother's side; and though he had done no great things, yet boasted of what he would do, when he had opportunity. Ludov. De Dieu thinks there is a peculiar meaning in this phrase, that he drew their affections to him, concealing in the mean time his intentions: upon John x. 24.

Ver. 7. *After forty years,*] One would think, that in the copy which Josephus used, it was written *arba*, four, not *arbaïm*, forty years: for his words are, μετὰ δὲ τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς καταλλαγὴν τεττάρων ἐτῶν ἤδη παρεληλυθότων, "four years after his father was reconciled to him." But there are no warrants now for this reading: but the forty years here mentioned are not to be understood, as if this happened after David had reigned forty years, that is, in the last year of his reign: for he was now very vigorous, which he was not a little before he died; but, as our great primate of Ireland in his Annals understands it, forty years after David was anointed by Samuel. That is, when he was threescore years old, ten years before he died. Then his son conspired against him between the feast of the Passover and Pentecost; as some gather from

8 For thy servant vowed a vow while I abode at Geshur in Syria, saying, If the Lord shall bring me again indeed to Jerusalem, then I will serve the Lord.

9 And the king said unto him, Go in peace. So he arose, and went to Hebron.

10 ¶ But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron.

11 And with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, that were called; and they

went in their simplicity, and they knew not any thing.

12 And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counsellor, from his city, even from Giloh, while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom.

13 ¶ And there came a messenger to David, saying, The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom.

14 And David said unto all his servants that were with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and let us

Barzillai's presenting him with parched corn and new fruits, when he fled from Absalom (xvii. 28). And so Strigelius. But the Talmudists in Seder Olam, and other books, will have these forty years to commence from the time that the Israelites asked a king to reign over them. And, after all, Abarbinel is of opinion, that the plainest sense is after forty years of David's reign; so that it was about the latter end of his life, when this great calamity befell him, though not in the very last year of it. For it is not said "in the fortieth year," but "about the end of forty years" (see Buxtorf, Antieritica, p. 1004).

[Let me go and pay my vow.] Now he pretends religion, as before he did the public good.

Ver. 8.] With a solemn sacrifice.

Ver. 9. *Go in peace.*] It is much he should dismiss him without any suspicion; when he had deferred so long to perform this vow, and made such court to the people, as he could not but be informed.

[Went to Hebron.] Which was a high place, where they were wont to sacrifice till the temple was built. And it being the place of his birth, where the royal seat had been in the beginning of David's reign, he thought it the most commodious city, next Jerusalem, for his purpose.

Ver. 10. *Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes*] To try how the people stood affected to him.

[As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron.] This was the signal which was to be given, that they should take arms. For as soon as they heard the sound of the trumpet (which he took care should be blown in all the tribes), these spies were to proclaim that Absalom was crowned in Hebron. Whereupon, all his partakers, it is likely, shouted, "God save king Absalom!"

Ver. 11. *With Absalom went two hundred men—that were called;*] Invited by him to feast with him upon his sacrifice. And it is likely they were principal persons of the city; whom he drew in to avoid suspicion.

[They knew not any thing.] Of his design; but went only to wait upon him, as the king's son; who did them the honour to invite them to a holy feast. Among these two hundred men, the Jews fancy were all those of the grand Sanhedrin, who thought they had been called by David's order to attend his son. For which there is no ground; though Mr. Selden has produced a great deal out of the Talmudists concerning this matter, lib. ii. De Synedriis, cap. 16. But I have shown elsewhere, there was no such Sanhedrin in these times.

Bartenora upon Sota hath a conceit, that Absalom begged of the king (for he had stolen his heart before he stole the people's) that he would grant him liberty, under his hand, to choose two persons whom he liked best, to be his companions; which being obtained, he went with this writing from two to two, till he had gathered two hundred; part of which were the men of the great Sanhedrin, whose examples others

followed; all believing they had been warranted by David to attend his son.

Ver. 12. *Absalom sent for Ahithophel*] None are more capable to do mischief to kings than those that know their secrets; having been of the privy council. And it is supposed by the Jews, that Ahithophel was incensed against David for abusing Bath-sheba, whom they take to have been his granddaughter, she being the daughter of Eliam (xi. 3), and Eliam being the son of Ahithophel (xxiii. 34).

[While he offered sacrifices.] Or rather, after he had offered sacrifices, while he sat at dinner, he sent for him to come to him.

[The people increased continually with Absalom.] Most of which, it is likely, intended no harm at the first, but came merely to do honour to the king's son, and to partake of his bounty. Nay, Abarbinel is of opinion, that neither Absalom, nor the elders of Israel, nor the rest of the people, who were misled by them, had any intention to divest David of his crown and dignity, much less to take away his life; but only to substitute Absalom as a coadjutor to him, for the executing of the royal authority during David's life, and to be his successor after his death. And, indeed, as it was very monstrously unnatural in Absalom to design the destruction of such a kind father, so it is not very probable that he should gain such a number as he had to assist him in such a villanous enterprise. And yet, notwithstanding this, David looked upon this as a treason against his life, as appears from ver. 14. and xvi. 11. because he knew, whatsoever they intended, they would be carried further, though they meant no more than Abarbinel supposes. And more than that, if this opinion of his were true, it is evident, they themselves did proceed so far as to design (contrary to their first intentions) to kill David for their own greater security. For so Ahithophel advised, and they all consented to it (xvii. 2, 4), which shows how dangerous it is to go out of the right way; for they do not know into what precipices they may fall. And it should be a warning to all men never to begin any thing that is wrong, which may lead them to commit that in the issue which they abhorred at the first; when they find they cannot be safe in one wickedness, unless they commit a greater.

Ver. 13.] Some of the two hundred men, who went innocently along with him from Jerusalem, it is likely, sent this intelligence. Which did not come presently; but when the conspiracy was plain and open, by a great concourse of people to him; and the elders of Israel, and the military men (who are called *all Israel*, as Fortunatus Scacchus thinks), declared for him.

Ver. 14.] Though Jerusalem, at least the fort of Zion, was a strong place, yet they could not have time to lay in provision to endure a siege: and beside, he was not willing to be cooped up there; but chose rather to go into the country, where he hoped to find friends and followers. He knew Absalom would lose

flee; for we shall not *else* escape from Absalom: make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword.

15 And the king's servants said unto the king, Behold, thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint.

16 And the king went forth, and all his household after him. And the king left ten women, which were concubines, to keep the house.

17 And the king went forth, and all the people after him, and tarried in a place that was far off.

18 And all his servants passed on beside him; and all the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, six hundred men which came after him from Gath, passed on before the king.

19 ¶ Then said the king to Ittai the Gittite, Wherefore goest thou also with us? return to

thy place, and abide with the king; for thou art a stranger, and also an exile.

20 Whereas thou camest but yesterday, should I this day make thee go up and down with us? seeing I go whither I may, return thou, and take back thy brethren: mercy and truth be with thee.

21 And Ittai answered the king, and said, As the Lord liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be.

22 And David said to Ittai, Go and pass over. And Ittai the Gittite passed over, and all his men, and all the little ones that were with him.

23 And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people passed over: the king also

no time to accomplish his end; and therefore requires them immediately to be gone, and prevent a surprise. He was desirous also to preserve Jerusalem from being sacked: being the royal city; upon which he had bestowed much cost.

Ver. 15.] One seems to have spoken in the name of the whole court: and it was some comfort to him, that he had a company of such faithful servants about him, as were ready to execute whatsoever he commanded.

Ver. 16. *All his household after him.*] In the Hebrew words are, "all his household at his feet." Which shows that he went on foot, and would not make use of his mule; being in a mournful state, and desirous to move his people's compassion to him.

The king left ten women.] For their sex, and their quality, might be thought to be a sufficient protection to them. What became of his wives is not here related; it is probable they went along with him to take care of him, as the others were left to take care of the house.

Ver. 17. *All the people after him.*] That is, all the people of Jerusalem, who were well affected to him.

Tarried in a place that was far off.] At a good distance from the city, where, it is likely, he put the people that came out confusedly after him into good order, and waited to see what other friends would come to him.

Ver. 18. *All his servants passed on beside him.*] His household servants, I suppose, marched on both hands of him.

All the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites.] Who these were, I have shewn at large upon viii. 18, and it is possible they now brought up the rear.

All the Gittites.] These marched in the front of his little army; but who they were it is hard to tell; for we read nothing of them before. Some take them to have been proselytes born in Gath of the Philistines, who came with Ittai to David; being attracted by the fame of his piety, and happy successes. Others take them to be the Jews, who had fled to David in his exile, when he was at Gath; and accompanied him ever after, not only in the time of Saul's persecution, but after he came to the crown of Judah and Israel.

Ver. 19. *Said the king to Ittai the Gittite.*] He seems to have been the commander of those six hundred men before mentioned. And the Jews make him the son of Achish king of Gath; who out of religion and friendship came to David.

Return to thy place.] That is to Jerusalem.

Abide with the king.] For so Absalom was by usurpation.

For thou art a stranger, and also an exile.] Who upon that account might hope to be civilly treated; at least, being none of David's family, and a new comer, he thought it was not fit to engage him in their broils.

Ver. 20. *Whereas thou camest but yesterday.*] He was newly settled at Jerusalem; and therefore David thought it unreasonable he should be so soon unsettled again.

Seeing I go whither I may.] Especially since he knew not whither he should betake himself for safety; and therefore would not have Ittai expose himself to such uncertainties (see concerning this phrase, 1 Sam. xxiii. 13).

Take back thy brethren.] Some understand by his brethren, the six hundred men that came from Gath: but it is not probable David would part with such a guard as they were, in this time of extreme danger, unless they had desired to be gone; therefore he rather means those persons that attended him, or were of his family, who came to sojourn with him in Judea.

Mercy and truth be with thee.] In the Hebrew words are, "with thee mercy and truth." Which some take to signify, "thou art a right honest and good man." But our translation seems better, which makes them a form of a blessing, or prayer to God, that he would requite the kindness and fidelity of Ittai, by showing mercy to him, and faithfully fulfilling his promises made to those who came to put their trust in him.

Ver. 21.] A marvellous fidelity in a stranger, when a son was a rebel against him. And David's humanity is no less admirable in offering to dismiss him so freely, yea, earnestly pressing him to return, because he was a stranger; though he was in the greatest need of all the assistance he could get to defend him.

Ver. 22. *Go and pass over.*] There was not a word more to be said, now he had sworn he would not leave him.

Ittai the Gittite passed over.] The brook Kidron, as it follows in the next verse.

And all his men, and all the little ones.] This shows that his whole family were come, as I noted before, to sojourn in this country.

Ver. 23. *All the country.*] About Jerusalem.
Wept with a loud voice.] Being extremely afflicted to see their prince, under whom they had lived in great peace and prosperity, reduced to such extremities.

himself passed over the brook Kidron, and all the people passed over, toward the way of the wilderness.

24 ¶ And to Zadok also, and all the Levites were with him, bearing the ark of the covenant of God: and they set down the ark of God; and Abiathar went up, until all the people had done passing out of the city.

25 And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me both it, and his habitation:

26 But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, *here am I*, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.

27 The king said also unto Zadok the priest,

And all the people passed over:] All that continued faithful to David in those parts.

The king also himself passed over the brook Kidron,] He stayed till the last, that he might take notice who appeared for him, as they passed over before him.

Toward the way of the wilderness,] And when they were over, they marched through the wilderness, that lay between Jerusalem and Jericho.

Ver. 24. *All the Levites were with him bearing the ark]* That is, all the Kohathites that were at Jerusalem, whose office it was to carry the ark, and take care of it.

They set down the ark of God;] When they came to David, they set down the ark in the place where he was, to signify that God would be with him, and accompany him; and that the people might thereby be excited to follow him, who had the token of the Divine presence with him.

Abiathar went up,] To the top of Mount Olivet.

Until all the people had done passing out of the city,] From the mount he could behold, when the people who would follow David were come out of the city. And then, I suppose, he came down; and desired that the ark and the king might move up the hill also.

Ver. 25. *The king said unto Zadok,]* The Talmudists have a fancy that the king spake to Zadok, not to Abiathar, because he had removed Abiathar from the high-priesthood; upon this account, that, he consulting by *urim* and *thummim*, God gave no answer; but when Zadok inquired, God did answer. Whereupon David understood the Spirit of God was departed from Abiathar, and therefore turned him out of his office; which is notoriously false, for he was not turned out till the reign of Solomon.

Carry back the ark] For he did not think it decent to have it wander about with him he knew not whither, as Abarbanel observes: and perhaps he thought God might be angry with him, should he let it be carried out of its place. As if he trusted in the ark, which was but the token of his presence, more than he did in God himself, who had preserved him in the persecution of Saul when he had no ark with him.

If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again,] It was not for the honour of the ark, as I said, to take it out of the place which he had made for it: which he calls *God's habitation*, because there he dwelt by this special token of his presence in it. And if he had a favour to him, he knew he could preserve him without the ark, as well as with it; and bring him again to worship him in his proper place.

Ver. 26.] He was very sensible of his own ill deservings; and humbly submits to whatsoever punishment, even the heaviest, that God would think fit to inflict upon him.

Art not thou a seer? return into the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz thy son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar.

28 See, I will tarry in the plain of the wilderness, until there come word from you to certify me.

29 Zadok therefore and Abiathar carried the ark of God again to Jerusalem: and they tarried there.

30 ¶ And David went up by the ascent of mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot: and all the people that was with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went.

31 ¶ And one told David, saying, Ahithophel

Ver. 27. *Zadok the priest,]* He is frequently called by Josephus, the *high-priest*: particularly in lib. vii. Antiq. cap. 6. where he saith David made him, Ἄρ- χειρία μετ' Ἀβιαθάρ, φίλος γάρ ἦν αὐτῷ, "high-priest together with Abiathar: for he was his friend." But hereby we are only to understand that he was the *sagan*, as the Jews call the vicar or deputy of the high-priest: who is called the *second priest*, 2 Kings xxv. 18. (see Selden. De Success. in Pontif. Hebræ. lib. i. cap. 4).

Art not thou a seer?] A very wise man, or a prophet, who could not but discern in what state things were likely to be, and that he might serve David better by staying in Jerusalem than going along with him.

Return—and your two sons with you,] This was another reason for sending back the ark: for as it was not fit to keep it with him, and the priests and Levites also to attend it, so they might do him more service elsewhere than in his camp.

Ver. 28. *I will tarry in the plain,]* He put an entire confidence in them, that they would not betray him, by acquainting them where he meant to rest awhile, to wait for intelligence from them.

Until there come word from you to certify me,] What Absalom designed; and accordingly he intended to steer his course.

Ver. 29.] Mention being made both here and also ver. 33 of Zadok before Abiathar, it seems to intimate some preference to him, and to justify what Josephus saith, that he was the king's friend; and being constantly with him, was more honoured than Abiathar.

Ver. 30. *Wep as he went up and had his head covered, and he went barefoot,]* Dejected, as Salvia glosses, into the condition of a servant; or rather in the habit of a mourner. For "covering the head" was a token of shame and confusion, and great trouble: and so was going *barefoot*. Which was used on the great fast or day of expiation, as we find in Codex Joma, cap. 8. though the doctors say, they might put on woollen or linen socks, but no leathern shoes. And this was observed also in funerals, as Buxtorfius shows in his Synagoga Judaica, cap. 49. which was a custom in the days of Ezekiel (xxiv. 17). Nor were the heathen strangers to it: but in times of great calamity went *barefoot*, as that excellent person Ezekiel Spanhemius observes in his notes upon Calimachus's hymn, ad Cererem, ver. 125.

All the people that was with him covered every man his head,] Going barefoot also, it is most probable, as the king did: whose example they followed.

Ver. 31. *Ahithophel is among the conspirators]* This touched him very nearly; because he was a very wise man, and one whom he took for his friend (Ps. lv. 13).

Turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness,] He

is among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O LORD, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.

32 ¶ And it came to pass, that when David was come to the top of the mount, where he worshipped God, behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him with his coat rent, and earth upon his head :

33 Unto whom David said, If thou passest on with me, then thou shalt be a burden unto me :

34 But if thou return to the city, and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king ; as I have been thy father's servant hitherto, so

will I now also be thy servant : then mayest thou for me defeat the counsel of Ahithophel.

35 And hast thou not there with thee Zadok and Abiathar the priests ? therefore it shall be, that what thing soever thou shalt hear out of the king's house, thou shalt tell it to Zadok and Abiathar the priests.

36 Behold, they have there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz Zadok's son, and Jonathan Abiathar's son ; and by them ye shall send unto me every thing that ye can hear.

37 So Hushai David's friend came into the city, and Absalom came into Jerusalem.

prays that he might give foolish counsel ; or that it might be contemned and looked upon as foolish ; or that it might miscarry in the execution.

Ver. 32. *Where he worshipped God,*] Looking towards the ark in the house of God : which he could see from the top of the mount.

That Hushai the Archite came to meet him] There was a city in the tribe of Ephraim called Archi (Josh. xvi. 2) where this person, in all likelihood, was born and bred, and coming to Jerusalem, became one of David's privy council ; being famous for wisdom ; otherwise Absalom would not have so readily entertained him, and admitted him to his secrets.

With his coat rent, and earth upon his head :] Which were expressions of great sorrow. Joh. Braunius hath demonstrated, the garment called *ketonah* was round, like our surplices, with sleeves to put the hands and arms into it. Which was worn by great persons, not only among the Jews but the Egyptians, Tyrians, and Assyrians, he observes (lib. ii. De Vestitu Sacerd. Hebr. cap. 2. sect. 13, 14), which may incline us to a belief, that Hushai was no mean man, but a person of quality.

Ver. 33.] For he was not provided with maintenance for his own family ; and Hushai being no soldier, but a counsellor, could not be so useful to him in the field as he might be at the court.

Ver. 34. *I will be thy servant, O king ;*] So he was to call him, because he had taken upon him that title.

As I have been thy father's servant hitherto,] He would have him pretend he would be as faithful to him as he had been to David ; and it was very well known he had done him good service. This was not honest, but it was according to the policy practised in those days, and indeed in all ages. Which Procopius Gazæus approves so far as to say, that "a lie which is told for a good end is equivalent to truth." But I dare not justify such doctrine ; though what Hushai undertook to do was not to get money, or to do others hurt, but to preserve a good king, and a prophet, and a friend.

Then mayest thou for me defeat the counsel of Ahithophel.] God he thought had sent this man in answer to his prayer (ver. 31), if he would but follow his direction.

Ver. 35.] Whom he looked upon as trusty persons, and faithful to his interest : and so they proved.

Ver. 36.] They were not with their fathers in Jerusalem, but lay close in a place not far off, ready to carry any message that was sent by them (see xvii. 17).

Ver. 37.] Where Hushai, I suppose, waited for his coming ; having got thither before him, and so ordered his affairs, that it was not known he had been to offer his services to David : or those that knew it, out of reverence to him and affection to David, did not discover it.

CHAPTER XVI.

1 Ziba, by presents and false suggestions, obtaineth his master's inheritance. 5 At Bahurim Shimei curseth David. 9 David with patience abstaineth, and restraineth others, from revenge. 15 Hushai insinuateth himself into Absalom's counsel. 20 Ahithophel's counsel.

1 AND when David was a little past the top of the hill, behold, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him, with a couple of asses saddled, and upon them two hundred loaves of bread, and an hundred bunches of raisins, and an hundred of summer fruits, and a bottle of wine.

2 And the king said unto Ziba, What mean-

est thou by these ? And Ziba said, The asses be for the king's household to ride on ; and the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat ; and the wine, that such as be faint in the wilderness may drink.

3 And the king said, And where is thy master's son ? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold,

CHAP. XVI.

Ver. 1. *Top of the hill,*] viz. Mount Olivet. *A bottle of wine.*] They put their wine into bottles, or bags, some of which were large vessels, and contained a great deal of wine. Such, no doubt, was this, which had liquor in it proportionable to the rest of the present.

Ver. 2. *The asses be for the king's household to ride on ;*] For his wives and children, if they were weary with travelling on foot ; as they now did.

The bread and summer fruits for the young men] For the refreshment of the king's attendants.

The wine, that such as be faint in the wilderness may drink.] This argues great consideration of David's condition, to which he suited his present ; which in a wilderness came very seasonably, and was very noble. Perhaps the bunches of raisins were intended for David's own support.

Ver. 3.] *Where is thy master's son ?*] He desired, I suppose, to know whether this present was from himself, or from Mephibosheth.

he abideth at Jerusalem: for he said, To-day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father.

4 Then said the king to Ziba, Behold, *thine are all that pertained unto Mephibosheth.* And Ziba said, I humbly beseech thee that I may find grace in thy sight, my lord, O king.

5 ¶ And when king David came to Bahurim, behold, thence came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera: he came forth, and cursed still as he came.

6 And he cast stones at David, and at all the servants of king David: and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left.

7 And thus said Shimei when he cursed,

To day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father.] This seems to be a fiction, but well contrived: for the family of David being so broken, he might think it probable the crown would fall to him.

Ver. 4. *Behold, thine are all that pertained unto Mephibosheth.*] We read ix. 2. that Ziba was but a servant (see there), but now David makes him a freeholder, giving him a great estate; which, if he said true, was forfeited to the king for treason, as it had been before in the time of Ish-bosheth, and thereupon given to Mephibosheth. But in this David seems to have been too credulous, and rashly condemned Mephibosheth before he heard what he could say for himself: but he imagined, perhaps, that Ziba durst not tell so notorious a lie, which might shortly be disproved. And beside, a man that comes to relieve another who is in great distress, easily wins his good opinion.

I may find grace in thy sight.] He pretends to value the king's favour more than the gift he had bestowed upon him.

Ver. 5. *Bahurim.*] A city in the tribe of Benjamin (xix. 16), into the territories of which David was now come: though not as yet into the town itself, as appears from ver. 14. The Targum calls it Almoth; which is of the same signification with Bahurim: the one importing *young men*, and the other *youth*.

Shimei—cursed still as he came.] Out of an inveterate hatred to David; whom he looked upon as the great enemy of his family.

Ver. 6. *He cast stones at David.*] In contempt of him. Or, as some fancy, to reproach him with the adultery he had committed; for which he deserved to have been stoned.

All the servants] This shows it was done only in contempt of them: as if they had been a company of dogs.

All the people—on his right hand and on his left.] He was under such a strong guard, that Shimei's rage was little less than madness; for he could not hurt David, but might have been immediately killed himself.

Ver. 7. *Come out, come out.*] As much as if he had said, Get thee out of the kingdom, from whence thou deservest to be expelled. So the words are in the Hebrew, "Go out, go out:" the doubling of which words expresses his vehement detestation of them.

Thou bloody man—thou man of Belial.] So they called all those that made their will their law. But R. Levi ben Gerson thinks he hath respect in these last words to the adultery committed with Bath-sheba; as, in the first, he might have to the killing of Uriah.

Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial:

8 The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and the Lord hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son: and, behold, thou art taken, in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody man.

9 ¶ Then said Abishai the son of Zeruiah unto the king, Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head.

10 And the king said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? so let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so?

Ver. 8. *The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul.*] This was perfect railing, for David had shed none of their blood; but he maliciously imputes to him the death of Abner and of Ish-bosheth. In effect, he calls him a usurper.

Thou art taken in thy mischief.] He still vomits out the same reproaches with a most wicked spirit, which the Greeks call *επιχαρεια*, "rejoicing in iniquity," to see Absalom so prosperous in this horrid rebellion.

Ver. 9. *This dead dog*] See iii. 8.

Let me go—and take off his head.] There was admirable discipline observed in this small army, none of which durst stir without David's order or leave. And this, according to human reason, was just a motion which Abishai made; he being very near of kin to David, as Shimei was to Saul; and therefore a fit person to stop the mouth of such a mad dog, by cutting off his head.

Ver. 10. *What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah?*] He speaks this with some indignation; and reflects upon Joab, as well as Abishai, who had been the occasion of these reproaches.

So let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David.] God neither bade him curse David, nor excited him to it; but finding his heart full of malice and rage, gave him an opportunity to vent it, as a punishment unto David. Unto which the good king humbly submits: looking upon it as coming from the hand of God, who delivered him up to this contempt. And in this David's virtue was admirable; for it is not an easy thing to stifle all motions to revenge when it is easy to take it, and there is a high provocation to it. It is an observation, indeed, of Cicero's (Orat. de Atruspium Responsis), that *perdit hominis profligatque maledictis, nullius gloria dignitasque violatur*; "by the reproaches of a wicked, profligate fellow, no man's glory or dignity is hurt or violated." But David doth not scorn these curses out of mere greatness of spirit, as coming out of the mouth of a base wretch, not worthy to be regarded; but acknowledges the justice of them, and bears them with a singular patience, out of humility and reverence to God, who had so ordered it.

Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so?] He doth not mean who should ask Shimei such a question, but who should take upon him to find fault with God, who had just reason to suffer this? Though Grotius thinks David excuses Shimei in these words. For speaking concerning the respect that is to be used to kings, in not giving them public reproaches, he excepts those which are given by a prophet, who had a special command from God for it. Upon which account he saith, when David was openly upbraided

11 And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now may this Benjamite do it? let him alone and let him curse; for the LORD hath bidden him.

12 It may be that the LORD will look on mine affliction, and that the LORD will requite me good for his cursing this day.

13 And as David and his men went by the way, Shimei went along on the hill's side over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and cast dust.

14 And the king and all the people that were with him, came weary, and refreshed themselves there.

15 ¶ And Absalom, and all the people the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel with him.

16 And it came to pass, when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, was come unto Absalom, that Hushai said unto Absalom, God save the king, God save the king.

by Shimei as a murderer, he had no excuse to make for him but this, that perhaps God had commanded him to do it; showing that this alone could make it lawful to speak evil of the king, if God in a special manner enjoined it (Lib. De Imperio Summar. Potest. circa sacra. cap. 9. sect. 19).

Ver. 11.] His passion seems not to have been at all stirred by this impotent railer, and he endeavours to quiet the spirits of others, calmly reasoning himself and them, with admirable consideration, into an humble patience: for what were the revilings of a stranger to the murderous intentions of a son? And how could he withstand God, who inflicted this punishment upon him for his sins?

Ver. 12.] He durst not be confident, being conscious of his ill deservings; but he had some hope that God would be as gracious to him as this man was malicious.

Ver. 13. *As David and his men went by the way,*] Taking no notice of him.

Shimei—cursed as he went,] Neglect of him made him more outrageous: which gave David occasion to exercise the greater patience under so long a vexation.

Ver. 14. *The king, and all the people—came weary,*] Not only with their journey, but with grief.

Refreshed themselves there.] At Bahurim (ver. 5).

Ver. 15.] As soon as David was got into the wilderness he took possession of Jerusalem, and the king's palace.

Ver. 16. *When Hushai—was come unto Absalom,*] Among others that came to welcome him to Jerusalem.

God save the king,] He not only owned his authority, but with great affection seemed to desire its countenance. Which was an egregious piece of flattery and dissimulation.

Ver. 17.] Absalom had not so little sense as not to consider, that no man ought to forsake a friend in his distress: though at the same time he did not reflect how he had not only forsaken, but forced away his own father. So that one might have said to him, "Is this thy duty to thy father?"

Ver. 18.] The voice of the people he pretends to look upon as the voice of God; and that he was bound to prefer the public good before his own private obligations or affections.

Ver. 19.] He gives a second reason; that he should

17 And Absalom said to Hushai, Is this thy kindness to thy friend? why wentest thou not with thy friend?

18 And Hushai said unto Absalom, Nay; but whom the LORD, and this people, and all the men of Israel, choose, his will I be, and with him will I abide.

19 And again, whom should I serve? *should I not serve* in the presence of his son? as I have served in thy father's presence, so will I be in thy presence.

20 ¶ Then said Absalom to Ahithophel, Give counsel among you what we shall do.

21 And Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Go in unto thy father's concubines, which he hath left to keep the house; and all Israel shall hear that thou art abhorred of thy father: then shall the hands of all that are with thee be strong.

22 So they spread Absalom a tent upon the top of the house; and Absalom went in unto his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.

23 And the counsel of Ahithophel, which he

not offend against David in giving good counsel to his son.

Ver. 20.] I suppose Ahithophel was made president of the council (as we now speak), who required the rest to deliver their opinions after he had delivered his.

Ver. 21. *Go in unto thy father's concubines,*] It appears by this he was a profane politician, who did not regard by what means, how wicked soever, he compassed his ends. The Hebrews think also, that by this counsel Ahithophel gratified his own revenge, because David had lain with his grand-daughter, as I before noted.

All Israel shall hear that thou art abhorred of thy father:] That he and his father were become irreconcilable enemies. For Ahithophel involved him in a greater sin than that for which he killed Amnon: it not being so foul a crime to lie with his sister, as it was to commit incest with his father's wives.

Then shall the hands of all that are with thee be strong.] When they were possessed with an opinion, that the father and son could never come to an accommodation. Which might have been hoped between such near relations: and then the people had been in an ill condition: for David might not have been reconciled to them, though he was to his son. But after this detestable crime there was no likelihood that they would ever be friends again.

Ver. 22.] Who were strangely depraved, in that none of them should cry out against such abominable wickedness.

Ver. 23. *The counsel of Ahithophel,—was as if a man had inquired at the oracle of God:*] It was so sure and safe, that it was commonly followed, without any doubting of the success. Such was this counsel which he now gave: for there was no greater danger to him and all Israel, than for Absalom to repent, and submit to his father: therefore he endeavoured, as I said, to make them irreconcilable, by doing his father the highest injury. Such was this to which he advised, as we learn by Jacob's resentment of it in his son Reuben, and many other examples, for which I refer to Grotius. He made a breach therefore thus wide, that it might never be healed: for if it had, David might have called him and others, in due time, to an account for their treason.

Both with David and with Absalom.] While David was in prosperity he gave him faithful counsel: but

counselled in those days, *was* as if a man had enquired at the oracle of God: so *was* all the

counsel of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom.

now in his distress as wisely consulted his ruin. For, as Procopius Gazæus observes, *accommodavit se rebus presentibus*: "he was one of those who complied with the present state of things;" and now

with great reason, advised to make haste to despatch David: fearing lest natural affection should work a reconciliation, and he should be punished for his perditionousness.

CHAPTER XVII.

1 *Ahithophel's counsel is overthrown by Hushai's, according to God's appointment.* 15 *Secret intelligence is sent unto David.* 23 *Ahithophel hangeeth himself.* 25 *Amasa is made captain.* 27 *David at Mahanaim is furnished with provision.*

1 MOREOVER Ahithophel said unto Absalom, Let me now choose out twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue after David this night:

2 And I will come upon him while he *is* weary and weak handed, and will make him afraid: and all the people that *are* with him shall flee; and I will smite the king only:

3 And I will bring back all the people unto thee: the man whom thou seekest *is* as if all returned: so all the people shall be in peace.

4 And the saying pleased Absalom well, and all the elders of Israel.

5 Then said Absalom, Call now Hushai the

Archite also, and let us hear likewise what he saith.

6 And when Hushai was come to Absalom, Absalom spake unto him, saying, Ahithophel hath spoken after this manner: shall we do *after* his saying? if not; speak thou.

7 And Hushai said unto Absalom, The counsel that Ahithophel hath given *is* not good at this time.

8 For, said Hushai, thou knowest thy father and his men, that they *be* mighty men, and they *be* chafed in their minds, as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field: and thy father *is* a man of war, and will not lodge with the people.

CHAP. XVII.

Ver. 1. *Let me now choose out twelve thousand men.*] Out of the whole multitude of the Israelites that followed Absalom; a thousand choice men, I suppose, out of each tribe. For he knew it would take up too much time to gather all the forces of Israel together, and give David an opportunity to escape.

I will arise and pursue after Israel] It seems he was a soldier as well as a counsellor: or, at least, he thought his counsel so sure of being successful, that he undertook himself to put it in execution. He was afraid, also, that if Absalom should command them himself, natural affection might make him spare his father, and not take away his life; or perhaps work an agreement between them: and so leave him in danger as I said before, to be called to an account for his rebellion.

This night] The next, I suppose, after David went away. For speed was the main thing on which he depended.

Ver. 2. *While he is weary*] With a long march. *Weak handed,*] Before he had got more forces together.

Will make him afraid] Strike a terror into him by this sudden attack; and in the night, when he was ill provided.

All the people that are with him shall flee] Finding how unable they were to resist such a force.

I will smite the king only] And spare all the people, whom he would not pursue.

Ver. 3. *I will bring back all the people unto thee*] By this means, he doubted not to make an end of the war presently, and to bring all Israel to be his subjects.

This man whom thou seekest, is as if all returned] By smiting David, with whom alone was his quarrel, the whole nation would come in to him: there being no other, to whom they should submit when he was dead.

So all the people shall be in peace] Thus they should

have a peace without war; by taking and killing him; which would preserve both the people which were with Absalom, and those with David. They should all be saved, and he alone destroyed.

Ver. 4.] For it was very sound advice; it being dangerous to deliberate long about such wicked designs; which must be executed speedily. So Tacitus well observes, *Scelera impetu, bona consilia mora valent*: "Wicked counsels prevail by sudden violence, but good by delays."

Ver. 5.] It was a proverb, it is likely, before Solomon's time, that "in a multitude of counsellors there is safety:" by which Absalom resolved to govern himself. But the providence of God is chiefly to be here noted; who made Absalom irresolute and doubtful, even in that counsel which was approved by all the elders of Israel, and was, evidently, the wisest that could be given.

Ver. 6. *Ahithophel hath spoken after this manner*] Relating what he had said, ver. 2, 3.

Shall we do after his saying?] Follow his advice. *If not; speak thou.*] He gives him full liberty to speak freely, if he were of another opinion; which he might deliver without offence, either to him or any body else.

Ver. 7.] He confessed him to be a man of extraordinary judgment; but no man is wise at all times: and he thought now he was in an error for the following reason.

Ver. 8. *Thy father and his men, that they be mighty men.*] Old soldiers, who are aware of the danger wherein they are; and will provide against it, that they be not easily surprised.

Chafed in their minds,] So extremely provoked and exasperated, that it would be dangerous to fall upon them with so small an army as Ahithophel proposed. For such desperate persons would sell their lives at a dear rate.

As a bear robbed of her whelps] All men know that a bear is a very fierce creature: and good authors, particularly Aristotle, observe, that she-bears are

9 Behold, he is hid now in some pit, or in some other place: and it will come to pass, when some of them be overthrowen at the first, that whosoever heareth it will say, There is a slaughter among the people that follow Absalom.

10 And he also that is valiant, whose heart is as the heart of a lion, shall utterly melt: for all Israel knoweth that thy father is a mighty man, and they which be with him are valiant men.

11 Therefore I counsel that all Israel be generally gathered unto thee, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, as the sand that is by the sea for multitude; and that thou go to battle in thine own person.

12 So shall we come upon him in some place

fiercer than the male; especially when they have whelps to take care of, as the same philosopher writes, lib. vi. Hist. Animal, cap. 18. But most of all enraged, when their whelps are killed, or taken away from them: which is mentioned often in Holy Scripture, Prov. xvii. 12. Hosea xiii. 8, where Kimchi observes, that they bring forth their whelps wrapped up in a very thick skin, which it costs them a great deal of pains to free them from; and therefore grieves them more, when they find they have laboured in vain (see Bochart, in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. iii. cap. 9).

Thy father is a man of war,] Of such experience in warlike affairs, that as his men would defend him stoutly, and with great fury, so, when all was done, it was probable Ahithophel would not know where to find him; for great captains having disposed their force to the best advantage; and set their guards, oftentimes retire themselves from the camp, and lodge in some secret place.

Ver. 9. *He is hid now in some pit, or in some other place,]* Some cave, or other lurking-place; as he was in the days of Saul, who was never able to catch him.

When some of them] That is, of Absalom's forces.

Be overthrowen at the first,] As might well be supposed, if David's men should come on a sudden upon them, out of an ambush, and put the first ranks into disorder, if not make a slaughter among them.

There is a slaughter among the people that follow Absalom,] This news would presently be spread through the whole army, and fear make them think the slaughter greater than it was.

Ver. 10. *He also that is valiant, whose heart is as the heart of a lion, shall utterly melt,]* For men are apt to conjecture of successes by the beginning; and it is a great encouragement to men to fight when they prosper at the first onset; and mightily disheartens those that are beaten. Lions are not only very strong, but very furious creatures; and therefore valiant men are said to have the hearts of lions, and the faces of lions (1 Chron. xii. 8), and the army of locusts, to have the teeth of lions (Joel i. 6). But no men are so terrible, but they may be terrified, when they are suddenly and unexpectedly surprised by men as terrible as themselves, and far more incensed and justly enraged.

Vossius thinks that the word *lebi*, which in Hebrew signifies a lion, comes from the word *leb* which in that language signifies the heart: as much as to say, *Cordatus*, a hearty creature, full of courage: whence the Greeks call a valiant and generous man, *θυμολόγος*, and *λεοντόδενος* (see him, lib. iii. De Orig. et Progr. Idol. cap. 52, and Bochartus, in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. iii. cap. 2).

Valiant men,] Who would pursue any advantage with the greatest courage and resolution.

where he shall be found, and we will light upon him as the dew falleth on the ground: and of him and of all the men that are with him there shall not be left so much as one.

13 Moreover, if he be gotten into a city, then shall all Israel bring ropes to that city, and we will draw it into the river, until there be not one small stone found there.

14 And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel. For the Lord had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Absalom.

15 Then said Hushai unto Zadok and to

Ver. 11. *I counsel that all Israel be generally gathered unto thee,]* He means all the fighting men throughout the country, which were very numerous. In which advice, his chief aim was to gain time for David to raise an army by the help of his friends; for all Israel could not presently be gathered together, and put into order of battle.

That thou go to battle in thine own person,] Which would encourage the people to fight valiantly when he was at the head of them; and would win him great glory, in owing his victory to his own conduct, and not to other men's.

Ver. 12.] He compares the multitude of their soldiers to the drops of dews, which cover the face of the whole earth; so that if David was in the field, he could not escape, but he would fall into the hands of some or other of them. For Absalom's army would be so large as to spread itself over all the country, and ferret David and his men out of all their holes, by searching every one of them. This counsel was very plausible to one who relied upon the greatness of a host; and Hushai was also so cunning as to speak as if he would accompany him.

Ver. 13.] He represents a further advantage of such a multitude; that if David quitted the field, and got into the strongest of their cities, encompassed with high walls, and a deep ditch, they were enough to begirt it round, and, by ropes put about the walls, draw them down and all the houses of the city, into the ditch that ran about it. There was no such thing, that we read of, practised in war; therefore some by *chabalim* (which we translate ropes) understand troops, or bands of men, who by machines drawn with ropes could batter down walls and houses: or rather, this is a bragging hyperbolic speech, that they should be so numerous as to be able to do this, if there were no other way to reduce the city.

Until there be not one small stone found there,] Much less any man remaining there.

Ver. 14. *The counsel of Hushai—is better, than the counsel of Ahithophel,]* For so it would naturally seem to men that had a bad cause, and were cowardly, having nothing but their numbers to depend upon.

For the Lord had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel,] But the chief reason was, that God blinded their eyes, and infatuated their judgments, that they could not discern what was best, but take that course which would ruin Absalom. Such is the wonderful overruling providence of God, in more cases than we are aware of; for, as St. Hilary speaks, concerning the rage of heretics, *Si quantum audet impietas, tantum consuleret prudentia, difficile esset veritatis causam agere*; "If wickedness were as wise and prudent in counsel, as it is bold and daring in attempts, it would be hard to maintain a good cause."

Ver. 15.] He acted the part of a true friend to

Abiathar the priests, Thus and thus did Ahithophel counsel Absalom and the elders of Israel; and thus and thus have I counselled.

16 Now therefore send quickly, and tell David, saying, Lodge not this night in the plains of the wilderness, but speedily pass over; lest the king be swallowed up, and all the people that are with him.

17 Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz stayed by En-rogel; for they might not be seen to come into the city: and a wench went and told them; and they went and told king David.

18 Nevertheless a lad saw them, and told Absalom: but they went both of them away quickly, and came to a man's house in Bahurim, which had a well in his court; whither they went down.

19 And the woman took and spread a covering over the well's mouth, and spread corn thereon: and the thing was not known.

20 And when Absalom's servants came to the

woman to the house, they said, Where is Ahimaaz and Jonathan? And the woman said unto them, They be gone over the brook of water. And when they had sought and could not find them, they returned to Jerusalem.

21 And it came to pass, after they were departed, that they came up out of the well, and went and told king David, and said unto David, Arise, and pass quickly over the water: for thus hath Ahithophel counselled against you.

22 Then David arose, and all the people that were with him, and they passed over Jordan: by the morning light there lacked not one of them that was not gone over Jordan.

23 ¶ And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father.

24 Then David came to Mahanaim. And

David, but not of a trusty servant to Absalom, whose counsels he betrayed.

Ver. 16. *Send quickly, and tell David.*] Carry him this intelligence with all speed.

Speedily pass over;] The river Jordan.

Lest the king be swallowed up,] For fear Absalom should change his resolution, and incline again to the counsel of Ahithophel; who being a man of great authority, might persuade him his advice was the truest.

Ver. 17. *En-rogel;*] A place near Jerusalem (Josh. xv. 7, 8), which the Targum translates the *fuller's well*; because, as Kimchi says, the fullers there trod their cloth with their feet; for he derives *rogel* from the word *regel*, which signifies a *foot*.

For they might not be seen to come into the city:] Their fathers charged them to stay in this place; because it would have been difficult to send them out of the city without being discovered.

A wench went and told them;] Pretending, perhaps, to go thither to scour some clothes.

They went and told king David.] After a little stop in their way, as it here follows.

Ver. 18. *A lad saw them, and told Absalom:*] Some of whose troopers, who were scouting thereabouts (as Josephus understands it), discovered them before they had gone two furlongs.

Came to a man's house in Bahurim,] They suspected they were discovered, and therefore turned out of the public road (as Josephus explains it), and made haste to this village, and perhaps in that man's house where David refreshed himself (xvi. 5. 14).

Which had a well in his court; whither they went down.] For at that time of the year their wells in many places were dry, or had little water in them. And it would not be easily suspected that they would stay in an open court.

Ver. 19.] Corn newly thrashed out, which she pretended to dry in the sun. By this means they lay undiscovered.

Ver. 20. *When Absalom's servants*] Who were sent to pursue them.

Came to the woman] For some had informed them that they had turned this way.

Where is Ahimaaz and Jonathan?] They were known persons, being the sons of the most eminent among the priests; or, perhaps, they described them to her, so that she could not but know whether two such persons came thither, or passed that way.

They be gone over the brook of water.] Which came,

I suppose, from the fountain of En-rogel. It seems to have been a common opinion in those days, that these officious lies, for the safety of innocent persons, had no hurt in them; for we find many instances of them, which cannot be justified (see upon Josh. ii. 5).

When they had sought and could not find them,] For the woman told them, as Josephus says, that they made no stay at her house; but after they had asked for a little drink, made haste away. Though if they pursued them speedily, she believed they might overtake them.

Ver. 21. *After they were departed,*] As soon as the pursuers were returned back to Jerusalem.

Arise, and pass quickly over the water: for thus hath Ahithophel counselled against you.] And they did not know but he, by his great wisdom, might overrule the counsel of Hushai (with which, no doubt, they also acquainted David), and persuade Absalom to hearken to his; and then David was in extreme danger.

Ver. 22.] By this it appears, that they passed over in the night, either at the fords, or in boats; and that not one of them miscarried in the passage, or ran away from him.

Ver. 23. *When Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed,*] Soon after Ahimaaz and Jonathan were gone to David, it publicly appeared, that the counsel of Ahithophel was rejected, and Hushai's entertained.

Put his household in order,] Settled his affairs, and disposed of his estate.

And hanged himself,] Being confident that David would get the better of Absalom; and that then he should be put to death for his treason; which made him choose to be his own executioner. So we understand it; though some of the Jews will have it that he died of grief, being choked with a quinsy. For it is not likely, they think, so wise a man as he would hang himself: but, being full of anguish, anger, and vexation (arising not merely from his pride, which enraged him to see any man's counsel preferred to his; but to the foresight, as I said, of danger, if David prevailed, as he was sure he would), these passions cast him into so violent a distemper, that he was strangled by it. And so some interpret the word ἀνιψάρο, in Matt. xxvii. 5.

Was buried in the sepulchre of his father.] Where perhaps he would not have had the honour to be interred if he had been executed, by David.

Absalom passed over Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him.

25 ¶ And Absalom made Amasa captain of the host instead of Joab: which Amasa was a man's son, whose name was Ithra an Israelite, that went in to Abigail the daughter of Nahash, sister to Zeruiah Joab's mother.

26 So Israel and Absalom pitched in the land of Gilead.

27 ¶ And it came to pass, when David was come to Mahanaim, that Shobi the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and

Ver. 24. *Mahanaim.*] A place in the tribe of Gad (see chap. ii. 8. of this book).

Absalom passed over Jordan, he and all the men of Israel.] As soon as he had gathered them together, which required some time: during which David had opportunity to strengthen himself by gathering an army also. Which was after the death of Ahithophel (who saw what delays were made by gathering Israel together, and what the consequence would be), and after relief was sent to him by several persons, particularly by Shobi of the children of Ammon (ver. 27), who were neighbours to this part of the country of Israel, though at a good distance from Mahanaim.

Ver. 25. *Amasa was a man's son, whose name was Ithra an Israelite.*] By religion, though by birth an Ishmaelite (see 1 Chron. ii. 27). Abarbinel thinks the quite contrary, that he was an Israelite by birth, but had lived long in the land of the Ishmaelites. And by "the son of a man" he understands an illustrious person.

That went in to Abigail the daughter of Nahash.] That is, he married one of the daughters of Jesse, who is here called Nahash. For, as Kimchi observes, many persons had two names: and this signifies a serpent. From whence it is, that when Isaiah saith, xiv. 29, "out of the serpent's root (or the root of Nahash) shall come forth a cockatrice, or basilisk;" the Chaldee paraphrase expounds it, "out of the root of Jesse shall come forth the Messiah." Who was typified by the brazen serpent in the wilderness.

Sister to Zeruiah Joab's mother.] So Amasa was cousin-german to Joab; and David was uncle to them both. Absalom, one would think, should not have trusted in such an office so near a relation of David: but he himself was much nearer; and he took Amasa to be as ambitious as himself.

Ver. 26.] Waiting an opportunity to fight David.

Ver. 27. *Shobi the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of Ammon.*] This was a comfort to David, to see himself honoured in his distress by one of a strange country: which he had made his enemy by the terrible execution he had made among them (xii. 26, &c.). But it is thought, that this Shobi, the brother of Hanun, abhorring the base affront which he put upon David, was preserved by him, and made king of the country in the room of Hanun. And showed his gratitude for so great a kindness, by coming to his relief, and perhaps to his assistance in his extreme necessity.

And Machir.] Who bred up Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, till David sent for him (ix. 5).

And Barzillai.] Who was a man of great wealth (xix. 32), and of as great goodness: for he maintained David while he was in those parts.

Ver. 28. *Brought beds, and basons.*] All manner of household stuff, which they now wanted.

And wheat, and barley.] All sorts of provision,

Machir the son of Ammiel of Lo-debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim,

28 Brought beds, and basons, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched corn, and beans, and lentiles, and parched pulse,

29 And honey, and butter, and sheep, and cheese of kine, for David, and for the people that were with him, to eat: for they said, The people is hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness.

which were necessary for the sustenance either of man or beast. And they brought it of their own accord, without asking, which was a token of their affectionate loyalty. The word *kali* is twice repeated among these provisions, and is first joined with *wheat, barley, and flour*. And properly signifies, *tostas fruges, parched corn*, as we well translate it. And in the latter end of the verse, after *beans and lentiles*, it must signify, as Bochart observes, *tostum aut frictum aliquid legumen, viz. frictum cicer*, "some parched or fried sort of pulse," to wit, "fried vetches:" which grew plentifully in Judea: as it was common among both Greeks and Romans in their food, as Bochart shows, in his Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. i. cap. 7, where he observes that it is called *kali* by the Arabians to this day. And here we may learn, by the way, from this story, and the present made him by Abigail, and by Ziba, what was the ordinary victuals used in those days. Grain and pulse made up a great part of it, which were the common food of the ancient Egyptians. And the Romans, in their best times, when they most of all applied themselves to agriculture, did scarcely live upon any thing else: whence came the illustrious names of Fabius, Piso, Cicero, and Lentulus.

Ver. 29. *And honey.*] Milk and honey in those times were reckoned the greatest delicacies, and were the food of kings and great persons; as the same Bochart observes, lib. iv. cap. 11.

And butter, and sheep, and cheese of kine.] The making of butter, I have observed elsewhere, was early known in these countries; and so was cheese. For, as the author now mentioned observes, though these words *saphoth lachar* be very variously interpreted, yet the Chaldee and Syriac, as well as all the Hebrews, understand by *saphoth*, cheese made of cow's milk: from the Hebrew and Chaldee word *saphar*, which signifies to strain; cheese being made by pressing the whey out of the curds (see Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 33). Here is no mention of any flesh-meat but sheep, which was very plentiful in those countries; and so was fish also, but we never read any mention of its being eaten till the latter times. For it is supposed by learned men, that the ancients despised it, as too light and delicate for strong stomachs. Whence they observe that Homer never speaks of it, nor any Grecian writer of the heroic times.

The people is hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness.] Where there was scarcity of provision, and therefore they needed refreshment, when they were come out of it. Which moved these good people to bring them beds to rest themselves in, after their journey: and all these good things which this country afforded, to satisfy their hunger: and it is highly probable, bottles of wine were not wanting, to make their entertainment more noble.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1 David viewing the armies in their march giveth them charge of Absalom. 6 The Israelites are sore smitten in the wood of Ephraim. 9 Absalom, hanging in an oak, is slain by Joab, and cast into a pit. 18 Absalom's place. 19 Ahimaaz and Cushi bring tidings to David. 33 David mourneth for Absalom.

1 AND David numbered the people that were with him, and set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them.

2 And David sent forth a third part of the people under the hand of Joab, and a third part under the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and a third part under the hand of Ittai the Gittite. And the king said unto the people, I will surely go forth with you myself also.

3. But the people answered, Thou shalt not go forth: for if we flee away, they will not care for us; neither if half of us die, will they care for us: but now *thou art worth ten thousand of us*: therefore now *it is* better that thou succour us out of the city.

4 And the king said unto them, What seemeth you best I will do. And the king stood by

the gate side, and all the people came out by hundreds and by thousands.

5 And the king commanded Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, *Deal gently* for my sake with the young man, *even* with Absalom. And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge concerning Absalom.

6 ¶ So the people went out into the field against Israel: and the battle was in the wood of Ephraim;

7 Where the people of Israel were slain before the servants of David, and there was there a great slaughter that day of twenty thousand men.

8 For the battle was there scattered over the face of all the country: and the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.

9 ¶ And Absalom met the servants of David.

CHAP. XVIII.

Ver. 1. *David numbered the people*] And found them sufficient to make a considerable army.

Set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them.] Formed them into regiments and companies (as we now speak), and set proper officers and commanders over them.

Ver. 2. *David sent forth a third part of the people under the hand of Joab*] Who was the general of the whole host: but now David intended to command in chief himself (as we read in the end of this verse), and therefore committed only a third part of the army to the conduct of Joab.

A third part under the hand of Abishai,—and a third part under—Ittai] Order and discipline is of more force in a battle than great numbers: therefore David disposes his little army, for so it was in comparison (Josephus saith but four thousand men), into three bodies, under three eminent commanders: who were to succour one another as they saw occasion.

I will surely go forth with you myself also.] Which he thought would be a great encouragement to them, and make them fight the more valiantly.

Ver. 3. *Thou shalt not go forth.*] They did not think it advisable that he should hazard himself; for which they give a good reason. That if they should be routed, and half of them slain, Absalom would not think himself a conqueror as long as David was alive: who might raise new forces, and give him battle again. And, as Josephus adds, they might possibly think the king had another army to guard his person.

Thou art worth ten thousand of us.] Whose person, therefore, ought not to be exposed to danger.

It is better that thou succour us out of the city.] By sending them, if there were need, a fresh supply of men which he kept with him as a reserve in the city: and provision also, with counsel and advice, as occasion required.

Ver. 4. *What seemeth you best I will do.*] He submitted to their opinion; for it was not a time now to oppose the sense of his people.

All the people came out] Whom Josephus saith, he

exhorted to be faithful and courageous, remembering what he had done for them, *κατὰ αὐτοῖς ἐπεξήμενος*, “praying to God to make them victorious.”

Ver. 5. *Deal gently—with the young man.*] If they got the better, he prayed, or rather required them, to spare Absalom's life: though he did not deserve it, yet because David desired it, whose affection was wonderfully great to him as his son; and in hope, perhaps, to reclaim him, and bring him to repentance. He considered him also as a rash young man, and therefore an object of his and their pity.

And all the people heard] So that no private soldier might voluntarily kill him.

Ver. 6.] Josephus saith, that Joab drew up his men, *ἐν τῷ πεδίῳ μεγάλῳ*, “in a large field, which had a wood behind it.” Which is called the “wood of Ephraim,” not because it belonged to the tribe of Ephraim, for they had no possessions on this side Jordan, where the battle was fought: but the Gileadites gave it that name in memory of the great slaughter Jephthah made of the Ephraimites hereabout mentioned Judg. xii.

Ver. 7. *Where the people of Israel were slain*] They who fought for Absalom being called “the people of Israel,” it looks like an argument that David's army was principally gathered out of his own tribe of Judah. But it will appear from xix. 11. that this is not true; and therefore by *Israel* we are to understand the tribes on the other side Jordan, who pursued David into the land of Gilead, where he had got together a small army.

A great slaughter] For the fight was obstinate, as Josephus thinks, both sides having great reason to stand stoutly to it, lib. vii. Antiq. cap. 9.

Ver. 8. *Over the face of all the country.*] Thereabout, both in the field and in the wood.

The wood devoured] Some think the wood is said to devour them, because they fell into pits, or stumbled upon stumps of trees, or pressed one another to death as they came into strait places, or were killed by wild beasts. But the most simple meaning is, that there were more slain in the wood than in the field; that is, more in flight than in the fight: so Josephus *ὡς φεύγοντας περὶν πείραιας ἢ μαχομένους*, “for they

And Absalom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that *was* under him went away.

10 And a certain man saw *it*, and told Joab, and said, Behold, I saw Absalom hanged in an oak.

11 And Joab said unto the man that told him, And, behold, thou sawest *him*, and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground? and I would have given thee ten *shekels* of silver, and a girdle.

12 And the man said unto Joab, Though I should receive a thousand *shekels* of silver in mine hand, yet would I not put forth mine hand against the king's son: for in our hearing the king

charged thee and Abishai and Ittai, saying, Beware that none *touch* the young man Absalom.

13 Otherwise I should have wrought falsehood against mine own life: for there is no matter hid from the king, and thou thyself wouldest have set thyself against me.

14 Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he *was* yet alive in the midst of the oak.

15 And ten young men that bare Joab's armour compassed about and smote Absalom, and slew him.

16 And Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing after Israel: for Joab held back the people.

17 And they took Absalom, and cast him into

could not run away so fast in the wood as in the open field." Many also being weary, it is likely got into lurking places, and were killed like wild beasts.

Ver. 9. *Absalom met the servants of David.*] In this fight through the wood he chanced to meet with some of David's soldiers, who would not kill him, nor so much as stop him, much less seize him: for so it seems they understood David's commandment, that they should not meddle with him. But though they let him go, yet God met with him, and put a stop to his flight, as it here follows.

Absalom rode upon a mule.] Full speed, as fast as it could carry him.

His head caught hold of the oak.] His neck, I suppose, stuck fast between the boughs of this oak.

He was taken up between the heaven and the earth.] He hung there, having nothing to support him: and his neck was so wedged between the boughs, by the swift motion of the mule, that he was not able to disengage himself. I do not see any colour for their opinion who think he hung by his hair, which, being very long, was wrapped about the boughs of the tree: nor is it probable he was without a helmet, which covered his hair. And besides, it is said afterward, that Joab smote him "while he was yet alive," in the middle of the oak (ver. 14). Which had been no wonder if he had only hung by his hair, which would not have killed him; whereas when Joab came to him, he was only not quite dead, but very near it. Yet that great man Bochartus, in his epistle about the weight of Absalom's hair, supposes it to have been so thick and so strong, that the weight of his whole body could not break it when he hung thereby. Though in his last work he saith, hæsit inter ramos arborum, et jumento prætergresso pependit inter cælum et terram, "he stuck between the boughs of trees, and his beast going from under him, he hung between heaven and earth" (Hieroicozon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 11).

Ver. 10. *I saw Absalom hanged.*] But not dead.

Ver. 11. *A girdle.*] A military belt, which was much esteemed (1 Sam. xviii. 4).

Ver. 12. *In mine hand.*] In ready money (as we speak) paid down beforehand.

In our hearing the king charged thee and Abishai.] It was a thing notoriously known, not only to him, but to all the army.

Beware that none touch—Absalom.] Do him no hurt; but leave me to punish him.

Ver. 13. *I should have wrought falsehood against mine own life.*] Not only being false and disobedient to the king, but brought his own life in danger; and therefore not to have been true to himself.

Thou thyself wouldest have set thyself against me.]

He knew the genius of Joab so well, that he was sure he would have been as forward as any both to inform the king of what he had done, and to have him punished for disobeying his sovereign. Joab also knew this to be so true, that he doth not rebuke him for this bold saying.

Ver. 14. *I may not tarry thus with thee.*] Lose time in such discourse.

He took three darts.] From the Hebrew *spatim*, which we translate *darts*, comes the Latin word *spatha*: which was a sort of weapon among the ancient Gauls, as Bochartus shows, called by the Chaldees *gisat*, from whence the Latin *gesum*: which Festus saith was grave jaculum, "a heavy dart," being made all of iron (see his Canaan, lib. i. cap. 42).

Thrust them through the heart of Absalom.] Not through that part which is strictly called *the heart* (for then he would have died immediately, and there would have been no need of his soldiers falling upon him, as we read they did in the next verse), but through the midst of his body; which did not kill him outright, but there was still some life remaining in him.

Ver. 15. *Ten young men that bare Joab's armour.*] Who waited upon his person, as general of the army.

Compassed about and smote Absalom.] Surrounded him, and thrust their spears or swords through him; and so put an end to his life. Joab, I suppose, thought himself not safe as long as Absalom was alive. For some unquiet people, he thought, who were deeply engaged in this rebellion, would move new disturbances to set him on the throne. Therefore he did not as David commanded, but as he imagined he should have commanded. Kimchi hath a conceit that some of Absalom's crimes are legible in his punishment: for he was thrust through with three darts, having stolen the heart of the king, and then of the two hundred men that followed him out of Jerusalem, and then of all Israel. And as he committed incest with his father's ten concubines, so ten young men compassed him about and killed him.

Ver. 16. *Joab blew the trumpet.*] Sounded a retreat.

Joab held back the people.] This was done like a good man: for he knew the people were drawn into this rebellion, and would return to their duty, now they had none to head them. Thus Cæsar, after the defeat of Pompey, and the scattering of his army, cried, Miles parce civibus, "Soldiers, spare your fellow-citizens."

Ver. 17. *Cast him into a great pit.*] They would

a great pit in the wood, and laid a very great heap of stones upon him: and all Israel fled every one to his tent.

18 ¶ Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and reared up for himself a pillar, which is in the king's dale: for he said, I have no son to keep my name in remembrance: and he called the pillar after his own name: and it is called unto this day, Absalom's place.

19 ¶ Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok, Let me now run, and bear the king tidings, how that the Lord hath avenged him of his enemies.

20 And Joab said unto him, Thou shalt not bear tidings this day, but thou shalt bear tidings

not bring his body to be disposed of by his father's order, lest it should too much move his passion.

[Laid a very great heap of stones upon him.] So that after a sort he was stoned: as the law ordered a rebellious son to be (Deut. xxi. 20, 21). Adricomius, in his description of the holy land, saith this heap remained to his days; and all travellers, as they went by it, were wont to throw a stone to add to the heap, in detestation of his rebellion against his father.

[All Israel fled] See 1 Sam. iv. 10.

Ver. 18. *Absalom—reared up for himself a pillar, which is in the king's dale.*] This dale is mentioned Gen. xiv. 17. and was not far from Jerusalem: there he thought to perpetuate his memory (which had better been forgotten) by a very magnificent structure; as Rasi and several other Jewish doctors fancy: and some that have been in the holy land, tell us of such a noble fabric in the valley of Jehoshaphat. But this is a supposititious monument, as Wagenseil observes upon Sota, p. 221. For Josephus, who is more to be believed than these later authors, saith, that it was only a pillar, lib. vii. Antiq. cap. 9. where he calls it, *στῆλος λίθου μαρμαρίου*, “a pillar of marble;” which he saith was two furlongs from Jerusalem; in a place where the king's horses run races, as some say, and other exercises used to be performed.

[I have no son] We read before, xiv. 27. that he had three sons and one daughter: but, as Kimchi and other Hebrew doctors say, they were all dead: so that he had no hope to make his name survive him by any other means but this.

[It is called unto this day, Absalom's place.] In the Hebrew the word which we translate place is *jad*, which signifies a hand. As much as to say, his work: though Kimchi observes, that this word sometimes is the same with *makom*, a place, as in Isa. lvi. 5. And when this book was written it bare Absalom's name: though it is likely it did not last very long, for such works of vanity are commonly short-lived. Of which the most famous instance we meet with in history is recorded by Pliny, lib. xxxvii. Natural Hist. cap. 6. where he saith, Demetrius Phalereus had as many statues erected to him in Athens as there are days in the year, viz. three hundred and sixty; “nondum anno hunc numerum dierum excedente;” which is more, he thinks, than ever man had. But they were all thrown down and broken in pieces before a year was expired.

Ver. 19.] By this it appears Ahimaaz did not return to Jerusalem after he carried intelligence to David, but stayed with him, and was in this battle; for the priests bore arms as well as other men: and particularly performed the office of trumpeters to the army (2 Chron. xiii. 12). And here it is observable what strict discipline was kept in those days: that no man durst stir to carry the news of what had been done without the leave of the commander-in-chief.

another day: but this day thou shalt bear no tidings, because the king's son is dead.

21 Then said Joab to Cushi, Go tell the king what thou hast seen. And Cushi bowed himself unto Joab, and ran.

22 Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok yet again to Joab, But howsoever, let me, I pray thee, also run after Cushi. And Joab said, Wherefore wilt thou run, my son, seeing that thou hast no tidings ready?

23 But howsoever, said he, let me run. And he said unto him, Run. Then Ahimaaz ran by the way of the plain, and overran Cushi.

24 And David sat between the two gates:

[Ver. 20. *Thou shalt not bear tidings this day,*] Some reward, no doubt, was wont to be given to him that brought good tidings, especially of a great victory: which made him so desirous to be the messenger.

[Because the king's son is dead.] Which he knew would be unwelcome news to David, and procure no good to Ahimaaz.

[Ver. 21. *Cushi,*] An Ethiopian by birth, as some think, who had embraced the Jewish religion: and it is probable was one of those ten young men who attended on Joab, and was present when Absalom was killed, and helped perhaps to despatch him (ver. 15).

[Go tell the king] He mentioned, it is likely, the particulars: which he would not put in writing, but have him deliver by word of mouth. For he himself would not relate what he had done to Absalom.

[Cushi—ran.] It was a great honour to be a messenger of such good tidings, as a defeat of the king's enemies.

[Ver. 22. *Let me, I pray thee, also run after Cushi.*] We cannot tell what made him so earnest to carry tidings, unless it was hope of reward, and confidence that his own swiftness would make him the first messenger of good news. For Josephus saith, he told Joab he would relate nothing to the king, but *περὶ μόνης τῆς νικῆς*, “only concerning the victory:” *ἔσυχασεν δὲ περὶ τῆς Ἀθναίωνων τελευτῆς*, “but say not a word about the death of Absalom.”

[Wherefore wilt thou run, my son, seeing that thou hast no tidings ready?] Concerning the particulars of the fight, which he had not time to acquaint him withal. He calling him *my son*, it signifies he had a great affection to him, and therefore had denied his first request: for Joab knew the king better than Ahimaaz did: who had a mind to run, because he imagined the king would be pleased to hear he was out of danger: whereas Joab knew the king loved Absalom so dearly, that nobody would be acceptable to him that could not assure him he was safe.

[Ver. 23. *Let me run.*] He did not understand Joab's kindness, and therefore presses him again to grant his desire.

[Ahimaaz ran by the way of the plain.] There were two ways from hence to the place where David was: one over the mountains, which was the shorter way; the other by the plain, which, though the longer, according to the proverb, proved the nearest. Or, as Josephus understands it, Ahimaaz ran a more compendious way, which he alone knew, *ἰστροσωρίαν ἰμβάων τῶν ὀρέων, ὁὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλῳ ἐπιγινώσκοντι*.

[Ver. 24. *David sat between the two gates.*] The gate was a very large place, where public meetings used to be; and had an inward and an outward door, between which David sat to hear news.

[The watchman went up to the roof over the gate.]

and the watchman went up to the roof over the gate unto the wall, and lifted up his eyes, and looked, and beheld a man running alone.

25 And the watchman cried, and told the king. And the king said, If he *be* alone, *there is* tidings in his mouth. And he came apace, and drew near.

26 And the watchman saw another man running: and the watchman called unto the porter, and said, Behold *another* man running alone. And the king said, He also bringeth tidings.

27 And the watchman said, Me thinketh the running of the foremost is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok. And the king said, He is a good man, and cometh with good tidings.

28 And Ahimaaz called, and said unto the king, All is well. And he fell down to the earth upon his face before the king, and said, Blessed *be* the LORD thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king.

Over the gate there was a watch-tower, from whence they might see round about, whether any were coming, and from what quarter.

A man running alone.] Whom he spied at some distance, but could not discern who he was.

Ver. 25. *If he be alone, there is tidings in his mouth.*] He took it for a sign that he was a messenger sent from Joab, and that he brought good news: for if they had been routed, there would have been more than one seen running away.

Drew near.] So that, in a little time he could discern who he was.

Ver. 26. *He also bringeth tidings.*] More news than the former.

Ver. 27. *Ahimaaz.*] Who was remarkable, it seems, for his speed in running. He was one true to the king's interest, and, therefore, he concluded, would not bring bad news.

Ver. 28. *All is well.*] He was in haste to let the king know the good success they had in the battle, and therefore seems to have said at a distance, before he came up to him, *Peace*; which is the word in the Hebrew, signifying all happiness and prosperity.

He fell down—before the king.] When he approached nearer to him.

Blessed be the Lord] Like a truly religious man, he ascribes the victory they had got unto the Lord; who still showed his mercy unto David, and continued to be his God; i. e. his benefactor.

Ver. 29. *Is the young man Absalom safe?*] He would not express his joy until he heard that Absalom was preserved.

When Joab sent the king's servant,] This seems to signify that Cushai was one belonging to the court.

I saw a great tumult,] He dissembled his knowledge of Absalom's death; and perhaps in this said true, that he did not know the particular manner of it; though it appears plainly (from ver. 20), that he knew he was dead.

Ver. 30.] He would not have him go away until Cushai came, supposing he might find more of the truth, by examining them both together.

Ver. 31. *Cushi came;*] Not long after Ahimaaz had

29 And the king said, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Ahimaaz answered, When Joab sent the king's servant, and *me* thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what it *was*.

30 And the king said *unto him*, Turn aside, and stand here. And he turned aside, and stood still.

31 And, behold, Cushai came; and Cushai said, Tidings, my lord the king: for the LORD hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee.

32 And the king said *unto Cushai*, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Cushai answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do *thee* hurt, be as *that* young man is.

33 ¶ And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

delivered his message. He said no more than Ahimaaz had done; thinking it would be unacceptable news to mention Absalom's death.

Ver. 32.] This was a decent manner of speech to inform him that he was dead.

Ver. 33. *The king was much moved,*] So that we do not find he inquired after the manner of his death, nor after any of the particulars of the victory.

Went up to the chamber over the gate.] See xix. 8.

And wept.] Being extremely disturbed, he retired as far as he could from all company, *ἐπὶ τὸ ἄσπετον τῆς πόλεως* (as Josephus speaks), "to the highest part of the city," where he bewailed his son, knocking his breast and tearing his hair (as the same author's words are), *καὶ πανταίως αὐτὸν αἰχίζομενος*, "afflicting himself all manner of ways."

As he went—he said.] When he came into the chamber, it was not so easy to know what he did, or hear what he said, because he shut up himself privately; but as he went up the stairs, he thus bemoaned the loss of his son.

O my son Absalom,] No words can be more passionate; and it is likely his wish, that he had died in Absalom's stead, was only the effect of excessive love to him, and grief for him, which made him vent himself in expressions which were not considerate. But Pellicanus (in which he follows St. Austin) thinks this was a deliberate wish, because Absalom died impenitent, and might have lived to be a better man; but if David had died he had good hope of his own salvation. But I take this not to be well-grounded; for if David had died, in all likelihood his son would not have been sorry for it, but triumphed in his good success, and proved a wicked tyrant over a base people. The stupidity of the Jewish doctors is inconceivable, who fancy Absalom would have cut his hair by which he hung, with his sword, had he not seen hell gaping for him, if he fell down; which made him choose to die in the oak: but his father, by his lamentation over him, crying seven times, *my son, my son*, delivered him from the seven gates of hell, and brought him into paradise (see Bartoloccius, in his Kirjath-sepher, tom. ii. p. 128, &c. 162).

CHAPTER XIX.

1 *Joab causeth the king to cease his mourning.* 9 *The Israelites are earnest to bring the king back.* 11 *David sendeth to the priests to incite them of Judah.* 18 *Shimei is pardoned.* 24 *Mephibosheth excused.* 32 *Barzillai dismissed, Chimham his son is taken into the king's family.* 41 *The Israelites expostulate with Judah for bringing home the king without them.*

1 AND it was told Joab, Behold, the king weepeth and mourneth for Absalom.

2 And the victory that day was turned into mourning unto all the people: for the people heard say that day how the king was grieved for his son.

3 And the people gat them by stealth that day into the city, as people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle.

4 But the king covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice, O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!

5 And Joab came into the house to the king, and said, Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants, which this day have saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons and of thy daugh-

ters, and the lives of thy wives, and the lives of thy concubines;

6 In that thou lovest thine enemies, and hatest thy friends. For thou hast declared this day, that thou regardest neither princes nor servants: for this day I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well.

7 Now therefore arise, go forth, and speak comfortably unto thy servants: for I swear by the Lord, if thou go not forth, there will not tarry one with thee this night: and that will be worse unto thee than all the evil that befell thee from thy youth until now.

8 Then the king arose, and sat in the gate. And they told unto all the people, saying, Be-

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Ver. 1.] For Joab was now come to the city himself to give the king an account of the fight; and it is likely Ahimaz, or Cushi, informed him how heavily the king took the news of his son's death.

Ver. 2. *The victory*] That is, the joy for the victory. *Was turned into mourning*] They had so great a regard to their prince, that when they heard of his affliction, they were afflicted with him; and instead of triumphing, they also made lamentations.

Ver. 3.] Not by the gate where David was, but by some secret way, that he might not see them. Just like thieves, who are afraid to be discovered and punished for what they have done. As if they had lost the day, and not been victorious.

Ver. 4. *The king covered his face,*] Such was the custom of deep mourners (as Kimchi here observes), that they might neither see, nor be seen. As being ashamed (saith R. Levi) any should behold their rueful looks.

The king cried with a loud voice,] It is observed by many learned men, that the oriental people expressed their passions with greater vehemence than we are wont to do in these parts of the world. Where crying out aloud with a doleful voice, called *howling* in Scripture, is not usual; but was common among the Jews, as we see before in David (iii. 32), and at the laying the foundation of the temple after the captivity, when they that wept with a loud voice, drowned the voice of those that shouted for joy (Ezra iii. 12, 13).

Ver. 5. *Joab came into the house to the king.*] It seems by this, that David was removed before Joab came from the top of the gate, and gone to his house where he was wont to reside.

Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants,] Making them hang down their heads, as if they had committed such a crime that they were ashamed to look men in the face.

Which this day have saved thy life, &c.] Of all that was dear unto him.

Ver. 6. *Hatest thy friends,*] In whose preservation he seemed to take no pleasure, but only to grieve for the loss of a rebellious son.

Thou regardest neither princes nor servants:] Neither thyself, nor Abishai, nor Itai, nor any of the

great officers and faithful soldiers, who had adventured their lives for him.

If Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well.] This was spoken by Joab too sharply, and insolently; yet it was something necessary at this time to awaken David out of a strange lethargy, which made him take notice of nobody, but behave himself as if he had no concern for any person in the world, but for Absalom alone, who was gone out of it.

Ver. 7. *Go forth, and speak comfortably unto thy servants.*] He wishes him to go and show himself to his people, and acknowledge their good service, praise their courage, and congratulate their happy success: giving the honours and largesses that were due unto them, or promising them rewards proportionable to their merits.

If thou go not forth,] Unto the people, and declare how sensible he was of their services.

There will not tarry one with thee this night:] He resolved, and confirmed it with the most solemn oath, that he would lead his whole army away from him, and leave him alone. David seems to have answered nothing to all this discourse, which moved Joab to conclude with these harsh words.

That will be worse unto thee than all the evil that befell thee] For during the cruel persecution of Saul, as well as in this exile, he had a good company of faithful persons with him. Josephus expresses this threatening very well, *τοτε οτι παρορτερον και αυχνης παρτω το πειθος*, "I will make thee weep for something (as we speak), and more bitterly than ever."

Ver. 8. *Sat in the gate.*] Where the concourse of people used to be about business. For the gate was a spacious place, and the same thing with the exchange, or the forum among the Romans. The market for commodities was held here, as we learn from the prophecy of Elisha, who foretold corn should be sold at such a rate the next day in the gate of Samaria (2 Kings vii. 2), which was a very large place, since Ahab assembled there four hundred false prophets (1 Kings xxii. 10). In these gates also there was some building, wherein were seats for the elders and judges: for Boaz having a cause to be heard, "went up to the gate," and sat down there (Ruth iv. 1, 2). And so many public assemblies being held here, it makes

hold, the king doth sit in the gate. And all the people came before the king: for Israel had fled every man to his tent.

9 ¶ And all the people were at strife throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, The king saved us out of the hand of our enemies, and he delivered us out of the hand of the Philistines; and now he is fled out of the land for Absalom.

10 And Absalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle. Now therefore why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back?

11 ¶ And king David sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, saying, Speak unto the elders of Judah, saying, Why are ye the last to bring the king back to his house? seeing the speech of all Israel is come to the king, even to his house.

12 Ye are my brethren, ye are my bones and

my flesh: wherefore then are ye the last to bring back the king?

13 And say ye to Amasa, Art thou not of my bone, and of my flesh? God do so to me, and more also, if thou be not captain of the host before me continually in the room of Joab.

14 And he bowed the heart of all the men of Judah, even as the heart of one man; so that they sent *this word* unto the king, Return thou, and all thy servants.

15 So the king returned, and came to Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal, to go to meet the king, to conduct the king over Jordan.

16 ¶ And Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite, which was of Bahurim, hasted and came down with the men of Judah to meet king David.

17 And there were a thousand men of Benjamin with him, and Ziba the servant of the house

it probable that the chamber over the gate (mentioned in the foregoing chapter), where David went to weep, was the place where the privy-council were wont to meet.

All the people] That were in the city and elsewhere.

All the people came before the king.] To congratulate to him his safety, and to receive the tokens of his favour.

For all Israel had fled] Until the people heard the king appeared publicly, and no longer bewailed Absalom.

Ver. 9. *All the people were at strife*] Who should be forwardest to bring back the king: blaming one another's slackness in it.

Saying.] They call to mind what benefits they had received by his means, in their deliverance from many enemies; especially the Philistines, who had grievously oppressed them: and also their great ingratitude to him in driving him out of Jerusalem and forcing him to flee over Jordan for the sake of Absalom.

Ver. 10. *Absalom, whom we anointed*] We do not read of his being actually anointed: but they chose him for their king, and obeyed him as if he had.

Why speak ye not a word] They spake this to their elders; who seem to have been dubious what to do until they heard the sense of the people.

Ver. 11. *David sent to Zadok and to Abiathar*] By their sons, whom he had with him.

Speak unto the elders of Judah.] The priests were men of great authority, especially the high-priest and his deputy, and most proper to be employed to deal with the elders.

Why are ye the last to bring the king back] That which made them so cold, was, I suppose, the sense of their guilt in joining with Absalom; who began his conspiracy in Jerusalem itself, and perfected it in Hebron, both cities of Judah. Whose revolt was the baser, because he was of their tribe, and had long shown his great kindness to them (1 Sam. xxx. 26, &c.), the conscience of which made them afraid to bring him again to Jerusalem.

Even to his house.] These last words, "even to his house," seem to be but a repetition of what was said before, to *his house*; viz. at Jerusalem: the other words being a parenthesis.

Ver. 12. *Ye are my bones and my flesh*:] That is, he had much kindred among them.

Wherefore then are ye the last] He expresses the greater kindness to them, lest they should be so desperate as to defend Jerusalem against him.

Ver. 13. *Say ye to Amasa, Art thou not of my bone.*] That is, his sister's son: whom he bids them particu-

larly court; for, being general of Absalom's forces, he might through shame and fear be very loath to look his uncle in the face.

If thou be not captain of the host before me continually in the room of Joab.] He solemnly promises to prefer him to the highest command in the kingdom: for now he thought it a fit time to depress Joab; who was grown insufferably insolent and imperious. For he had slain Abner most perfidiously in cold blood; and killed Absalom against the king's command; and now lately insulted him in his sorrow; threatening (if we may believe Josephus) τὴν βασιλείαν ἐπίρρη παρὰδίδωαι, "that he would depose him, and deliver the kingdom to some other person." This promise David endeavoured to perform; bidding Amasa take upon him to assemble all the men of Judah (xx. 4), yet leaving Joab (ver. 7), the command of his own legion. Which he took so heinously, that he killed Amasa; and was captain of the host again, more out of fear than any favour David had for him: for if Amasa had lived, David would have humbled him. For Amasa had a great interest in Israel, over whom he had commanded in chief; especially in the tribe of Judah, whose heart he bowed to receive David again, as it here follows.

Ver. 14. *He bowed the heart of all the men of Judah, even as the heart of one man*;] Either this disposition was wrought in them by Amasa; or the kind words delivered from David by Zadok and Abiathar overcame them.

So that they sent this word unto the king.] By some messenger of their own.

Return thou.] Assuring him they were ready to receive him, and return to their obedience.

Ver. 15. *So the king returned.*] Began to return back, and came as far as Jordan; which parted the country where he was from the land of Canaan.

And Judah] That is, the elders of Judah.

Came to Gilgal.] This was an expression of their great affection, to come thus far to attend him, and to furnish him, I suppose, with accommodations in his journey: for Gilgal was near Jordan; on the other side of the river.

Ver. 16.] Hoping David would receive him kindly in such good company.

Ver. 17. *There were a thousand men of Benjamin with him.*] He was nobly attended, to show how powerful he was, and what an interest he had in his country; and yet came to implore the king's mercy. Perhaps he was a captain of a thousand in his own tribe; who came with him to intercede for his pardon.

His fifteen sons and his twenty servants] See ix. 10.

of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him; and they went over Jordan before the king.

18 And there went over a ferry boat to carry over the king's household, and to do what he thought good. And Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king, as he was come over Jordan;

19 And said unto the king, Let not my lord impute iniquity unto me, neither do thou remember that which thy servant did perversely the day that my lord the king went out of Jerusalem, that the king should take it to his heart.

20 For thy servant doth know that I have sinned: therefore, behold, I am come the first this day of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king.

21 But Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered and said, Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the LORD's anointed?

They went over Jordan] They were so officious as to go further than the men of Judah, to the other side of Jordan, where the king was: before whom they passed over.

Ver. 18. *A ferry boat*] Prepared, as many suppose, by the men of Judah. Josephus will have it a *bridge*; composed, perhaps, of many boats joined together.

To carry over—what he thought good,] To carry over what he pleased to order.

Shimei—fell down before the king,] As soon as he landed.

Ver. 19.] Resent it so deeply, as to be revenged of him.

Ver. 20. *I have sinned.*] He professes himself sensible of the crime he had committed, and was sorry for it.

I am come first this day] To show by his example what the rest should do: and, as the Hebrew doctors gloss upon it, they would all see in him an instance either of David's clemency, or severity; and accordingly behave themselves. He was not properly of the house of Joseph, but of a tribe near of kin to it: so that at this time, it seems, they looked upon themselves as members of the same body; being descended from the same mother; and they continued so till the kingdom was rent. For Benjamin is placed between Ephraim and Manasseh (the two sons of Joseph) in Ps. lxxx. 2. and they marched under the same standard, Numb. ii. 18, 19, &c.

Ver. 21.] He would have gone and done execution upon him, at that time when he cursed (xvi. 9), and now he imagined there could be no reason to spare him.

Ver. 22. *What have I to do with you.*] It seems Joab joined with his brother: who thought to govern all the king's motions as they pleased. But he bids them, in a disdainful manner, stand aside, and not meddle in this matter.

That ye should this day be adversaries unto me?] Hinder me from following my own inclinations, and set my people against me. For by following this advice, he might have alienated the hearts of all Israel from him, and made them fear the like punishment for their revolt.

Shall any man be put to death this day] In a time of universal joy, he would not have any family have cause to make lamentation. It was accounted an ill omen among other nations, if any man was put to death on the king's birth-day: and this was a second

22 And David said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah, that ye should this day be adversaries unto me? shall there any man be put to death this day in Israel? for do not I know that I am this day king over Israel?

23 Therefore the king said unto Shimei, Thou shalt not die. And the king swarc unto him.

24 ¶ And Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king, and had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came again in peace.

25 And it came to pass, when he was come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said unto him, Wherefore wentest not thou with me, Mephibosheth?

26 And he answered, My lord, O king, my servant deceived me: for thy servant said, I will saddle me an ass, that I may ride thereon, and go to the king; because thy servant is lame.

natalis imperii, "birth-day of David's empire;" which he would not have sullied with any cloud of sorrow.

I am this day king over Israel?] He had power to punish, or to pardon, as he pleased: and being restored to his kingdom, would not enter upon it with blood.

Ver. 23.] That he would not put him to death. But this did not oblige him not to give such a charge as he did to Solomon, to do justice upon him for any new disobedience. Nothing is more glorious than mercy and clemency, as the heathens themselves were sensible. Cæsar saith in a letter of his to Oppius and Cornelius (which is among Cicero's Epistles), *Hæc nova est vincendi ratio, &c.* "This is a new way of conquering, to fence ourselves by mercy and liberality" (lib. ix. Epist. ad Atticum).

Ver. 24. *The son of Saul*] That is, his grandson.

Neither dressed his feet] But wholly neglected himself, as they used to do in a time of public sorrow. For the not dressing his feet signifies (as Schickard and others understand) that he had not cut the nails of his toes; but let them grow, as he did his beard. It may be understood of his not washing his feet; the neglect of which made men very sordid. For in those countries, they lying upon beds when they ate (as Scaliger observes in his sixth book *De Emend. Temporum*), put off their shoes, and washed their feet, *ne pulverosis pedibus strata inquinarent*, "lest they should defile the carpets with their dusty feet." Besides, in hot weather the smell of their feet without washing was offensive.

Nor trimmed his beard,] He not only let the hair grow, but took no care to put it in good order. For the words in the Hebrew are, "he had not done any thing to his feet, nor any thing to his beard."

Nor washed his clothes,] His shirt nor any of the linen which he wore. As for their woollen garments, they were not wont to wash them.

From the day the king departed] This long-continued mourning argued him to be really afflicted for the king's exile.

Ver. 25. *When he was come to Jerusalem*] It is manifest from the foregoing verse, that he came down from some other place to Jerusalem to meet the king: but could not meet him sooner, as others had done, because Ziba had got his estate, and, it is likely, would not furnish him with an ass, no more than he had done when David fled away.

Wherefore wentest thou not with me,] As prudence, as well as gratitude, obliged him.

Ver. 26.] He had ordered an ass to be made ready

27 And he hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king; but my lord the king is as an angel of God: do therefore *what is good* in thine eyes.

28 For all of my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king: yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table. What right therefore have I yet to cry any more unto the king?

29 And the king said unto him, Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land.

30 And Mephibosheth said unto the king, Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house.

31 ¶ And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim, and went over Jordan with the king, to conduct him over Jordan.

32 Now Barzillai was a very aged man, *even* fourscore years old: and he had provided the king of sustenance while he lay at Mahanaim; for he *was* a very great man.

for him, to carry him to David: instead of which, Ziba saddled it for himself; and went with that false story, which is mentioned xvi. 3.

Ver. 27. *My lord the king is an angel of God;*] To discern between truth and falsehood.

Do therefore what is good in thine eyes.] And therefore he submits himself entirely to his judgment, and trusted to his kindness. He had great reason so to do, as he confesses in the next words.

Ver. 28.] The undeserved benefits he had received from David made him absolutely resign himself to his will and pleasure. He did not challenge any thing as his right, nor thought it decent to trouble the king further with his complaints.

Ver. 29. *Why speakest thou any more of thy matters?*] As if he had said, Enough, enough; I desire to hear no more of the injuries done me by the house of Saul.

Thou and Ziba divide the land.] Some of the Hebrew doctors understand this, as if he now parted the estate formerly given to Mephibosheth between him and Ziba; partly out of shame, lest he should appear too rash and hasty of belief in giving all to Ziba, and partly out of suspicion that the two great wealth of Mephibosheth might make him ambitious. But they acknowledge this sentence to be unjust, Ziba making no defence for himself. And some of them say, a voice from heaven was heard thereupon, saying, That God would make the like division of David's kingdom between Rehoboam and Jeroboam. But if we carefully attend to the words, they carry another sense in them; being as much as if he had said, "My first grant shall stand;" when he decreed that Mephibosheth should be lord of the land, and Ziba should manage it for him, ix. 10 (see Selden, De Successionibus, cap. 25. fol. 89, 90, where he makes out this very clearly).

Ver. 30.] Nothing could be more generously spoken, nor signified greater affection, than that he was content to be a beggar, now that the king was restored to his kingdom.

Ver. 31. *Rogelim,*] A place in Mount Gilead.

To conduct him over Jordan.] Merely to bring him on his way so far, and then return.

Ver. 32 *Barzillai was—fourscore years old.*] Which was a great age in David's days (Ps. xc. 10). *He was a very great man.*] And had a very large

33 And the king said unto Barzillai, Come thou over with me, and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem.

34 And Barzillai said unto the king, How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king into Jerusalem?

35 I am this day fourscore years old: and can I discern between good and evil? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women? wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king?

36 Thy servant will go a little way over Jordan with the king: and why should the king recompense it me with such a reward?

37 Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in mine own city, and be buried by the grave of my father and of my mother. But behold thy servant Chimham; let him go over with my lord the king; and do to him what shall seem good unto thee.

38 And the king answered, Chimham shall go

heart, which moved him to supply the wants of David, and all his family and attendants, as long as he stayed at Mahanaim, which was a considerable time. Pliny relates, that Crassus denied any man to be rich, who was not able to maintain a legion, lib. xxxiii. Natural. Hist. cap. 10, where he mentions one that entertained all Xerxes' army at a feast; but here was a far more rare example of virtue in Barzillai, who maintained not a prosperous prince in all his glory, but a distressed prince in his exile, when no hope appeared of a reward.

Ver. 33.] Entertained him at his own table, as a singular friend.

Ver. 34.] He excuses himself by several reasons, for not accepting the king's kindness; and the first is, because, as he was unfit for travel so far, so, for so short a time as he had to live, it was not prudent to change his dwelling.

Ver. 35. *I am this day fourscore years old.*] These general words are explained by the particulars which follow.

Can thy servant taste what I eat or—drink?] His second reason is, that the king's kindness would be ill bestowed upon one that had no relish left of any of the pleasures of a court.

Wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden?] A third is, that instead of doing the king any service he should prove a burden to him; for old men must have some to wait on them, and take care of them.

Ver. 36. *Thy servant will go a little way over Jordan.*] Express his dutiful affection to him, as far as he was able.

Why should the king recompense it me.] Since he had but done his duty to his sovereign, he did not expect to be so highly rewarded for it.

Ver. 37.] He beseeches him, for a fourth reason, not to press him to go further; but suffer him to enjoy that which old men naturally desire; to die in the place where they had lived, and to be buried with their ancestors. That he might not seem rude in refusing the king's gracious offer, he desires him to translate his kindness to his son, and bestow upon him what he pleased.

Ver. 38.] He would not have it left to his choice what he should do for Chimham; but desires the good old man to say what he would have for him, and it should be done. We do not read what Barzillai

over with me, and I will do to him that which shall seem good unto thee: and whatsoever thou shalt require of me, *that* will I do for thee.

39 And all the people went over Jordan. And when the king was come over, the king kissed Barzillai, and blessed him; and he returned unto his own place.

40 Then the king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him: and all the people of Judah conducted the king, and also half the people of Israel.

41 ¶ And, behold, all the men of Israel came to the king, and said unto the king, Why have our brethren the men of Judah stolen thee away,

and have brought the king, and his household, and all David's men with him, over Jordan?

42 And all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, Because the king *is* near of kin to us: wherefore then be ye angry for this matter? have we eaten at all of the king's cost? or hath he given us any gift?

43 And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, and said, We have ten parts in the king, and we have also more *right* in David than ye: why then did ye despise us, that our advice should not be first had in bringing back our king? And the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

asked, or what David did for him: but there being mention made in Jer. xli. 17, of "the habitation of Chimham," and that near to Beth-lehem, it is a very reasonable conjecture of Grotius, in his annotations on that place, that David, having a patrimony in the field of Beth-lehem, the place of his nativity, Jus ibi habitandi, et fructus quosdam suos faciendi dedit Chimhamo, he bestowed it upon Barzillai's son; and from thence this place took the name of Chimham, which remained until the days of Jeremiah. He promises withal, that when Barzillai was gone home, if he had any occasion to petition him, his request should be granted.

Ver. 39. *The king kissed Barzillai, and blessed him;*] They parted with great kindness, and the king prayed God to requite what Barzillai had done for him.

He returned unto his own place.] With great satisfaction, that he had seen his sovereign in his way to be restored to his kingdom.

Ver. 40. *Chimham went on with him.*] As one of his near attendants.

Judah conducted the king, and also half the people of Israel.] That is, the elders and great men both of Judah and Israel. To gratify his own tribe, David marched on, not expecting the coming of all the great men of Israel, who were making themselves ready to wait upon him.

Ver. 41. *All the men of Israel—said unto the king.*] When the other half of the Israelites were got together, they thus expostulated with the king.

Why have our brethren the men of Judah stolen thee away,] That is, why did they make such haste, and not expect our consent and assistance, who were as zealous as themselves to bring the king back? They seem to take it ill, that not only David and his family but all his *men*, i. e. his soldiers and guards, should be brought over Jordan; as if they would force their way, whether the Israelites would or no.

Ver. 42. *Because the king is near of kin to us;*] Being of their tribe, which justly required they should be more forward than others in his service.

Wherefore then be ye angry,] For our affection to him.

Hath he given us any gift?] We get nothing by it, but have only done our duty, and testified our great affection. Abarbanel thinks these words, *given us any gift*, import expiation and pardon; as in Gen. xviii. 26. Numb. vi. 26, and are as much as if they had said, Hath he granted us a pardon for what we did in the business of Absalom? Whereby they suggested, that the Israelites were the principal actors in that rebellion, and needed an act of oblivion, though they did not.

Ver. 43. *The men of Israel*] These words are not as before, "all the men of Israel:" which is a sign some of them were cooled, though most of them continued violent.

We have ten parts in the king] By the *king* is here meant the *kingdom*: ten parts of which they say were theirs (whereas there were eleven tribes besides Judah), because Simeon, being intermixed with Judah, it is likely, now came with them.

We have also more right in David than ye:] As David was a private person, Judah had more interest in him than the rest, because he was of their tribe: but as he was a king, the Israelites had more, being the far greater part of his subjects.

Why then did ye despise us,] They looked upon it therefore, as a great neglect, if not contempt, of them that they had not the precedence in this business.

The words of the men of Judah were fiercer] More vehement: or, they were too hard for them in their argument. David did not think fit to interpose: which made the men of Israel think he favoured Judah, and thence arose a new rebellion.

CHAPTER XX.

1 *By occasion of the quarrel, Sheba maketh a party in Israel.* 3 *David's ten concubines are shut up in perpetual prison.* 4 *Amasa, made captain over Judah, is slain by Joab.* 14 *Joab pursueth Sheba unto Abel.* 16 *A wise woman saveth the city by Sheba's head.* 23 *David's officers.*

I AND there happened to be there a man of Belial, whose name *was* Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjaminite: and he blew a trumpet, and said,

CHAP. XX.

Ver. 1. *There happened to be there*] When this contention fell out between the men of Israel and Judah.

Sheba, the son of Bichri,] Who perhaps was of kin

We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his tents, O Israel.

to Saul, as Shimei was (xvi. 5), and one of the commanders in Absalom's army, next to Amasa. For so Victorinus Strigelius understands the Hebrew words, *ish Bichri*, to signify unus ex proceribus, a nobleman of great power and authority among the people: like Catiline at Rome.

2 So every man of Israel went up from after David, and followed Sheba the son of Bichri: but the men of Judah clave unto their king, from Jordan even to Jerusalem.

3 ¶ And David came to his house at Jerusalem; and the king took the ten women his concubines, whom he had left to keep the house, and put them in ward, and fed them, but went not in unto them. So they were shut up unto the day of their death, living in widowhood.

4 ¶ Then said the king to Amasa, Assemble me the men of Judah within three days, and be thou here present.

5 So Amasa went to assemble the men of Judah: but he tarried longer than the set time which he had appointed him.

We have no part in David,] As much as to say, Let the men of Judah have him to themselves. He cares not for us, and we care not for him.

Every man to his tents, O Israel.] He wishes all the men of Israel, since David expressed no more regard to them, to go to their homes, and trouble themselves no further in bringing him back.

Ver. 2. So every man of Israel—followed Sheba] Instead of going home, they followed their seditious incendiary: taking it in snuff (as we speak) that the king did not expect till they, who were the majority, came to conduct him: but relied solely on the men of Judah, as if they were able, without the rest of Israel, to re-establish him in his throne.

But the men of Judah clave unto their king, from Jordan even to Jerusalem.] Not a man of them stirred from him, but conducted him from Jordan to Jerusalem. And we must not think that all the men of Israel forsook him: but a very great number of them. For Shimei, in all likelihood, and his thousand men, stuck to him, though of the same tribe with Sheba; otherwise David would have punished him, when this rebellion was quelled.

Ver. 3. Put them in ward,] Shut them up close under a guard, and fed them. Nobody came to them, but only to bring them daily provision for their sustenance.

But went not in unto them.] Never lay with them; but looked upon them as become impure to him, having been defiled by his son.

So they were shut up] They were not fit for any body else, being royal wives; and therefore he did not give them a bill of divorce, but shut them up close, that no man might enjoy them. And indeed it was not prudent to let them be so much as seen abroad: which would have renewed the remembrance of Absalom's filthiness.

Ver. 4. Then said the king to Amasa,] He makes good his promise to Amasa, which was a great encouragement to others in the tribe of Judah, to stick fast to their king. And by this means also the seditious Israelites might be the sooner brought to reason, when they saw their old general in the field against them.

Within three days,] Because the business required speedy despatch.

Be thou here present,] To receive his orders.

Ver. 5.] He was not treacherous unto David (as the Jewish doctors in the Sanhedrin say Joab represented him, and made it the reason of his killing him) but he found difficulty in the business; because the people had a high opinion of Joab, and would not easily be brought to serve under a new general. This Amasa, it is likely, was loath to report to the king,

6 And David said to Abishai, Now shall Sheba the son of Bichri do us more harm than did Absalom: take thou thy lord's servants, and pursue after him, lest he get him fenced cities, and escape us.

7 And there went out after him Joab's men, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and all the mighty men: and they went out of Jerusalem, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri.

8 When they were at the great stone which is in Gibeon, Amasa went before them. And Joab's garment that he had put on was girded unto him, and upon it a girdle with a sword fastened upon his loins in the sheath thereof; and as he went forth it fell out.

9 And Joab said to Amasa, Art thou in health,

because it would diminish his authority, and represent him as incapable to serve the king in the office wherein he had placed him.

Ver. 6. David said to Abishai,] He persisted in his resolution to depress Joab; but employed his brother, who was the next great commander in the army. Whom he doth not create captain of the host; but for fear this delay should prove prejudicial, bids him take such forces as he found ready in Jerusalem, and pursue Sheba.

Now shall Sheba—do us more harm than did Absalom:] If he had time to gather an army: the people being highly incensed by the provocation the men of Judah had given them.

Thy lord's servants,] The guards that attended David, and the standing forces, which were always kept on foot.

Pursue after him, lest he get him fenced cities,] So that they must be put to the trouble of laying a long siege to the place where he was.

Ver. 7. Joab's men,] A body of men whom he particularly commanded.

The Cherethites,] See upon viii. 18.

They went out of Jerusalem, to pursue after Sheba] For David thought himself safe enough in the love of the city of Jerusalem, and the rest of the people thereabout.

Ver. 8. When they were at the great stone which is in Gibeon,] The place of rendezvous (as we now speak), appointed by Amasa for the men of Judah. Which was, as Josephus saith, a hundred furlongs from Jerusalem.

Amasa went before them,] As their commander-in-chief.

Joab's garment] As soon as Amasa arrived at the army, Joab also came there as a volunteer, of his own accord: or rather, was there before with Abishai. Yea, Josephus takes it, as if David had spoken those words ver. 6, unto Joab, telling him it was not safe to delay, and therefore bids him take such forces as they had ready, and go with his brother Abishai. Ἰωβὸς δὲ οὐκ ἔτι μάλλον ἔκρυπεν, ἀλλὰ τὸν τε ἀδελφὸν καὶ τοὺς ἑξακοσίους παρήλασε, &c. "He resolved not to stay to gather more forces: but with his brother, and six hundred men, and all the force they had in Jerusalem, marched out to pursue Sheba.

Upon it a girdle with a sword fastened upon his loins in the sheath] He had no armour on, but such a garment as soldiers wore, closely girt to him: and upon it a belt, in which a sword hung by his side. Yet Josephus saith he had a breast-plate, θώρακα ἐνδεδυμένος, as well as μάχαραν περιζωσάμενος, "begirt with a sword."

As he went forth] To meet Amasa, πολλὴν δύνα-

my brother? And Joab took Amasa by the beard with the right hand to kiss him.

10 But Amasa took no heed to the sword that was in Joab's hand: so he smote him therewith in the fifth rib, and shed out his bowels to the ground, and struck him not again; and he died. So Joab and Abishai his brother pursued after Sheba the son of Bichri.

11 And one of Joab's men stood by him, and said, He that favoureth Joab, and he that is for David, let him go after Joab.

12 And Amasa wallowed in blood in the midst of the highway. And when the man saw that all the people stood still, he removed Amasa out of the highway into the field, and cast a cloth

μὴ ἀναγώστος, "who led numerous forces" to that place, as the same author speaks.

It fell out.] He had hung it so, that it might drop out of the sheath when he pleased. And it fell out just as he went to salute and embrace Amasa: who seeing him stoop to take it up, imagined it was only to put it into the sheath again.

Ver. 9. *Art thou in health, my brother?*] He inquired in a friendly manner of his welfare.

Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him.] This is the custom still among the eastern people, the Indians: who take one another by the chin, or the beard, when they would give a hearty salute; and say *bobba*, i. e. father: or *biti*, i. e. brother, as the author of the voyage to the East Indies relates, at the end of Peter De Valle's Travels, p. 410.

Ver. 10. *Amasa took no heed to the sword that was in Joab's hand.*] Which he thought he had put into his sheath, and did not observe that he held it in his left hand, which it seems he could manage as well as the right.

He smote him therewith in the fifth rib.] See iii. 17.

And shed out his bowels to the ground.] He gave him such a wound, that his very bowels gushed out; and there was no need to give him a second stroke.

Joab and Abishai his brother pursued after Sheba.] Hereupon Joab immediately, without any order, resumed his command, and Abishai durst not oppose him, but yielded it up to him. For his authority was so great among the soldiery, that none of Amasa's men durst stir to avenge his death; the Cherethites, and Pelethites, and all David's guards submitting to him: and besides, all Amasa's men were not yet come up, but followed by degrees, as appears by the rest of the story.

Ver. 11. *One of Joab's men stood by him.*] By the command of his master; who knew this would make some disorder among Amasa's soldiers.

He that favoureth Joab, and he that is for David.] He cunningly joins these two together, as if their interests were inseparable.

Let him go after Joab.] He was grown so insolent, because David durst not punish him; that, as it made him venture upon this bloody fact, so he presumed, that though the sight of Amasa's dead body might stop the march of those that came by it; yet, upon the declaration his officer made, that now he was become general of the army, their love to him was such, that they would make no scruple to follow him.

Ver. 12. *Amasa wallowed in blood*] He seems not to have been quite dead, though senseless: but had so much life, that he rolled to and fro in his own blood, which was a doleful sight.

upon him, when he saw that every one that came by him stood still.

13 When he was removed out of the highway, all the people went on after Joab, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri.

14 ¶ And he went through all the tribes of Israel unto Abel, and to Beth-maachah, and all the Berites; and they were gathered together, and went also after him.

15 And they came and besieged him in Abel of Beth-maachah, and they cast up a bank against the city, and it stood in the trench: and all the people that were with Joab battered the wall, to throw it down.

16 ¶ Then cried a wise woman out of the city,

When the man saw that all the people stood still,] Joab was deceived in his measures, for the people hated this fact as much as they loved him. And therefore as many as saw it would move no further till the body was removed out of the way: so that they who were behind went without any stop after Joab.

He moved Amasa out of the highway] This was a prudent officer; who expected no orders, but of his own accord removed that out of sight which hindered their pursuit of Sheba.

Ver. 13.] They that were behind, it is likely, did not know that Amasa was killed, and so marched on without any scruple.

Ver. 14. *He went through all the tribes of Israel*] That is, Sheba rambled about the country, from one city to another, to excite the people to take up arms against David. But Josephus refers this to Joab, that he followed Sheba from place to place, till he came where he was.

Unto Abel and to Beth-maachah.] Or rather unto Abel Beth-maachah: for they were one and the same place, as appears by the next verse. And so Josephus, who saith it was a strong city, well fortified, in the tribe of Naphtali, in the northern parts of Judea, upon the borders of that part of Syria where Maachah was (x. 8). In this city Sheba at last settled himself, and resolved to defend it: being unable, I suppose, to raise such an army as to keep the field.

All the Berites.] Among whom he had been before he came hither, and got some considerable forces among them. For they were of the city Beroth (it is probable) and the parts adjacent: which was in the tribe of Benjamin, of which he was a member, and perhaps dwelt in this city (Josh. xviii. 25).

Went also after him.] Unto Abel Beth-maachah.

Ver. 15. *They came*] That is, Joab and his men pursued him thither.

They cast up a bank against the city.] Raised fortifications round about it, from whence to batter it.

It stood in the trench.] That is, Joab's army had advanced so far that they had filled up the trench: and there stood at the very foot of the wall.

Battered the wall.] Some battered it with engines from the forts: while those at the bottom of the wall undermined it to throw it down. So Josephus.

Ver. 16. *Then cried a wise woman*] A woman of great understanding, who also could speak well. Many such there were in Israel, it appears by her of Tekoah, and Abigail, and the mother of king Lemuel.

Come near hither, that I may speak with thee.] She prays those that were at the bottom of the wall to stop their proceedings awhile: and desires Joab to come, and hear what propositions she had to make to him.

Hear, hear; say, I pray you, unto Joab, Come near hither, that I may speak with thee.

17 And when he was come near unto her, the woman said, *Art thou Joab?* And he answered, *I am he.* Then she said unto him. Hear the words of thine handmaid. And he answered, I do hear.

18 Then she spake, saying, They were wont to speak in old time, saying, They shall surely ask *counsel* at Abel: and so they ended *the matter.*

19 *I am one of them that are peaceable and faithful in Israel: thou seekest to destroy a city and a mother in Israel: why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of the LORD?*

20 And Joab answered and said, Far be it, far be it from me, that I should swallow up or destroy.

Ver. 17. *Art thou Joab?*] She was unwilling to treat with any one, but him who had power to agree to what she propounded.

I do hear.] He did not despise her because she was a woman; but as became a wise man, gave her a favourable audience, and attended to what she said.

Ver. 18.] According to this translation of the words, she praises the city of Abel as famous, time out of mind, for wisdom and giving sound advice: and now, she would have him believe, was not without persons of great prudence and fidelity also (as it follows in the next verse), who would not willingly offend their king. But there is another translation in the margin of our Bibles, which I take to be more literal, by referring the word *barishonah* not to *old time*, but to the *beginning* of the siege. As if she had said, When the people saw thee lay siege to the city, they said, Surely they will ask us if we will have peace, and then we shall soon come to an agreement and make an end. Whereby she secretly remembers Joab of a rule in the law, Deut. xx. 10, which commands them to offer peace to the cities of other nations when they came to besiege them; and therefore much more to a city of their own, as Abel was. To this purpose R. Solomon Jarchi; and it agrees well with what follows, that they were a peaceable people and faithful to their prince: and therefore would not have refused to yield, upon summons, to him. R. Levi ben Gersom gives another sense of them; that Sheba and his company, when they first came into the city, asked if they would follow him, and said no more: to whom the men of the city answered, We are peaceable and faithful; that is, we cannot join with thee and rebel against king David. But there is a late writer, who thinks the words will bear this sense: This was a common saying in old time, if any one asked whether Abel was a place of justice and judgment, or a den of thieves; the answer was, They are an upright people. And therefore she asks Joab, why he went about to destroy a city so famous for virtue. Thus Mayerus in his Annotations on Seder Olam Rabba, cap. 14.

Ver. 19. *I am one of them that are peaceable and faithful*] She speaks in the name of the whole city: which was of a peaceable temper; and had been faithful to David in the time of the late revolt.

Thou seekest to destroy a city and a mother in Israel:] A great city, which had many towns depending on it, and therefore called a *mother.*

Why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of the

21 *The matter is not so:* but a man of mount Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name, hath lifted up his hand against the king, *even* against David: deliver him only, and I will depart from the city. And the woman said unto Joab, Behold, his head shall be thrown to thee over the wall.

22 Then the woman went unto all the people in her wisdom. And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri, and cast it out to Joab. And he blew a trumpet, and they retired from the city, every man to his tent. And Joab returned to Jerusalem unto the king.

23 ¶ Now Joab was over all the host of Israel: and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and over the Pelethites:

24 And Adoram was over the tribute: and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder:

Lord?] Do an injury to the public, by depopulating a part of the country, which is God's peculiar.

Ver. 20.] Do you the least hurt, if I can avoid it. He disclaims any ill intentions twice, saith R. Solomon; as if he had said, Far be it from me, far be it from the king, to design any such thing.

Ver. 21. *The matter is not so:*] You are not rightly informed.

But a man of mount Ephraim,] He is said before (ver. 1), to be of the tribe of Benjamin: but he lived, I suppose, in mount Ephraim.

Deliver him only, and I will depart] And leave all Sheba's party at liberty to go home, without any punishment.

His head shall be thrown to thee over the wall.] She had reason to be confident that both the citizens and soldiers would be glad to save themselves, by giving up him, who had brought them into imminent danger.

Ver. 22. *Then the woman went unto all the people in her wisdom.*] Desired they would all meet in the common hall; where she told them what terms she had made for them with Joab: unto which they immediately consented.

They cut off the head of Sheba] It seems his party was not strong in the city; or, seeing it likely to be taken, they were glad to accept of the conditions the woman had made for them.

He blew the trumpet, and retired] Raised the siege, and went home.

Joab returned to Jerusalem unto the king.] To give him an account of his good success.

Ver. 23. *Now Joab was over all the house of Israel:*] Now that David was restored to his kingdom, and established in it, he settled all the great officers who were to govern under him: and continued Joab in the chief command of the army, which was so much at his devotion, that he found it dangerous to displace him.

Benaiah—was over the Cherethites and over the Pelethites:] As he was also before (viii. ult.), being a very valiant man (xxiii. 20), whom Solomon made commander-in-chief of the whole army (as now he was captain of the king's guards) after the death of Joab.

24. *Adoram was over the tribute:*] Treasurer, or receiver of the king's revenue. Which office was not settled before; because, in the beginning of his reign, it is likely David had no great revenue.

Jehoshaphat—was recorder:] See upon viii. 16.

Ver. 25. *Sheva*] It is uncertain whether Sheva be the same with Seraiah mentioned viii. 17, or Seraiah being

25 And Sheva *was* scribe : and Zadok and Abiathar *were* the priests :

dead or displaced, this man came in his room. Concerning these priests, see viii. 17.

Ver. 26. *Ira also the Jairite.*] He had his original in the country of Jair the Gileadite on the other side Jordan (Numb. xxxii. 41); who is not mentioned before, but now was made a great officer.

Was a chief ruler about David.] The Hebrew word *cohen* (as hath been often observed) signifies any min-

26 And Ira also the Jairite was a chief ruler about David.

ister, either sacred or civil : a priest or a prince. Instances of the last are many, and the Targum thus expounds it here, *Rab le David*, a prince, or great man about David. And so the "priest of Oa," Gen. xli. 50, and the "priest of Midian," Exod. ii. 26. signify the priest or ruler of Oa and of Midian. As, in Job xii. 19, we, following the Chaldee, translate it, "God leadeth princes away spoiled."

CHAPTER XXI.

1 *The three year's famine for the Gibeonites ceaseth, by hanging seven of Saul's sons.* 10 *Rizpah's kindness unto the dead.* 12 *David burieth the bones of Saul and Jonathan in his father's sepulchre.* 15 *Four battles against the Philistines, wherein four valiants of David slay four giants.*

1 THEN there was a famine in the days of David three years, year after year; and David inquired of the LORD. And the LORD answered, *It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites.*

2 And the king called the Gibeonites, and said unto them; (now the Gibeonites *were* not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites; and the children of Israel had sworn unto them : and Saul sought to slay them in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah.)

3 Wherefore David said unto the Gibeonites,

What shall I do for you? and wherewith shall I make the atonement, that ye may bless the inheritance of the LORD.

4 And the Gibeonites said unto him, We will have no silver nor gold of Saul, nor of his house; neither for us shalt thou kill any man in Israel. And he said, What ye shall say, *that* will I do for you.

5 And they answered the king, The man that consumed us, and that devised against us *that* we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the coasts of Israel,

CHAP. XXI.

Ver. 1. *Then there was a famine*] The Jewish doctors commonly say this famine was before the rebellion of Absalom. But Abarinel will have it, that things are related here in the order wherein they were done; just as that was after that rebellion was ended.

David inquired of the Lord.] For what sin so grievous a punishment was inflicted: suspecting (as Abarinel thinks) God might still punish him for those sins he committed in the matter of Uriah.

It is for Saul, and for his bloody house.] God soon comforted him, by letting him know that this punishment was upon the account of Saul and his family, who had been deeply engaged in blood.

Because he slew the Gibeonites.] When he slew the whole city of Nob (saith the same Abarinel) where the Gibeonites lived, and served as hewers of wood and drawers of water to the high-priest, whom Saul then cut off (1 Sam. xxii. 18, 19). But the same great man hereupon inquires, why God did not send this famine rather for the slaughter of the priests than of the Gibeonites! Of which he gives this account, that the slaughter of the priests was punished before by the slaughter of Saul and of his sons in the battle with the Philistines (1 Sam. xxvi.), and now he was punished in the sons of his concubines, and all Israel suffered with them by famine, because they did not hinder him from murdering the Gibeonites, by remembering him of the oath which was made to them; nay, perhaps they approved of what he did, being glad to see the land rid of foreigners. But why this judgment was not executed before, may seem strange, till we consider, as he observes, that the counsels of God are profound; and he hath excellent reasons why he punishes sinners not now, but hereafter: and knows which of their children are most worthy to be punished, and bear the iniquity of their fathers. And the longer he stays before he strikes, the more evident it is, that he doth not forget what the evil men have

done, though he doth not presently declare his anger against it. He observes, also, that the Gibeonites being drawers of water, God put the Israelites in mind of their offence, by withholding rain from them: just as his refusing to answer Saul by *urim*, was a suitable punishment for his murdering the priests who consulted God by that oracle.

Ver. 2.] Which transported him to violate a solemn oath: as many since have done, under a pretence of the public good.

Ver. 3. *What shall I do for you?*] He asks them what satisfaction they desired, for the wrong that had been done them. Which may seem strange, unless we suppose, as Josephus doth, that God told him when he consulted him, not only for what crime he sent this punishment, but that he should take, $\delta\epsilon\alpha\chi\eta\ \nu\upsilon\ \alpha\iota\tau\omicron\iota\ \delta\iota\kappa\omicron\nu\sigma\tau\epsilon\iota$, "such a revenge for it, as the Gibeonites would have." Besides, they had never made any complaint to David of the injury which had been done them: who might therefore be the kinder to them, and give them leave to name the recompense that should be made them.

Wherewith shall I make the atonement,] Pray to God to be pacified also; and to restore plenty unto Israel again.

Ver. 4. *Neither for us shalt thou kill any man in Israel.*] Except those that they afterward mentioned. For they seem to have been people truly proselyted to the Jewish religion, who desired nothing but equal justice; that men should suffer as they have done: and therefore Saul having not taken away their money but their lives; they desired only that the lives of some of his family might pay for it. If they had desired money, or any thing else that was in his power, they might have had it.

Ver. 5.] He intended, if not to kill, yet to banish them all: which had been worse than death; for it would have deprived them of the liberty of worshipping the true God.

6 Let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us, and we will hang them up unto the LORD in Gibeah of Saul, whom the LORD did choose. And the king said, I will give them.

7 But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, because of the LORD's oath that was between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul.

8 But the king took the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom she bare unto Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth; and the five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul, whom she brought

up for Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite:

9 And he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the hill before the LORD: and they fell all seven together, and were put to death in the days of harvest, in the first days, in the beginning of barley harvest.

10 ¶ And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth, and spread it for her upon the rock, from the beginning of harvest until water dropped upon them out of heaven, and suffered

Ver. 6. *Let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us,*] Some imagine, that at the first they demanded all the house of Saul to be delivered up unto them: but upon cooler thoughts they demanded only seven persons.

We will hang them up unto the Lord] To appease his anger and vindicate his honour. Some think this was a barbarous custom in those days (which certainly prevailed in future times) to hang men up, to appease the anger of their gods, in time of famine. Which Johannes Geusius fancies the Gibeonites had formerly used, and now propounded it to David, as a means to make the earth more fruitful (*De Victimis Humanis*, par. i. cap. 14. p. 310, &c. and par. ii. cap. 14. p. 312) which he imagines to be the reason why it is observed (ver. 2) that the Gibeonites were "not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites." To show whence this horrid superstition proceeded: of which some tang still remained amongst them. The Vulgar here translates it, *ut crucifigamus eos*, "that we may crucify them." Which misled Serrarius and some others into this error, that crucifixion was a punishment anciently among the Jews; which Casaubon, Selden, and several other great men, have shown to be false.

In Gibeah of Saul,] To make the punishment the more remarkable and shameful: this being the city where he lived, both before and after he was king, (1 Sam. x. 26. xi. 4).

Whom the Lord did choose.] This aggravated his guilt that he was so highly favoured by God, and yet obeyed not his commands: but spared the Amalekites, whom God commanded him to destroy; and killed these poor Gibeonites, whom he was bound by the oath of God to preserve.

I will give them.] This seems to be contrary to the Divine law (*Deut. xxiv. 16*) that the son should not die for his father's fault. To which some of the Jewish doctors thought it sufficient to answer, "It is better that one letter should be taken out of the law, than that the name of God should be publicly profaned:" that is, that one precept, rather than an oath should be broken. But there is no need of this: for as Abarbanel judiciously observes, the law in Deuteronomy is to be understood of proceedings in human courts; not of the Divine judgments: for God visits the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation (*Exod. xx. 5*).

Ver. 7.] Not merely his affection to Jonathan, but his dread of breaking the oath he had made to him, moved him to preserve Mephibosheth: lest he himself should incur the same punishment which Saul fell under, for breaking the oath made to the Gibeonites.

Ver. 8. *Rizpah the daughter of Aiah,*] Who was a concubine of Saul, as we read afterward, ver. 11.

Armoni and Mephibosheth;] After whose name, perhaps, Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan was called.

Whom she brought up] In the Hebrew, "whom she bare," i. e. which were born: according to an usual

manner of speaking among the Hebrews; of which see Dr. Hammond upon Luke xvi. note b.

For Adriel] It is plain from hence, that by *was born* is meant, as we translate it, *was brought up*. For Michal was not the wife of Adriel, but was given to Phaltiel (1 Sam. xxv. 44). Merab her eldest sister being married to Adriel (1 Sam. xviii. 19), by whom she had these five sons, whom Michal brought up, and therefore they are called her children. Thus the Jews say, in the Gemara Sanhedrin, cap. 2. "Merab brought them forth, and Michal educated them." And the like we read (as they allege for the proof of this) *Gen. xxx. 3. l. 23* (see Selden, *De Uxore Hebr.* lib. i. cap. 6). Kimchi also here alleges the words of the women in *Ruth iv. 17*. "There is a son born to Naomi," who was not the mother of it, but only laid it in her bosom, and became nurse to it, as is said in the precedent verse. Thus also Rasi, Rabgag, and a great many other Jews, following the Chaldee paraphrase. And we have an example of this in the heathen writers. For Agamemnon and Menelaus are called sons of Atreus, because their father being dead, he took care to bring them up. So Eustathius on the second book of the *Iliads*: Plisthenes (who was their father) being dead, the youths being bred up by Atreus, *αἱ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκτρέφοντο*, "they were called his children."

The son of Barzillai the Meholathite.] This last word is intended to distinguish him from the other Barzillai the Gileadite: for this was of the tribe of Benjamin, to which Abel-meholah belonged.

Ver. 9. *He delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the hill*] In a conspicuous place, where they might be seen by all that passed by. David did not command his officers to hang them up, but delivered them to the Gibeonites, that they might dispose of them as they pleased.

In the beginning of barley harvest.] That is, say the Jews, on the sixteenth of Nisan, a little after the passover.

Ver. 10. *Rizpah—took sackcloth, and spread it for her upon the rock.*] It is probable she both made a tent of it to dwell in, and spread it upon the ground to lie upon.

From the beginning of harvest until water dropped upon them out of heaven.] From the sixteenth of Nisan (as the Hebrew doctors understand it) until the seventeenth of Marchesvan; that is, from the middle of our March to the middle of October; when God showed he was reconciled, by sending showers down upon the earth; which might be, for any thing we know, in the middle of summer. And, indeed, Abarbanel thinks this opinion of their doctors is not true; but that the plain meaning is, they hung from the beginning of harvest until God was entreated for the land, and was pleased to send them rain; for want of which they suffered by famine. And he thinks it probable, that not long after they were hung up, they had plentiful showers by the good providence of God, though

neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night.

11 And it was told David what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done.

12 ¶ And David went and took the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son from the men of Jabesh-gilead, which had stolen them from the street of Beth-shan, where the Philistines had hanged them, when the Philistines had slain Saul in Gilboa :

13 And he brought up from thence the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son ; and they gathered the bones of them that were hanged.

14 And the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son buried they in the country of Benjamin in

Zelah, in the sepulchre of Kish his father ; and they performed all that the king commanded. And after that God was intreated for the land.

15 ¶ Moreover the Philistines had yet war again with Israel ; and David went down and his servants with him, and fought against the Philistines : and David waxed faint.

16 And Ishbi-benob, which was of the sons of the giant, the weight of whose spear weighed three hundred shekels of brass in weight, he being girded with a new sword, thought to have slain David.

17 But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured him, and smote the Philistine, and killed him. Then the men of David sware unto him, saying, Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel.

it was summer time ; whereby it appeared God was appeased ; but by their hanging there several days, it is manifest this was not a legal punishment (and therefore David committed it to the Gibeonites, and did not execute it by his own officers), but an extraordinary one, inflicted by those who were not bound by that law, Deut. xxii. 24. which in this case was violated.

Suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them, &c.] She had servants no doubt to attend her, who kept a constant watch day and night to fright away the birds and beasts.

Ver. 11.] Which did not displease him, nor the Gibeonites neither (as far as appears), but was accounted a laudable thing, which excited David to the imitation of her. I observed before, that Saul had but one wife, and we read of no more than this one concubine, which shows his moderation in some things, which was praiseworthy.

Ver. 12.] See 1 Sam. xxxi. 10. This noble act of Rizpah moved David to do some honour to the carcases of her sons, and to the whole house of Saul : and for that end he sent for the bones of Saul and Jonathan, to inter them and those children of Saul's with their ancestors. Which piece of generosity demonstrated that he had no personal enmity to the family of Saul.

Ver. 13. *He brought up from thence the bones of Saul and Jonathan*] From under the tree where they were buried in Jabesh (1 Sam. xxxi. 13).

They gathered the bones of them that were hanged.] Which seems to have been done some time after they were taken down, when nothing but their bones remained ; and then they had all seven an honourable interment, as it here follows.

Ver. 14. *The bones of Saul and Jonathan*] Together with those now mentioned.

Buried they in the country of Benjamin in Zelah,] Which was in that tribe (Josh. xviii. 28).

In the sepulchre of Kish his father.] It was accounted very desirable to be buried with their parents, as appears by old Barzillai (xix. 37). They that were employed in this business gave them a solemn burial, with all the mourning that was usual in the funerals of kings ; as the Hebrew doctors expound it.

After that God was intreated] When satisfaction was given to the Gibeonites for the injuries done to them, God restored plenty to the country.

Ver. 15. *The Philistines had yet war again with Israel*] That is, after all the wars before mentioned in this book with the Philistines, they again disturbed David's repose in the latter end of his reign. Some, indeed, will have these wars to have been presently after the war with the Ammonites was ended ; before

the rebellion of Absalom. But Abarbinel, I think, well resolves, that the history of this war is not misplaced, but that it fell out not long after the famine before mentioned.

David went down,] It is not said where this battle was fought (as the place of the other three following is mentioned), but it is likely to have been near to the country of the Philistines ; unto which "David went down ;" for it lay low, towards the sea-side.

David waxed faint.] Being in his declining years ; or rather of a great age, and much worn out by various troubles and afflictions.

Ver. 16. *Ishbi-benob, which was of the sons of the giant,*] That is, of Goliath : who by way of eminency is called the giant ; though Bochartus thinks the Hebrew word *rapha* signifies any giant ; and so these words should be translated, "of the race of the giants," i. e. of the Anakims who fled into this country, particularly to Gath, when Joshua expelled them from Canaan (Josh. xi. 22).

The weight of whose spear weighed three hundred shekels of brass] This is to be understood of the head of his spear, which weighed half as much as that of Goliath (1 Sam. xvii. 7).

He being girded with a new sword,] The word *sword* is not in the Hebrew ; nor is there any thing remarkable in his having a new sword ; therefore it should be translated, "with a new kind of weapon," or rather, "with a new belt ;" which had been bestowed upon him as a reward of some great exploit which he had done ; or as a token of some new honour, or command, conferred upon him in the army (see xviii. 11).

Thought to have slain David.] Being stronger than he, and having him at an advantage ; when, by some accident, he was separated from his army ; as Josephus understands it.

Ver. 17. *But Abishai—succoured him,*] Came in seasonably to his relief.

Smote the Philistine,] The words leave it doubtful whether he was slain by Abishai or by David. Our translation seems to incline to the former ; but if David was not the person that killed him, I do not see how that can be verified, which is said in the end of this chapter, that all these giants "fell by the hand of David and of his servants ;" for he slew none of them, unless it were this.

Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle,] They had advised this before, when they went to fight with Absalom (xviii. 3), but now they peremptorily decreed it, and solemnly confirmed it with an oath.

That thou quench not the light of Israel.] Lest he should be killed, and thereby they should lose the glory of having such a king reign over them ; for good

18 And it came to pass after this, that there was again a battle with the Philistines at Gob: then Sibbechai the Hushathite slew Saph, which was of the sons of the giant.

19 And there was again a battle in Gob with the Philistines, where Elhanan the son of Jaare-oregim, a Beth-lehemite, slew the brother of Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam.

20 And there was yet a battle in Gath, where

kings are called the *light* of their people, 1 Kings xi. 36. xv. 4, because, by their wise government, conduct, and courage, they made their people happy and illustrious.

Ver. 18. *Gob*:] Which was also called Gezer, as Abarbanel thinks, 1 Chron. xx. 4. Or, they were so near one another, that the battle was in the confines of both.

Sibbechai] One of David's worthies (1 Chron. xi. 29).

Slew Saph, which was of the sons of the giant.] One of the same race of the Rephaims: who seem to be descended from the Anakims.

Ver. 19. *There was again a battle in Gob*] This was a place, it seems, very proper for armies to draw up in; for here they fought twice.

Where Elhanan, the son of Jaare-oregim] He is simply called the son of Jair, 1 Chron. xx. 5, and is reckoned among David's worthies, 1 Chron. xi. 26, and there said to be the son of Dodo; who, I suppose, was his grandfather.

Slew the brother of Goliath] The word *brother* is supplied out of 1 Chron. xx. 5, where his name is said to be Lahmi.

The staff of whose spear] See 1 Sam. xvii. 7.

was a man of *great* stature, that had on every hand six fingers, and on every foot six toes, four and twenty in number; and he also was born to the giant.

21 And when he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimeah the brother of David slew him.

22 These four were born to the giant in Gath, and fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants.

Ver. 20. *There was yet a battle in Gath,*] In the territory belonging to it.

Where was a man of great stature,] The LXX. translate it, "a man of Madon:" who was born, that is, in a place called by that name.

That had on every hand six fingers, &c.] If we may believe Tavernier (in his relation of the Grand Signior's Seraglio, p. 95), the eldest son of the emperor of Java, who reigned in the year 1648, when he was in that island, had six fingers on each hand, and as many toes on each foot; all of equal length.

He also was born to the giant.] Was one of the Rephaim of that country.

Ver. 21. *When he defied Israel,*] In imitation of the great giant Goliath, confiding as he did in his monstrous strength.

Jonathan the son of Shimcah the brother of David slew him.] We read of this brother of David in 1 Sam. xvi. 9, where he is called Shammah. But this son of his is not reckoned among David's worthies, 1 Chron. xi.

Ver. 22.] Here *rapha* seems to signify *Goliath*, the most famous giant; if one of them had not been his brother. The first of them was slain by David (Abishai assisting), the rest by the great men who were about him (see ver. 17).

CHAPTER XXII.

A psalm of thanksgiving for God's powerful deliverance, and manifold blessings.

1 AND David spake unto the LORD the words of this song in the day that the LORD had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul:

CHAP. XXII.

Ver. 1.] It is commonly thought David penned this psalm towards the end of his life, after all the victories mentioned in the foregoing chapter. Thus Rasi in the time of his old age, and Kimchi, in the conclusion of his day: but Abarbanel, who contends earnestly that all things fall out in the order wherein they are related in this book, is of a quite different opinion here; and will have it that he composed this song in his youth, in the midst of all his straits and difficulties; out of which, when God delivered him, he sung this song of praise unto him. So that by the words "in the day that the Lord delivered him," he thinks is meant, that every time he received any deliverance from God, his usual method was to acknowledge it thankfully in the words of this song, which was composed at first for his own private use: but in the end of his days, he thought fit to communicate it to others; and therefore put it into the book of Psalms, that it might serve for the use of those which might be in the like straits, and receive the like mercies. And then also he reviewed it, and made several alterations in it; which, little and great, amount,

2 And he said, The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer;

3 The God of my rock; in him will I trust; he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my

as he observes, to seventy-four in number. And this he did, as he thinks, to make his meaning plainer; and that the people might not mistake it. And there is some ground for part of what he saith; for the eighteenth Psalm is directed to the chief musician, which shows it was then intended for public use; whereas here is nothing said of that, and therefore it is probable it remained for some time a piece of private devotion. Saul may be thought to be comprehended under the name of his *enemies*: but they (as the same Abarbanel observes) were properly the people of other nations, who made war upon him; of whom he speaks in Psalm cxxxix. 21, 22, "Do not I hate them that hate thee, &c. I account them mine enemies." Now though Saul cruelly persecuted David, yet it did not become David to call him his enemy, and one that he hated: for he loved Saul, and therefore doth not number him among his enemies; but, in a particular manner, to distinguish him from them, adds, "and out of the hand of Saul."

Ver. 2, 3.] This great heap of metaphors, as Strigelius observes, is a large paraphrase upon the first commandment, declaring God alone to be his confidence: in whom he placed all his strength, safety,

high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence.

4 I will call on the LORD *who is* worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.

5 When the waves of death compassed me, the floods of ungodly men made me afraid;

6 The sorrows of hell compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me;

7 In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried to my God: and he did hear my voice out of his temple, and my cry *did enter* into his ears.

8 Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations of heaven moved and shook, because he was wroth.

9 There went up a smoke out of his nostrils,

security and happiness. The consequence of which is, that we should love God with all our heart, and soul, and strength (as Moses adds after that precept, Deut. vi. 4, 5. x. 12); and therefore David adds that, when he reviewed this Psalm, and begins it thus; "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength," &c. Ps. xviii. 1 (see my paraphrase upon that Psalm, where I have sufficiently explained these verses).

Ver. 4.] See in that Psalm, where there are the very same words. Upon which the forenamed Strigelius piously observes; That as the Παισιδια of a soldier doth him no service, unless he put it on to defend himself and offend his enemy, so no protection or help from God is to be expected (who is so powerful as before described) unless we apply ourselves unto him by prayer and praises.

Ver. 5.] These words in this verse differ from the words in Ps. xviii. but the sense is the same: that he was in a sinking condition, and saw no way to escape; being overpowered by troops of ungodly men, who, like a torrent, threatened to sweep him away.

Ver. 6.] He was so entangled in their snares, that he had no more power to help himself, than a dead man bound head and foot in his grave. For so the word *sheol*, which we translate *hell*, here signifies.

Ver. 7. *In my distress I called upon the Lord.*] He did not despair when he was at this plunge, but made his addresses to Him who is omnipotent; most earnestly beseeching him to deliver him, as he had often done.

He did hear my voice out of his temple.] There is very little difference between these words and those in Psalm xviii. The meaning of which is, that God gave him a gracious answer from his sanctuary or from heaven (of which the sanctuary was a type), and showed that he was sensibly touched with his affliction.

Ver. 8. *The earth shook and trembled.*] The terror which God struck into his enemies is compared to an earthquake; which makes every body tremble, as it did the gaoler, Acts xvi. 29.

The foundations of heaven moved and shook.] In Psalm xviii. the words are, "the foundations of the hills:" which explains what he here means by *heaven*: viz. mountains lifted up to heaven. Or, he represents the dread which fell upon his enemies, by the consternation which an earthquake causes, when it is accompanied with thunder, lightning, and hail from heaven, in a great tempest. We do not read that there were literally such storms, tempests, and earthquakes, for David's deliverance: but if there were, it need not seem strange, when profane history informs us of God's interposing after this manner in some cases. For Strigelius observes out of Livy, that in the eighth year of the second Punic war, when Hannibal

and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it.

10 He bowed the heavens also, and came down; and darkness *was* under his feet.

11 And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: and he was seen upon the wings of the wind.

12 And he made darkness pavilions round about him, dark waters, and thick clouds of the skies.

13 Through the brightness before him were coals of fire kindled.

14 The LORD thundered from heaven, and the most High uttered his voice.

15 And he sent out arrows, and scattered them; lightning, and discomfited them.

16 And the channels of the sea appeared, the

and the Romans were drawn up in battle and ready to fight (upon which the fortune of the city of Rome depended), there fell such a shower of rain and hail, as confounded both armies: so that being scarce able to hold their arms they retreated unto their camps. And on the next day, in the very same place, the like tempests parted them: and as soon as they came into their camps, there was a wonderful serenity and tranquillity.

Because he was wroth.] Highly displeased at their enmity to David.

Ver. 9.] These are very high metaphors, to express the most flaming degree of anger, and the dreadful effects of it.

Ver. 10.] The Divine Majesty appeared in a glorious cloud, descending from heaven; which at the bottom was all dark, but above bright and shining, with an amazing lustre.

Ver. 11. *He rode upon a cherub.*] *To ride*, in the Hebrew language (as Maimonides observes), is to rule, to govern, to manage with an absolute power, that on which one is said to ride; and to dispose of it as he pleases (More Nevochim, par. i. cap. 70). And therefore to *ride upon a cherub*, or to make the clouds his chariot (which is the very same, because angels were wont to appear in bright clouds), is to send his heavenly ministers whither he thinks good, to execute his pleasure.

And did fly.] Made haste to succour and relieve David, when he was in great distress.

He was seen upon the wings of the wind.] A rapid wind showed that he was present to overturn all opposition (see 1 Sam. v. 24).

Ver. 12.] This is still a description of the angelical powers who surrounded him on all sides as his ministers, ready to be employed which way he thought fit to send them. For Andreas Casariensis truly observes, in his commentary on the Revelation, that whensoever we read in the sacred books of clouds or thick darkness, we are always to understand, *ἰσχυριστὸς τῶν θεῶν πραγμάτων*, "some ministry ready to serve in Divine affairs."

Ver. 13.] Those heavenly ministers going forth from his glorious presence, sent hailstones and lightnings (as in the days of Joshua, x. 11) in the face of his enemies.

Ver. 14.] Thunder is called the voice of God in Ps. xxix. Which he sent forth in such terrible cracks, accompanied with flashes of fire, that quite daunted his enemies.

Ver. 15.] These were the weapons whereby they were vanquished; lightnings were the darts and arrows that made them turn their backs and run away.

Ver. 16.] This is the description of a great earthquake, which rent it in sunder, and made such

foundations of the world were discovered, at the rebuking of the LORD, at the blast of the breath of his nostrils.

17 He sent from above, he took me; he drew me out of many waters;

18 He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them that hated me: for they were too strong for me.

19 They prevented me in the day of my calamity: but the LORD was my stay.

20 He brought me forth also into a large place: he delivered me, because he delighted in me.

21 The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness: according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.

22 For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God.

23 For all his judgments were before me: and as for his statutes, I did not depart from them.

24 I was also upright before him, and have kept myself from mine iniquity.

25 Therefore the LORD hath recompensed me according to my righteousness; according to my cleanness in his eye sight.

26 With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful, and with the upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright.

27 With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself unsavoury.

28 And the afflicted people thou wilt save: but thine eyes are upon the haughty, that thou mayest bring them down.

29 For thou art my lamp, O LORD: and the LORD will lighten my darkness.

30 For by thee I have run through a troop: by my God have I leaped over a wall.

breaches in it, that the very bottom of it was discovered: and this was the effect of God's just indignation against his enemies.

Ver. 17. *He sent from above,*] He sent his angels to rescue and protect David.

He drew me out of many waters;] Delivered him from innumerable dangers; compared to waters breaking out upon a country, to overflow it.

Ver. 18. *He delivered me from my strong enemy,*] First from Goliath, and afterward from many others, as we read in the foregoing chapter, xxi. 16, 17, &c.

From them that hated me;] The Philistines, the Syrians, and other nations, whose hatred to him made them set themselves against him, to destroy him.

For they were too strong for me.] Their forces were more numerous than his, and would have overpowered him, if the Lord had not been his helper.

Ver. 19.] When he was in a weak condition, unable to defend himself, Saul suddenly came upon him, and had destroyed him if the Lord had not been his support (see 1 Sam. xxii. 9. xxiii. 14. 26. xxiv. 2, 3, &c.).

Ver. 20. *He brought me forth also into a large place;*] When his house, for instance, was beset by Saul's officers, who watched to kill him as he came out in the morning, he escaped by the help of his wife, and got to Samuel and Ramah, where he was at liberty to go whither he pleased (1 Sam. xix. 11. 18).

He delivered me, because he delighted in me.] In many other straits he afterward delivered him; because he had a kindness for him, and resolved to make him a king of Israel.

Ver. 21.] God knew also that he was innocent of what he was accused; and had no design to do Saul any hurt (1 Sam. xxiv. 11, 12, &c. xxvi. 23).

Ver. 22.] He took no unlawful courses to preserve himself; but when Saul fell into his hands, he would not hurt him, because he was God's anointed (see there, 1 Sam. xxiv. 11—13, and xxvi. 19, &c.).

Ver. 23. *For all his judgments were before me:*] He made God's commands the rule of his actions.

As for his statutes, I did not depart from them.] In Ps. xviii. the words are, "I did not put away his statutes from me:" that is, bid them stand aside, and give way to his interest, but strictly observed them.

Ver. 24.] This is still spoken with respect to Saul. For though he offended afterward grievously against God's laws, yet he chose rather to suffer any thing than do Saul any harm: and nothing could tempt

him to that iniquity, unto which he was invited by fair opportunities (1 Sam. xxiv. 4. xxvi. 8, &c.).

Ver. 25.] According to David's prayer; which is very remarkable, 1 Sam. xxvi. 23. where he desires God to deal with him as he had dealt with Saul, with whose blood he would not defile his hands, when it was in his power to take revenge.

Ver. 26.] This is the common method of God's providence, to do good to those that do good to others: and to do them justice who do not swerve from the rules of righteousness, when they are injuriously treated by their neighbours.

Ver. 27. *With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure;*] Faithfully keep his promises to those who are faithful to him.

With the froward thou wilt shew thyself unsavoury.] Declare how much he distastes and abhors those that take deceitful courses to bring about their ends. In Ps. xviii. the words are, "with the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward;" that is, he ensnares those in their own devices who perversely take crooked ways to compass their designs: which unexpectedly end in their destruction.

Ver. 28.] He is wont to deliver poor helpless people who humbly depend on him, and not on any unlawful means for safety: but he contrives ways to lay those low who (proud of their power) insolently oppress them.

Ver. 29.] David himself was an instance of this; whom, from a despicable, God raised to an illustrious condition: and when he concluded he should perish (1 Sam. xxvii. 1), advanced him to royal splendour and greatness.

Ver. 30.] Now he seems to celebrate the wonderful works of God, after the persecution of Saul was over, and he was made king. When numerous enemies assaulted him; but he broke and scattered them all. And particularly (which seems to be meant by the last words) he scaled the highest walls, whereby his enemies thought themselves securely defended (see ch. v. of this book, ver. 6, 7, &c.).

Ver. 31. *As for God, his way is perfect;*] By the way of God here, seems to be meant his counsels, proceedings, and methods of his providence: which for the present may appear to us perplexed, but in the issue will be seen to be perfectly just, and agreeable to his promises; as it here follows.

The word of the Lord is tried.] The experience of all good men tells us, that he never failed to be true to his word: which is freer from all deceit than the most refined gold is from dross.

31 *As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all them that trust in him.*

32 *For who is God, save the LORD? and who is a rock, save our God?*

33 *God is my strength and power: and he maketh my way perfect.*

34 *He maketh my feet like hinds' feet: and setteth me upon my high places.*

35 *He teacheth my hands to war; so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms.*

36 *Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy gentleness hath made me great.*

37 *Thou hast enlarged my steps under me; so that my feet did not slip.*

38 *I have pursued mine enemies, and destroyed them; and turned not again until I had consumed them.*

39 *And I have consumed them, and wounded*

them, that they could not arise: yea, they are fallen under my feet.

40 *For thou hast girded me with strength to battle: them that rose up against me hast thou subdued under me.*

41 *Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies, that I might destroy them that hate me.*

42 *They looked, but there was none to save; even unto the LORD, but he answered them not.*

43 *Then did I beat them as small as the dust of the earth, I did stamp them as the mire of the street, and did spread them abroad.*

44 *Thou also hast delivered me from the strivings of my people, thou hast kept me to be head of the heathen: a people which I knew not shall serve me.*

45 *Strangers shall submit themselves unto me: as soon as they hear, they shall be obedient unto me.*

46 *Strangers shall fade away, and they shall be afraid out of their close places.*

He is a buckler to all them that trust in him.] So that none can hurt those that put themselves under his protection, with a pious confidence in him.

Ver. 32. For who is God, save the Lord?] For none can defeat his intentions, or resist his will.

Who is a rock, save our God?] There are none so powerful as to be able to hurt those whom he will protect; or to defend those whom he will destroy. Of this word rock, see Deut. xxxii. 4. 31.

Ver. 33. God is my strength and power:] What great men would Scipio and others have been, if they had been possessed with such a sense of God, as to have acknowledged that all their courage, and conduct and mighty victories were owing to his power. But no warrior was ever like to David, who had God in all his thoughts, and acknowledged all his great acts to be performed by the Divine aid.

He maketh my way perfect.] Removed all obstacles out of his way, to the completing of his conquests (see v. 10).

Ver. 34. He maketh my feet like hinds' feet:] This is commonly thought to relate to the swiftness of hinds; and so I have taken it in my paraphrase on the Psalms: but Bochartus hath made it probable that it hath respect to the firmness of their treading; which is very remarkable, as he shows in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. iii. cap. 17.

Setteth me upon my high places.] He was enabled to pursue his enemies with great celerity, and without tripping: even unto such places as for their height and craginess were thought inaccessible.

Ver. 35.] He ascribes all his strength and dexterity to God: who enabled him to wrest the strongest bow out of his enemies' hands, and break it in pieces.

Ver. 36.] And when he was in great dangers, God protected him: as he did in the battle mentioned in the foregoing chapter (ver. 16, 17), when Ishbi-benob had slain him, if Abishai had not stepped in for his timely succour. These wonderful deliverances he could ascribe to nothing but the tender mercy of God to him, when he was unworthy of his favour.

Ver. 37.] When he was in great straits, and beset with difficulties, God opened a wide passage, and made all things succeed according to his desire. For that seems to be meant by his feet did not slip, but he went on smoothly.

Ver. 38.] He got complete victories over the Philistines, Moabites, Syrians, and Ammonites (see ch. viii. and x. of this book).

Ver. 39. I have—wounded them, that they could not

arise:] Gave them such a blow, that they were not able to renew the fight.

They are fallen under my feet.] Submitted themselves unto him and served him (see x. 19).

Ver. 40.] This was remarkably fulfilled in the rebellion of Absalom, when he was in a feeble condition, and had but few followers: but God gave them courage to fight, and such success in the battle, that they routed his army; and all Israel was brought under his obedience (see ch. xviii.).

Ver. 41.] This also was literally fulfilled, when Sheba raised a new rebellion; and his head was thrown over the wall of Abel to Joab (ch. xx.).

Ver. 42. They looked, but there was none to save:] In Ps. xviii. it is, "they cried:" which may signify that they sought for help from their allies and confederates: but to no purpose.

Even unto the Lord, but he answered them not.] And it was too late, when other help failed them, to seek for help from God: for he had deserted them, and would not hear their prayers.

Ver. 43. Then did I beat them as small as the dust of the earth.] In Ps. xviii. the words are, "as the dust before the wind." He so entirely vanquished them, that they had no more power than the small dust of the earth, which is tossed up and down with every blast of wind.

I did stamp them as the mire of the street.] In the forenamed Psalm, "I did cast them out as the dirt in the street:" that is, made them as contemptible as the dirt in the street, which every one treads under his feet.

Ver. 44.] The first part of these words relates to the union of the people of Israel and Judah under his government, after long contentions between them (v. 1, 2, &c.). The other part to the enlargement of his kingdom, by subduing his neighbouring heathen people under him (ch. viii. 10). Such as the Syrians of Zobah, and Rehob, and Ish-tob, and Maacah of which David, it is likely, had no knowledge, till they came to help the Ammonites (x. 8).

Ver. 45.] The very report of his victories made some heartily submit themselves unto him: and others dissembled their hostility and offered him their service (x. 19).

Ver. 46. Strangers shall fade away.] Fall as withered leaves do from the trees.

They shall be afraid out of their close places.] Distrusting their strong holds, that they came creeping

47 The Lord liveth; and blessed be my rock; and exalted be the God of the rock of my salvation.

48 It is God that avengeth me, and that bringeth down the people under me.

49 And that bringeth me forth from mine enemies: thou also hast lifted me up on high above them that rose up against me:

out with fear, to surrender up themselves into his hands.

Ver. 47. *The Lord liveth; and blessed be my rock;]* To him he desires all the praise may be ascribed; in whose eternal power alone he still confided.

And exalted be the God of the rock of my salvation.] He desires again the Lord might be magnified with the highest praises: who had not only preserved him from perishing, but exalted him to be king of Israel. For so the last words are in the Hebrew, "exalted be God, the rock of my salvation." Who safely preserved and delivered him; and now advanced him most graciously to the highest dignity.

Ver. 48.] He did not avenge himself, but left it to God to plead his cause: who not only punished those that were injuries to him, but brought many nations under his empire.

Ver. 49. *And that bringeth me forth from mine enemies: thou also hast lifted me up on high above them that rose up against me:]* In these words David made some small alteration, when he inserted this hymn into the book of Psalms for public use. Of which,

thou hast delivered me from the violent man.

50 Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the heathen, and I will sing praises unto thy name.

51 *He is the tower of salvation for his king:* and showeth mercy to his anointed, unto David and to his seed for evermore.

Abarbanel endeavours to give a reason; but he seems too curious in his observations. The plainest and most certain of which is this; that the first part of these words respect the nations whom he subdued; who were properly his enemies: and the latter the children of Israel, when they rose up against him to dethrone him.

Thou hast delivered me from the violent man.] After he had delivered him from Saul, who violently persecuted him a long time.

Ver. 50.] He resolved to make his thankful acknowledgments unto God every where: so as to make those nations whom he had subdued sensible that he ascribed all his victories unto him. In honour of whom he would sing this perpetual song.

Ver. 51.] As he was a king by God's appointment, and not by usurpation; so he trusted in him for the support of his authority. And he hoped the same mercy which had promoted him to this dignity, would be continued to him and to his posterity till the coming of the great king Messiah; whose kingdom shall have no end (see vii. 12, 13).

CHAPTER XXIII.

1 *David, in his last words, professeth his faith in God's promises to be beyond sense or experience.* 6 *The different state of the wicked.* 8 *A catalogue of David's mighty men.*

1 Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said,

2 The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.

CHAP. XXIII.

Ver. 1. *These be the last words of David.]* He spake other words recorded in the next chapter, and in the next book, before he died: but these were the last words that he spake by the Holy Ghost, as Abarbanel expounds them. Who observes, that after he had composed the book of Psalms, and added the hymn mentioned in the foregoing chapter unto it, then he spake these words; after which the influence of the Holy Spirit resided in him no more. The Chaldee paraphrase (which was always highly esteemed among the Jews) takes these words, as if they were a prophecy of the Messiah: for so it expounds them; "These are the words of the prophecy of David, which he prophesied of the consummation of all things, in the day of consolation, which is to come."

David the son of Jesse said,] He remembers his low condition, when God was pleased to make choice of him to be a king.

The man who was raised up on high,] From feeding his father's sheep, to rule the people of Israel.

The anointed of the God of Jacob,] The Chaldee hath it, "Anointed by the Word of the God of Jacob."

The sweet psalmist of Israel,] Who was inspired to

3 The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.

4 *And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.*

compose many delightful hymns in the praises of God.

Ver. 2.] He would not have those hymns, nor what he spake now, looked upon as human compositions: but as proceeding from a Divine influence, conferred upon him by the Holy Ghost.

Ver. 3. *The God of Israel said,]* By Nathan or by Samuel.

He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.] Or, as we render it in the margin, "Be thou ruler over," &c. which the Chaldee expounds of the Messiah in this manner, "The faithful God spake (so he interprets the word *Rock*), I will constitute to me a king, he is the Messiah, who shall arise, and reign in the fear of the Lord." But this relates first to David, the type of Christ; who was taught to rule justly, and in the fear of God: that is, in the exact observance of all the Divine laws. Or, as Abarbanel interprets it, "When he that rules men is just, then the fear of the Lord will rule and have dominion in the earth;" for all the people are apt to tread in the steps of their king: so that when he that rules is just, it is as if he did not rule, but the fear of the Lord ruled in the earth.

Ver. 4. *He shall be as the light of the morning, when*

5 Although my house *be* not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all *things*, and sure: for *this is* all my salvation, and all *my* desire, although he make it not to grow.

6 ¶ But the sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands:

7 But the man that shall touch them must be

the sun riseth,] The dominion of the just (as the same Abarbinel interprets it) shall be as the morning light, when the sun ariseth and the light continuing increases.

Even a morning without clouds;] Which hinder the rays of the sun from piercing through unto the earth.

As the tender grass springeth out of the earth by clear shining after rain.] We have in this translation quite transposed the Hebrew words, where they run thus, "From splendour and from rain, grass out of the earth." The sense of which Abarbinel thinks is this, It shall be such a morning, in which there is sometimes sunshine, and sometimes showers of rain, to make grass spring out of the earth.

Ver. 5. *Although my house be not so with God;*] Which he thus interprets; Although the kingdom of a just man, by little and little, grows and increases; and sometimes is clouded, and sometimes the light shines upon it: the kingdom of David shall not be so, but God hath made a perpetual covenant, &c.

For this is all my salvation,] Or, as he interprets it, This is all my salvation, and my desire, that he would not make it grow or shoot up (for that supposes it to be buried), but that, as was said before, it may always remain in an equal manner ordered and conserved.

It must be acknowledged, that there are no words so obscure in this book as these two verses. The sense of which Ludovicus De Dieu seems to me to have most clearly opened:—The stability and perpetuity of his kingdom, saith he, David amplifies by a comparison with three natural things, which are very grateful to men, but not constant and stable; in a settled order and sure. For the sun arises, but goes down again; and the morning may be clear, but clouds afterwards arise; and the tender grass springs up, but withers away. Not so, saith he, is my kingdom before God. It is flourishing, like all these, but perpetual: for he hath made an everlasting covenant with me; though some afflictions have befallen me; and he hath not made all my salvation and desire to grow. So he makes the first *caph* of similitude to stand for three; and to be repeated thrice in this manner:—

"The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake concerning me; The just man ruleth among men: he ruleth in the fear of God. And as the sun ariseth, with a shining light; as the morning is without clouds, by reason of its splendour; as from rain the tender grass springs out of the earth: yet (or truly) so is not my house with God. Because he hath made an everlasting covenant with me; disposed in all things, and well kept and preserved in that order. Although he doth not make all my salvation and desire to grow (that is, though some adversities happen to me and my family), yet that always remains, which in the covenant of God made with me, is in all things orderly, disposed, and preserved."

Ver. 6.] The kingdom of impious men shall not be like the kingdom of the house of David: being so far from being like to grass, which is useful, that they are rather like thorns; which are rejected as hurtful

fenced with iron and the staff of a spear; and they shall be utterly burned with fire in the same place.

8 ¶ These *be* the names of the mighty men whom David had: The Tachmonite that sat in the seat, chief among the captains; the same was Adino the Enzite: *he lift up his spear* against eight hundred, whom he slew at one time.

9 And after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo

and pernicious. That is, such wicked men are not fit for human society.

Ver. 7. *But the man that shall touch them must be fenced with iron and the staff of a spear;*] If any body will meddle with them, it must be at his peril. For so the word *jinnale* (which we translate *fenced*) signifies "shall be filled," with the iron and the staff of a spear. Spears are never used to cut down thorns; but iron gives one a sore wound, like that which a man receives from a spear, when it runs into his body, iron and wood withal. So the same De Dieu very judiciously.

They shall be utterly burned with fire in the same place.] Therefore men burn them with fire, in the same place where they grow: and so wicked men are destroyed, where they think themselves most secure. Which the Targum applies to the judgment of the great day, saying, "Their punishment is in the hand of man: but they shall be burnt up utterly, when the house of the great judgment appears: that they may sit on the throne of judgment to judge the world."

Ver. 8. *These be the names of the mighty men*] Now follows a catalogue of those valiant men who helped to raise David to his dignity, and preserve him in it: being continually with him in all his wars. There is a list of them in 1 Chron. xi. very different from this in several things. But Abarbinel thinks that it creates no difficulty, if we do but observe, that there he distinguishes them into three classes: those that had always been with him; and they that came to him to Ziklag, a little before he was made king of Judah; and they that came to him to Hebron, after he was made king of all Israel. All whose memories were fit to be preserved: but here, in this book, the Divine writer intended only to mention the most excellent heroes, who were always with him in his wars; and for whose sake he composed the preceding song of praises to God.

The Tachmonite that sat in the seat,] Or, as it is translated in the margin, "Josheb-boshebat the Tachmonite:" for so he is called in 1 Chron. xi. 11. *Ishobeam*; which may well be thought the same name abbreviated. He "sat in the seat" (as we translate it here) in the council of war; next to Joab: being, it is thought, his lieutenant-general. For that he was one of the Sanhedrin, who sat in the seat of judgment, as some would have it, is not probable: though it is likely these were men of great wisdom as well as valour: and this man being called a Chachmonite, Abarbinel thinks it was because he was a man of learning, being given to study as well as fighting; for in Hebrew the word *chacham* signifies a *wise man*; as this was no question in military affairs, if not in affairs of state and other sorts of wisdom.

Chief among the captains;] The principal commander, as I said, under Joab. Who is not here mentioned, though he was a great man, inferior to none of these; but had stained himself by the base murder of two great persons, Abner and Amasa. Which some take to be the reason why he had not the honour to be put into the number of those worthies who served David.

the Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with David, when they defied the Philistines that were there gathered together to battle, and the men of Israel were gone away :

10 He arose, and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clave unto the sword : and the LORD wrought a great victory that day ; and the people returned after him only to spoil.

11 And after him was Shamhah the son of Agee the Hararite. And the Philistines were gathered together into a troop, where was a piece of ground full of lentiles : and the people fled from the Philistines.

12 But he stood in the midst of the ground and defended it, and slew the Philistines : and the LORD wrought a great victory.

The same was Adino the Ezrite.] It is thought he had two names, and was of the family of the Ezrites ; though Abarinel will have his name to have been Adinohezri.

He lift up his spear.] These words are supplied out of 1 Chron. xi. 11.

Against eight hundred, whom he slew at one time.] In that place of the Chronicles it is said he killed three hundred : that is, after the slaughter he made in one battle of eight hundred ; but killed in another (as Kimchi understands it) three hundred.

Ver. 9. Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite,] He was a Benjamite, for Ahoah was one of his sons (1 Chron. viii. 4).

When they defied the Philistines.] As Goliath had done the Israelites (1 Sam. xvii. 1).

That were there gathered together.] In Pasdammin, as we read 1 Chron. xi. 17, which is the same with Ephes-dammim, 1 Sam. xvii. 1.

The men of Israel were gone away:] Fled from before the Philistines, as it is explained 1 Chron. xi. 13.

Ver. 10. Smote the Philistines until his hand was weary,] With the slaughter he had made.

His hand clave unto his sword:] Being all besmeared with blood ; which drying by the heat of it, made the sword cleave to his hand.

The Lord wrought a great victory that day ;] Like that of Shamgar, Judg. iii. ult. and of Samson, xv. 13, where I have shown these are not incredible stories ; God inspiring men with wonderful courage, and striking a terror into their enemies. There were men in ancient times of prodigious strength, mentioned by Pliny, lib. vii. Nat. Histor. cap. 20.

The people returned after him only to spoil.] They that fled rallied again, when they saw the wonders he did : and followed after him not to fight but only to partake of the spoil.

Ver. 11. Shamhah the son of Agee] Who is not expressly mentioned in the book of the Chronicles ; but plainly implied to be engaged in this great action. For it is said, 1 Chron. xi. 14, that "they set themselves," &c. that is, Shamhah and Eleazar, who joined in this enterprise. But this place in Samuel teaches us, that Shamhah, the son of Agee, had the chief hand in it : and therefore it is ascribed to him.

Into a troop,] Or, as we translate it in the margin, "for forage." For so Ralbag interprets the Hebrew word chajja (which Kimchi takes to be a city), that they came to get some sustenance out of the field.

Full of lentiles:] In the Chronicles it is, "full of barley." In which there is no difficulty, one part of the field being sown with lentiles, and the other part with barley.

The people fled] Fearing to defend the place.

13 And three of the thirty chief went down, and came to David in the harvest time unto the cave of Adullam : and the troop of the Philistines pitched in the valley of Rephaim.

14 And David was then in an hold, and the garrison of the Philistines was then in Beth-lehem.

15 And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Beth-lehem, which is by the gate !

16 And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Beth-lehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David : nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the LORD.

17 And he said, Be it far from me, O LORD,

Ver. 12. But he stood in the midst of the ground,] So that they could neither burn the corn, nor carry it away, nor tread it down.

The Lord wrought a great victory.] By his hand : who was one of the three most mighty men, though not particularly named in the book of the Chronicles. It being the manner of the Scripture, as the Jews observe, to propound that briefly in one place, which hath been at large explained in another : as this action of Shamhah is here in this book.

Ver. 13. And three of the thirty chief.] Or, as it is in the margin, "three captains over the thirty." Not the three before mentioned, but the three that follow : who were not so great as the first three ; but yet greater than any of the thirty whom they commanded.

Came to David in the harvest time.] Or rather, as the Hebrew words are, at harvest. That is, saith Abarinel, the Philistines came to destroy the fruits of the earth, that they might famish the Israelites : whereupon David raised an army to protect and defend them in reaping of their harvest when they went about it.

Unto the cave of Adullam:] A place where he had hid himself under the persecution of Saul (1 Sam. xxii. 1), and where he now fortified himself against the Philistines : who in the beginning of his reign came with great forces against him. For it is plain from 1 Chron. xi. 15, that there was a rock or strong hold there.

Valley of Rephaim.] See 2 Sam. v. 17, 18.

Ver. 14. David was then in an hold,] As in the place above mentioned ; near Adullam (1 Sam. xxii. 4).

The garrison of the Philistines was then in Beth-lehem.] They had possessed themselves of this place, and put a garrison into it.

Ver. 15.] The weather being very hot (as it used to be in harvest-time), David was very thirsty, and said to some about him, how glad he should be of a draught of the waters of Beth-lehem : where he was born, and had lived a long time ; and therefore had been accustomed to them, and knew how very pleasant and refreshing they were. But he did not speak this, as Abarinel observes, to the end that any men should venture their lives, to fetch him some of this water.

Ver. 16. The three mighty men brake through the host] This they did without David's knowledge ; and the forenamed author observes three wonderful things in this action. First, that three men could break through the whole host of the Philistines : and when they had so done, durst stay to draw water out of the well : and then carry it away with a high hand, through the same host, and bring it to David. To

that I should do this: is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives? therefore he would not drink it. These things did these three mighty men.

18 And Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was chief among three. And he lifted up his spear against three hundred, and slew them, and had the name among three.

19 Was he not most honourable of three? therefore he was their captain: howbeit he attained not unto the first three.

20 And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man, of Kabzeel, who had done many acts, he slew two lionlike men of Moab: he went

down also and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow:

21 And he slew an Egyptian, a goodly man: and the Egyptian had a spear in his hand; but he went down to him with a staff, and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and slew him with his own spear.

22 These things did Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and had the name among three mighty men.

23 He was more honourable than the thirty, but he attained not to the first three. And David set him over his guard.

24 Asahel the brother of Joab was one of the thirty; Elhanan the son of Dodo of Beth-lehem;

which he might have added a fourth thing, that they attempted this at the very gate of Beth-lehem: where, no doubt, the garrison of the Philistines kept the strongest guard.

But poured it out unto the Lord.] Not in that place, where it was brought to him, but kept it (as Abarbinel thinks) till he had opportunity to go to the altar, and there poured it out unto God. Some fancy that now was the feast of tabernacles, when they used to draw water, and pour it out: and David made use of this for that purpose (see 1 Sam. vii. 6). There are mystical senses which the Jews please themselves withal about this water, with which I shall not trouble the reader.

Ver. 17. *Is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives?*] He looked upon it no longer as water, but as the blood of those men who fetched it with the peril of their lives: and the blood of every thing belonged to the Lord: and was proper to be offered unto him. Some carry this so far to another sense, that they imagine David hereby showed it was not material water he longed for; but the Messiah, who had the water of life. Who he knew should be born at Beth-lehem, which the Philistines therefore should not be able to destroy.

These things did these three mighty men.] They all joined in this hazardous exploit: but now follows what they did singly.

Ver. 18. *Abishai—was chief among three.*] The chief of those three mighty men before mentioned (see 1 Chron. xi. 20).

Had the name among three.] That is, was most eminent and famous of those three.

Ver. 19. *He was their captain.*] That is, no doubt, he was worthy to be the leader of them.

Ver. 20. *Benaiah—the son of a valiant man of Kabzeel.*] He was descended from valiant ancestors: whom he far excelled. Kabzeel was in the tribe of Judah (Josh. xv. 21).

Who had done many acts,] As Abishai also had done (for he succoured David when a giant had like to have killed him), but their greatest acts only are here mentioned.

He slew two lionlike men of Moab.] The Hebrew word *ariel* signifies "a lion of God," that is, "a great lion." And it was the name among the Moabites for a very valiant man; who at this day, among the Arabians, is called *Assedollabi*, a lion of God, as Bochartus hath observed out of a great many authors in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. iii. cap. 1.

Slew a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow.] This action was the greater, because in the time of snow lions are fiercer for want of prey, and are then also fullest of heat and vigour. But it is not likely that Benaiah went to encounter this lion merely to show his bravery; but, as some think, this was a lion

that had done much mischief to the country; which moved him to expose himself to this combat with it. But Bochartus doth not think this likely; for he needed not have hazarded his life, but have called others unto his assistance, to destroy this ravenous beast. He thinks, therefore, that in a deep snow, the lion took shelter in a cave (for so the word we translate *pit* sometimes signifies), and that Benaiah being abroad in that snowy season, came into the same place to defend himself from the severity of the weather; where he was necessitated to enter into a combat with the lion; whom he found there, and came with open mouth to devour him. He compares him to Alexander the Great, upon whom a lion of great bigness running, he gave him such a wound as killed him. So did Lysimachus with another (see Hieroz. par. i. lib. iii. cap. 5). Abarbinel observes three great things in this action. First, that he slew a lion, which is the fiercest of all wild beasts: secondly, he slew him in a pit, where he could not turn himself as he pleased: and, thirdly, in a time of snow, when his hands and feet were cold and numb; which hindered their vital operations.

Ver. 21. *He slew an Egyptian, a goodly man.*] A person of great stature (see 1 Chron. xi. 23).

The Egyptian had a spear.] See there.

A staff,] Such as men used to walk with.

Plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand and slew him.] This shows him to have been both a fearless person, and of great skill and dexterity, in managing a combat either with man or beast.

Ver. 22.] Who the third was is not said plainly, either here or in the book of the Chronicles.

Abarbinel thinks he might possibly join with the other two, but did no mighty matter by himself; and so is not mentioned. But perhaps, Adina, the son of Shiza, might be the third; because it is said, 1 Chron. xi. 42. that he was "a captain of the Reubenites, and thirty with him." Which seems to signify that he was above the thirty, as Abishai and Benaiah were.

Ver. 23. *He attained not to the first three.*] Was not comparable to Adino, and Eleazar, and Shammah, who were like lions; as these were like lion's whelps, as Strigelius glosses.

David set him over his guard.] See ch. viii. 18.

Ver. 24. *Asahel—was one of the thirty.*] Now follow the names of thirty valiant men, but not equal to the worthies before named. Asahel seems to have been the chief of the thirty; and so some translate the words, "he was above the thirty:" and so might be the last of the three of the second order of worthies.

Elhanan.] Concerning whom we find nothing recorded but this: That he was born and bred (it is likely) in the same place with David.

25 Shammah the Harodite, Elika the Harodite,
 26 Helez the Paltite, Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite,
 27 Abiezer the Anethothite, Mebunnai the Hushathite,
 28 Zalmon the Ahohite, Maharai the Netophathite,
 29 Heleb the son of Baanah, a Netophathite, Itai the son of Ribai out of Gibeah of the children of Benjamin,
 30 Benaiah the Pirathonite, Hiddai of the brooks of Gaash,
 31 Abi-albon the Arbathite, Azmaveth the Barhumite,

32 Eliahba the Shaalbonite, of the sons of Jashen, Jonathan,
 33 Shammah the Hararite, Ahiam the son of Sharar the Harrite,
 34 Eliphelet the son of Ahiasbai the son of the Maachathite, Euiam the son of Ahuthophel the Gilonite,
 35 Hezrai the Carmelite, Paari the Arbite,
 36 Igal the son of Nathan of Zobah, Bani the Gadite,
 37 Zelek the Ammonite, Nahari the Beerothite, armourbearer to Joab the son of Zeruiah,
 38 Ira an Ithrite, Gareb an Ithrite,
 39 Uriah the Hittite: thirty and seven in all.

Ver. 25. *Shammah the Harodite, Elika the Harodite.*] The first of these is called Shammoth in 1 Chron. xi. 27, and he is said to be an Harorite. Which is a very small variation, *resh* being put in the place of *daleth*, as is very common in Scripture, according to the various pronunciation of words in divers parts of the country. There is a greater difference in the name that follows, and in many others; it being common, as Abarinel observes, for men to have two names. But it is plain the same persons are here mentioned that are in the book of Chronicles: though there (as he notes), are more added. For the author of that book reckons up all the chief commanders in the army; so that, though they were not heroidal persons in themselves: yet, being great commanders over others, Ezra thought fit to mention them. But here, in the book of Samuel, the prophet only numbers

those that were of themselves great heroes, not minding the chief commanders in the army who were not so.

Ver. 26—38. *Helez the Paltite, Ira the son of Ikkesh.*] None of the memorable acts of these, or of the following worthies, are recorded; therefore all that I can say of them is this: That when God intended to raise a king to a great height, as he did David, he raised up the spirits of several great men to assist him. Thus he did with Alexander the Great, who had Clitus, Parmenio, Antigonus, Ptolemæus, Seleucus, Craterus, and other brave men to accompany him in all his enterprises; but David (it may be truly observed), in a less kingdom, had far more.

Ver. 39. *Thirty and seven in all.*] Here are only thirty and six named; therefore Joab is supposed, by Abarinel, to be the other; who was the head of them all.

CHAPTER XXIV.

1 David, tempted by Satan, forceth Joab to number the people. 5 The captains, in nine months and twenty days, bring the muster of thirteen hundred thousand fighting men. 10 David, having three plagues propounded by God, repenteth, and chooseth the three days' pestilence. 15 After the death of threescore and ten thousand, David by repentance preventeth the destruction of Jerusalem. 18 David, by God's direction, purchaseth Araunah's threshing floor; where having sacrificed, the plague stayeth.

1 AND again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah.

2 For the king said to Joab the captain of the host, which was with him, Go now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even to Beer-

sheba, and number ye the people, that I may know the number of the people.

3 And Joab said unto the king, Now the LORD thy God add unto the people, how many soever they be, an hundred fold, and that the eyes of my lord the king may see it: but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing?

CHAP. XXIV.

Ver. 1. *Again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel.*] Because they had followed Absalom, says Abarinel, and afterward Sheba the son of Bichri: for which they had not been yet sufficiently punished. But it is more likely, it was for their luxury, now that plenty was restored to them, after the sore famine that fell upon them upon the score of the Gibeonites.

He moved David against them.] Or, "David was moved;" that is, by Satan, as it is expounded in the first book of the Chronicles, xxi. 1. But Abarinel thinks it is as if he had said, The anger of the Lord, which was kindled against Israel, moved David, &c. That is, the same sin which made God angry with Israel, was the cause that David was seduced in this thing, that they might be punished.

Go, number Israel and Judah.] To give command

that an account should be taken of the number of all the people.

Ver. 2. *For the king said to Joab.*] Accordingly it no sooner came into his heart, but he gave orders about it to the principal commander of his army.

Which was with him.] Who always, when they were in war, attended on him.

From Dan even to Beer-sheba.] From one end of the country to the other. For Dan (as I have before observed) was the utmost bounds of it in the north, as Beer-sheba was in the south.

Number ye the people.] Joab was to take proper officers with him, to assist him in this business; so that there might be an exact account given (see ver. 4).

Ver. 3. *Now the Lord thy God add unto the people,—an hundredfold.*] It appears by this, that Joab was a great courtier, as well as a great captain, who knew how to divert the king from what he did not like, if good words and wishes would have done it.

4 Notwithstanding the king's word prevailed against Joab, and against the captains of the host. And Joab and the captains of the host went out from the presence of the king, to number the people of Israel.

5 ¶ And they passed over Jordan, and pitched in Aroer, on the right side of the city that lieth in the midst of the river of Gad, and toward Jazer :

6 Then they came to Gilead, and to the land of Tahtim-hodshi ; and they came to Dan-jaan, and about to Zidon,

7 And came to the strong hold of Tyre, and to all the cities of the Hivites, and of the Ca-

naanites : and they went out to the south of Judah, even to Beer-sheba.

8 So when they had gone through all the land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days.

9 And Joab gave up the sum of the number of the people unto the king : and there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword ; and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men.

10 ¶ And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the LORD, I have sinned greatly in that I have done : and now, I beseech thee, O LORD,

But why doth my Lord the king delight in this thing?] For which he thought there was no reason ; and as it would be troublesome and chargeable, so there might be much danger in it ; as he expresses it in 1 Chron. xxi. 3.

Ver. 4. The king's word prevailed—against the captains of the host.] Who joined, it seems, with Joab to divert the king from this purpose : in which he was fixed and immovable.

Joab and the captains of the host went] It is most likely, that their inferior officers went with the captains to expedite the business.

Ver. 5. They passed over Jordan.] They went first into the eastern part of the country ; and so by the northern coast to the west ; and then to the south.

Pitched in Aroer.] These words seem to import, that they pitched their tents in the field ; and thither summoned the neighbouring towns to come into them ; which was very troublesome, and at last proved grievous, as appears by the book of Chronicles.

In the midst of the river of Gad, and towards Jazer.] We nowhere read of such a river : which, in the margin, is translated the valley of Gad. But Jazer was a town in that tribe (Numb. xxxii. 35).

Ver. 6. Tahtim-hodshi ;] It is in vain to seek after this land, which is not mentioned in the book of Joshua, but it is likely was near to Gilead ; and had been lately recovered, some think, from other people, and was now inhabited by the Israelites (see the margin of our Bibles).

And about to Zidon.] Not to the city of Zidon, for that was not in their power, but to the coast about it.

Ver. 7. Strong hold of Tyre.] To the territory near it.

Hivites, and—Canaanites.] Who lived in those north-west parts of the country.

To the south of Judah.] Having taken account of all the towns upon the sea-coast (which was in the west), they turned to the south, into the tribe of Judah.

Even to Beer-sheba.] Which was in the utmost limits of the country on that side.

Ver. 8. So when they had gone through all the land,] But not numbered all the people ; for the work grew so tedious that they omitted Levi and Benjamin, as we read 1 Chron. xxi. 6.

At the end of nine months and twenty days.] They could not well despatch it in less time ; an account being to be taken of every city and village in the whole country.

Ver. 9. Joab gave up—the number.] All the officers brought in their particular sums to Joab ; who cast them up, and they amounted in all to the number following.

Eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword ;] They did not, it seems, reckon women and

children, and old men ; nor such as were not fit for war.

The men of Judah were five hundred thousand men.] There is a great difference between this account and that in the Chronicles. For there (1 Chron. xxi. 5), the men of Israel are said to be three hundred thousand more than are here mentioned ; and, on the contrary, the men of Judah are said to be thirty thousand less. Of the former of which there is a plain account, that in this book the standing legions are not numbered : which were very well known, they serving under twelve commanders so many months (1 Chron. xxvii. 1, &c.) ; but in the book of the Chronicles all these are taken into the number there mentioned. For the Jews observe in Halicoth Olam, that there being twenty-four thousand who waited every month (which makes in all two hundred eighty-eight thousand), allowing a thousand officers, (as we cannot well allow less) to every twenty-four thousand, there will be twelve thousand wanting ; which, added to the eight hundred eighty-eight thousand, make just three hundred thousand : which, added to the eight hundred thousand here mentioned, make up the eleven hundred thousand mentioned in the Chronicles. The like account Bochartus gives of the next difficulty, that if twenty-four thousand legionary soldiers be added to the tribe of Judah to the four hundred and seventy thousand, it comes near to five hundred thousand (Hieroz. par. i. lib. ii. cap. 38). But others think there is no need of this ; it being usual in Scripture to mention a round sum : either of men or of years, when some were wanting. So that though there were no more than four hundred and seventy thousand, yet they might be said to be five hundred thousand. Or, as they say in Halicoth Olam, the tribe of Benjamin (who were neighbours to Judah) are reckoned here in this book, who were omitted in the Chronicles (1 Chron. xvi. 6).

Ver. 10. David's heart smote him] When he ordered it, he was possessed with other thoughts ; and did not seriously reflect upon what he had done, until God touched his heart with a sense of his guilt after the sin was committed.

I have sinned greatly in that I have done.] It is made a great doubt by interpreters what this sin was, and wherein the heinousness of it consisted. The common opinion is, that as there was something of vanity and ostentation in him, when he had a mind to know how populous his country was, so it quite made him forget the half shekel that was due upon such occasions, by the appointment of the law, Exod. xxx. 12. And this was no small sin, not to pay God his dues, in such plenty and abundance as they now enjoyed. But if that was the meaning of Moses, it cannot well be thought that David was either ignorant nor un-mindful of it, having made the law his study day and night. Bertram therefore thinks his fault was, that

take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.

11 For when David was up in the morning, the word of the LORD came unto the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying,

12 Go and say unto David, Thus saith the LORD, I offer thee three things; choose the one of them, that I may do it unto thee.

13 So Gad came to David, and told him, and said unto him, Shall seven years of famine come

unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be three days' pestilence in thy land? now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me.

14 And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the LORD; for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man.

15 ¶ So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Is-

he numbered those who were under twenty years old, contrary to the order in the law, Exod. xxx. 14. xxxviii. 26. &c. but I see no foundation for this; but rather the quite contrary is asserted in the book of the Chronicles. Therefore Dr. Lightfoot fancies David had a covetous project in his mind, to lay a capitation tax (as we now speak) upon every poll throughout the kingdom. But such conjectures being without ground, some reject all other interpretations, and rely upon this; that the numbering of the people was a thing contrary to the fundamental promise made by God to Abraham, that his seed should increase so, as to be like the stars for multitude: which is given as a reason why the number of the people was not taken exactly, 1 Chron. xxvii. 23. and seems to imply, that there was a general notion received among the Jews, that since God promised to increase them beyond number, none ought to go about to take the number of them, for this might seem to savour of infidelity, and mistrust of God's promise. But those words on which this reason relies (in 1 Chron. xxvii. 23), only give a reason why David did not number all from twenty years old, and under: which if he had gone about to do (i. e. reckon the whole nation), it might have seemed to cross the promise: but since it was only those who were above twenty years old whom he ordered to be numbered, I cannot look upon it as a contempt or a mistrust of God's word: but, after all, I think we must content ourselves with what Rabbag says (whom Abarinel after the examination of other opinions follows), that David being the anointed of the Lord, and the sweet singer of Israel, made flesh his arm, and confided in the number of his people; in which such a king as he should not have placed his confidence, but in the Lord his God; whom none can resist, and who can save by few, as well as by many. Unto which Abarinel adds, that the greatness of a sin is not always to be measured by the sin itself, but by the quality and dignity of him that committeth it: as Moses and Aaron were punished for a small sin, which excluded them from the good land: which was not proportionable to the sin, but to the condition of the offenders, who should have given a better example to the people. Thus he.

Take away the iniquity of thy servant; Since he condemned himself, and begged pardon, he hoped he might escape the punishment which he deserved. But he was deceived; because not only he, but his people, had offended, and upon other accounts deserved to be punished.

Ver. 11.] The words seem to import that David was not touched in conscience, till Gad came and told him how angry God was with him. He is called David's seer, because he was his domestic prophet (who is the same with a seer. 1 Sam. ix. 9), with whom he was wont to advise in all difficult cases (1 Sam. xxii. 5), and kept a record of his memorable acts (1 Chron. xxix. 29).

Ver. 12.] Now it had been a proper time, as Abarinel observes, for David to have fallen down before God, and deprecated his displeasure in those words

(ver. 10), "I have sinned greatly in what I have done," &c. But he saw the sentence was passed upon him absolutely; and therefore he submits unto it.

Ver. 13. *So Gad came—and told him,*] That he was sent by God with a message to him.

Shall seven years of famine come unto thee, &c.] In the book of the Chronicles only three years of famine are propounded; which is far more likely than seven: for it better agrees with the three months' flight before his enemies, and the three days pestilence. And therefore, not only Grotius, but Bochartus also here read three years, following the LXX. who have τριηνια, whom most of the ancients follow, as Bochartus observes in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 38. Yet Josephus here hath seven years: and many think that Gad at first propounded seven years: but afterward, at David's prayer, shortened them to three. Other solutions are in every interpreter, who adheres to this reading of seven years (see Buxtorf's Vindice. Verit. Hebr. par. ii. cap. 2. and cap. 8. p. 523). These were the three sore judgments wherewith God commonly afflicted them for their sins; who now was so gracious, as to give him his choice which of them he would suffer: for one of them was peremptorily resolved.

Now advise, and see what answer I shall return] There seems to be no great need to take time to consider which of these to choose; the last being the shortest, and an immediate stroke from the hand of God, who is full of tender mercy and compassion. But in this Gad expresses the clemency of God, who would not hastily inflict any punishment upon them.

Ver. 14.] He seems to leave it to God to send either famine or pestilence (for both come from God's hand) and desires only that men might not be the instruments of his punishment. For as they are wont to be cruel, so they make no distinction between good and bad, but destroy all alike. This is admirably expressed by the son of Sirach, in Eccles. ii. 17, 18, "They that fear the Lord will prepare their heart, and humble their souls in his sight, saying, We will fall into the hands of the Lord, and not into the hands of men; for as his majesty is, so is his mercy."

Ver. 15. *So the Lord sent a pestilence*] The symptoms of which were very diverse, if we may believe Josephus. For some, he saith, died suddenly in intolerable pain; others wasted away, and left nothing to be buried but skin and bones, their bodies being consumed by the disease: others were suddenly choked, or struck blind, &c.

From the morning] For that time when Gad delivered the message, and David made his choice; which was in the morning, as we read before (ver. 11).

Even to the time appointed;] There are those who by "the time appointed," understand to the end of three days, mentioned by Gad, as the time appointed by the Lord for the continuance of this plague. But this is quite contrary to what follows, that God repented him of the evil; and commanded the angel that smote the people to stay his hand. Therefore the LXX. translate it better, *ως ωρας αριστων*, "until

rael from the morning even to the time appointed : and there died of the people from Dan even to Beer-sheba seventy thousand men.

16 And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough : stay now thine hand. And the angel of the Lord was by the threshingplace of Araunah the Jebusite.

17 And David spake unto the Lord when he saw the angel that smote the people, and said, Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly : but these sheep, what have they done ? let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house.

18 ¶ And Gad came that day to David, and said unto him, Go up, rear an altar unto the Lord in the threshingfloor of Araunah the Jebusite.

dinner-time :” and so Procopius Gazeus. Certain it is, that *moed* signifies some part of that day when the plague began : and that must be either noon, or the evening. But, as Bochartus hath observed, the morning and evening are the parts of the day most opposite in Scripture (of which he gives many instances), and therefore so he here understands it, that it continued from morning to the evening. For *moed* properly signifies an assembly : and therefore the time *moed* he thinks is the time when the people met for evening prayer ; about the ninth hour of the day. Which prayer, before the building of the temple, was made at the tabernacle, or in their synagogues. And therefore the tabernacle, is frequently called *ohel moed* : and the synagogues are called in Ps. lxxiv. 18. *Moede El*. So that he makes account this pestilence lasted no more than nine hours : which was the eighth part of three days.

Three died—seventy thousand men.] If it had aged three days, and in every nine hours had killed so many, above the third part of those who had been numbered would have died by this plague. But, as Kimchi here observes, by the great mercy of God, the time was contracted. It is a frivolous observation of some of the Jews, that because it is not said seventy thousand *anashim* but only *ish*, which commonly signifies a single person, that Abishai died of this plague, who was worth seventy thousand of the common people. Nor doth the observation of Grotius seem to be altogether true ; who, in his second book (De Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 21. sect. 17) saith, *Hæc pœna erat non populi, sed Davidis* : “ This was the punishment, not of the people, but of David :” quoting that saying of an ancient Christian writer (Quæst. ad Orthodoxos, Πικροτάτη τιμωρία τῶν ἡμαρτανύτων βασιλέων, ἢ τιμωρία τοῦ λαοῦ, “ The bitterest punishment of delinquent kings, is that which is inflicted upon their people.” But it is certain the people here had also offended : for it is said in the very beginning of this chapter, that God was angry with Israel. And as for what David saith (ver. 17), “ These sheep, what have they done ?” it is spoken out of his great affection to them ; whose offences he did not know so well as his own : and therefore desired they might be spared, and he punished.

Ver. 16.] God did not change his mind, but only revoked that which he had decreed upon a certain condition ; which was, that three days’ pestilence should come upon the country, unless David and the people repented ; which he seeing they did (1 Chron. xxi. 16), he shortened the time, and would not let the angel proceed above an eighth part of it.

19 And David, according to the saying of Gad, went up to the Lord commanded.

20 And Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming on toward him : and Araunah went out, and bowed himself before the king on his face upon the ground.

21 And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant ? And David said, To buy the threshingfloor of thee, to build an altar unto the Lord, that the plague may be stayed from the people.

22 And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what *seemeth* good unto him : behold, *here be* oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing instruments and *other* instruments of the oxen for wood.

23 And all these *things* did Araunah, as a king, give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, The Lord thy God accept thee.

Ver. 17. *Lo, I have sinned.*] Like a good man, he reflected only on his own sin, in numbering the people ; but did not think of theirs in deposing him lately and setting up Absalom (which Theodoret, Procopius Gazeus, and others, think was the crime for which they were punished), which he had forgiven, but God thought fit to punish ; who by their silence may be thought to have approved the fact of David. And besides, the loss of so many people was a punishment of the king himself, as was before observed.

Against my father's house.] That is, against his kindred, who did not dissuade him from the vanity of numbering the people, but perhaps encouraged him in it.

Ver. 18. *Gad came that day to David.*] By this express command of the Lord (1 Chron. xxi. 18, 19).

Go up, rear an altar unto the Lord in the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite.] This threshing-floor was on the Mount Moriah ; the place where Abraham offered up his son, and where the temple was built by Solomon (see 2 Chron. iii. 1). Of which Eupolemus, a heathen writer, takes notice, saying, that God showed David by an angel the place where the temple should be built (see Eusebius’ *Præpar. Evang.* lib. ix. cap. 30). The Jews will have it, that it was here Abel and Cain offered their sacrifices (see Selden lib. iii. De Synedr. p. 199. 431) ; nay, that it was the place where Adam was created ; according to a saying of their docters, “ Adam was created out of the place of his expiation” (see G. Vorstius upon Pirke Eliezer, p. 163).

Ver. 19.] That is, he went the next moment after he received the command.

Ver. 20.] As the manner was, and still is, in the eastern countries.

Ver. 21. *Wherefore is my lord the king come?*] It may be he thought it too great an honour ; and therefore desired to know the meaning of it.

To build an altar unto the Lord.] By offering a sacrifice to appease his anger ; as he himself had ordered (1 Chron. xxi. 26, 27).

Ver. 22.] For when the angel appeared there, he was thrashing wheat, which he offered likewise to David for a meat offering (1 Chron. xxi. 20, 23). And the *instruments of the oxen* were their yokes, and such as they drew after them to press forth the corn.

Ver. 23. *All these things did Araunah, as a king, give unto the king.*] The words in the Hebrew are, “ these things gave Araunah the king unto the king.” From whence some infer, that before the taking of Jerusalem he was the king of the Jebusites ; or, a man

24 And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshing-floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

25 And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD was intreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel.

of the greatest authority among them, like a king; or was descended from the blood royal of the Jebusites, as Dr. Lightfoot expresses it. But neither the Greek, nor the Syriac, nor the Arabic copies have the word *king*: nor was it in many of the Vulgar till Sixtus' correction; nor in the Chaldee paraphrast in the time of Kimchi, who cites it thus; "Araunah gave to the king what the king asked of him." And, as Bochartus observes, Araunah (or Ornan) being mentioned fourteen times in the holy books, it is a wonder he should not be styled a king, but only here (Hieroz. par. i. lib. i. cap. 38). But it is likely he was a very rich man, as Josephus reports: whom the king spared when he took the fort of Zion; either because he was a lover of the Israelites, or had done some good office unto David.

The Lord thy God accept thee.] He thought himself abundantly satisfied, if God pleased to grant David's request; which he besought him to do: for no doubt he was a proselyte, earnestly desiring the happiness of the nation, into which he was incorporated.

Ver. 24. *Neither will I offer—of that which doth cost me nothing.*] Whence is that of Solomon (Prov. iii. 9) "Honour the Lord with thy substance;" which the Greek thus translates, *τίμα τὸν Κύριον ἀπὸ τῶν δικαίων πού σου*. "Honour the Lord out of the honest labours;" that is, out of that which thou hast acquired by thy honest industry.

For fifty shekels of silver.] In the Chronicles we read, according to our translation, that he gave him "six hundred shekels of gold by weight," which Bochartus thus reconciles; that in one place he speaks of shekels of gold, and in another of shekels of silver. Whose proportion is twelvefold, so that fifty shekels of gold are in value as much as six hundred shekels of silver. He quotes a place out of Plato in his Hipparchus, which proves that gold and silver held this proportion. And then he thus translates this

place in Samuel, He bought the floor and the oxen *beceseph*, for money; viz. for "fifty golden shekels." So the word *ceseph* often signifies *money* in general, of whatsoever metal it be: as appears from this very history, wherein David tells Ornan that he will buy the field of him, *beceseph malo*, which we translate, "at its full price," 1 Chron. xxi. 24. And then it follows, he gave Ornan *shikle zahav*, "shekels of gold," *mishkall shesh mooth*, "in value six hundred vulgar, or silver shekels." See Hierozic. par. i. lib. ii. cap. 38. where the word *mishkall* he acknowledges commonly signifies *weight*; yet here denotes *value*: as in 2 Sam. xii. 30. The design of Ezra being to show, that the fifty shekels he gave for the floor and oxen were not silver (which were most common), but shekels of gold: every one of which was worth twelve of silver: so that those fifty shekels were equivalent to six hundred silver ones.

But there is a shorter way of solving this difficulty by supposing, that for the thrashing-floor and the oxen he gave only fifty shekels of silver: but all the ground about it (out of which the court of God's house were afterward made) cost him six hundred shekels of gold.

Ver. 25. *Burnt offerings and peace offerings.*] Burnt offerings were prayers to God that he would remove this plague: and peace offerings were acknowledgments of God's goodness, who had already given David hopes of this mercy.

The plague was stayed.] As plainly appeared by God's sending fire down from heaven to consume the sacrifices; and the angel also, who appeared with a flaming sword over Jerusalem, being commanded to put it up into his sheath (1 Chron. xxi. 26, 27). From hence David concluded God would be more placable in this place than any other; and therefore took counsel to build the temple here.

THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS,

OTHERWISE CALLED, THE THIRD BOOK OF THE KINGS.

THESE two following books contain the history of the kings of Israel and Judah, from the beginning of Solomon's reign down to the captivity of Babylon, for the space of near six hundred years, taking into the account the history of the two foregoing books. It is highly probable that they were composed by Ezra, who extracted them out of the public records, which were kept of what passed in that nation; as we read of the book of the acts of Solomon, in this very book, xi. 41, and frequently of the books of the kings of Israel, and of the kings of Judah; and of the book of Jehu, in which was written the acts of Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xx. 34. And Isaiah, we read, wrote the acts of Uzziah, first and last, 2 Chron. xxvi. 22; out of which, and such like books, Ezra composed this brief history. In which there are several things that heathens themselves have taken notice of, as Huetius observes in his *Demonstratio Evangelica*. propos. iv., where he answers the trifling objections which some have made against the antiquity of these books.

CHAPTER I.

1 *Abishag cherisheth David in his extreme age.* 5 *Adonijah, David's darling, usurpeth the kingdom.* 11 *By the counsel of Nathan, 15 Bath-sheba moveth the king, 22 and Nathan secondeth her.* 28 *David reneweth his oath to Bath-sheba.* 33 *Solomon, by David's appointment, being anointed king by Zadok and Nathan, the people triumph.* 41 *Jonathan bringing these news, Adonijah's guests fly.* 50 *Adonijah, flying to the horns of the altar, upon his good behaviour is dismissed by Solomon.*

1 Now king David was old and stricken in years; and they covered him with clothes, but he gat no heat.

2 Wherefore his servants said unto him, Let there be sought for my lord the king a young virgin: and let her stand before the king, and let her cherish him, and let her lie in thy bosom, that my lord the king may get heat.

3 So they sought for a fair damsel throughout all the coasts of Israel, and found Abishag a Shunammite, and brought her to the king.

4 And the damsel was very fair, and cherished the king, and ministered to him: but the king knew her not.

5 ¶ Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, I will be king: and he prepared

him chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him.

6 And his father had not displeased him at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so? and he also was a very goodly man; and his mother bare him after Absalom.

7 And he conferred with Joab the son of Zeruiah, and with Abiathar the priest: and they following Adonijah helped him.

8 But Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and Nathan the prophet, and Shimei, and Rei, and the mighty men which belonged to David, were not with Adonijah.

9 And Adonijah slew sheep and oxen and fat cattle by the stone of Zoheleth, which is by En-rogel, and called all his brethren the king's sons,

CHAP. I.

Ver. 1. *David was old*] He was seventy years old, as we learn from 2 Sam. v. 4, 5.

He gat no heat.] His blood was so chilled, that he could not be warm in his bed, much less when he was up. Dr. Lightfoot thinks he was struck with a dead palsy.

Ver. 2. *His servants*] His physicians, it is most likely, that attended him.

Let there be sought for my lord] Those are the words of the prime physician in the name of the rest.

Let her stand before the king,] Or, minister unto him in the day-time: for the very sight of a beautiful virgin very much excites the natural spirits.

Let her lie in thy bosom,] Become his wife, and in the night lie in the same bed close to him.

That my lord the king may get heat.] For nothing more effectually procures heat and healthful concoction than the application of a young body, even of a puppy, to the stomach all night: as Galen observes, in his fifth book of the Power of simple Medicines. For *επιφύσσητα, και οίξειώτερα πολυ,* "this warmth is nearer of kin to us, and more proper, than any other that can be invented:" as Victorinus Strigelius hath taken notice.

Ver. 2. *Abishag a Shunammite, and brought her to the king.*] She being young, sprightly, and willing to be taken into his bed: for his other wives were grown too old to put any life into him.

Ver. 4. *Was very fair,*] Of an amiable countenance. *The king knew her not.*] Did not enjoy her as his wife; but she remained still a virgin: being his bed-fellow only to keep him warm.

Ver. 5. *Then Adonijah—exalted himself, saying, I will be king*] Taking advantage of his father's age and weakness, (who he thought could not oppose it), he resolved to take possession of the kingdom: but the crown, as the Jews fancy, would not fit him.

He prepared him chariots and horsemen,] Just as Absalom had done, when he began to conspire against his father, 2 Sam. xv. 1.

Ver. 6. *His father had not displeased him at any time*] This was one of David's great faults, extraordinary indulgence unto his children: of whom he was

so fond, that he seems to have overlooked their errors, and never to have chidden them for any thing they did amiss. And now in his old age this wickedness was more apparent; he naturally growing more remiss, careless, and sluggish.

He also was a very goodly man;] And so the more likely to draw the people after him. For a noble aspect was always a qualification for the royal authority; as appears by the history of Saul, David, and Absalom.

His mother bare him after Absalom.] He pretended to the crown, because Absalom being dead, he was next to him in order of birth (see 2 Sam. iii. 3, 4).

Ver. 7. *He conferred with Joab—and with Abiathar*] Whom, it is likely he knew to be two discontented persons: the former upon the account of David's putting Amasa in his place; and the other because he saw Zadok in greater favour than himself.

Helped him.] Furthered him in his design, as a means to secure themselves with the next heir.

Ver. 8.] The first three of these are well known to have been great favourites with David: and therefore Adonijah knew would not be for his turn. The next two, it is likely, were persons of note, who were perfectly in David's interest: and Shimei possibly may be the person whom Solomon preferred to a great office (iv. 18), though Abarbanel thinks he was Shimei who cursed David (see upon the next chapter, ver. 8). *The mighty men* here mentioned are those named in 2 Sam. xxiii. and his guards, who had served under David so long, and done such mighty acts in his reign, and under his conduct, that Adonijah had no hope of drawing them into his party.

Ver. 9. *Fat cattle*] Of the Hebrew word *meri*, which we translate *fat cattle*, see upon 2 Sam. iv. 13.

By the stone of Zoheleth, which is by En-rogel.] The Hebrew word *Zohel* signifies a "slow motion," as Bochart observes in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. i. cap. 9. from whence this stone had its name: the fallers here pressing out the water, which dropped from the clothes that they had washed in this well, called, *Rogel*. Josephus saith the king's gardens lay near this well: which, out of him, is also affirmed by Procopius Gazæus.

The king's sons.] Whose names are mentioned in

and all the men of Judah the king's servants :

10 But Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, and the mighty men, and Solomon his brother, he called not.

11 ¶ Wherefore Nathan spoke unto Bath-sheba the mother of Solomon, saying, Hast thou not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith doth reign, and David our lord knoweth it not ?

12 Now therefore come, let me, I pray thee, give thee counsel, that thou mayest save thine own life, and the life of thy son Solomon.

13 Go and get thee in unto king David, and say unto him, Didst not thou, my lord, O king, swear unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne ? why then doth Adonijah reign ?

14 Behold, while thou yet talkest there with the king, I also will come in after thee, and confirm thy words.

15 ¶ And Bath-sheba went in unto the king into the chamber : and the king was very old ;

and Abishag the Shunammite ministered unto the king.

16 And Bath-sheba bowed, and did obeisance unto the king. And the king said, What wouldst thou ?

17 And she said unto him, My lord, thou swarest by the LORD thy God unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne.

18 And now, behold, Adonijah reigneth ; and now, my lord the king thou knowest it not :

19 And he hath slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the sons of the king, and Abiathar the priest, and Joab the captain of the host : but Solomon thy servant hath he not called.

20 And thou, my lord, O king, the eyes of all Israel are upon thee, that thou shouldst tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him.

21 Otherwise it shall come to pass, when my lord the king shall sleep with his fathers, that I

2 Sam. iii. 4, 5. and more largely in 1 Chron. iii. 4, 5, &c.

The king's servants :] Except those before mentioned, ver. 8. and again excepted, ver. 10. But all the rest of the family of David, and the principal persons of the tribe of Judah, with the high-priest, and the captain of the host, being present there seemed to be nothing wanting to the making of him king, but only his anointing. For this seems to have been a federal feast ; wherein they swore allegiance to Adonijah.

Ver. 10.] It was a feast, I suppose, upon a great sacrifice ; unto which none came but they who were invited.

Ver. 11.] It seems they were so bold as to proclaim him king. For it was secretly contrived between him and Joab and the rest : without the privity of David or Bath-sheba.

Ver. 12.] Whom he knew they would endeavour to cut off : as the person designed by David to be his successor.

Ver. 13.] We do not read any where else of this oath ; but do not doubt he had solemnly sworn to her, that he would make her son his successor : God himself having designed him to that honour ; as appears from 2 Sam. vii. 12. where God promises by Nathan to set upon his throne a son that should proceed from him : which plainly signifies, none of his sons already born was to be the person. But more plainly, 1 Chron. xxii. 8—10, &c. he declares God told him Solomon should reign after him, and build him a house, and thereupon he commanded all the princes of Israel to be assistant to him, ver. 17. and see xxviii. 5, 6. All this, I doubt not, was known to Adonijah ; which made his crime the greater, in setting himself against the decree of Heaven : and he himself confesses as much in the next chapter, ver. 15.

Ver. 14.] Which he knew would quicken the king, to give speedy orders about this matter.

Ver. 15. *Bath-sheba went in unto the king into the chamber :*] Being the king's wife, she had the privilege to come into his bedchamber, without asking leave, as Kimchi observes. Whereas Nathan did not appear before the king till they told him he was there to wait upon him (ver. 23).

The king was very old ;] And could not discern who it was that entered into the chamber.

Abishag—ministered unto the king.] And informed him, it is likely, that Bath-sheba was come into the room to speak with him.

Ver. 16. *Bath-sheba bowed, and did obeisance*] First bowed her head, and then her body : as the manner was even for their wives, as well as other persons.

What wouldst thou ?] She had signified, I suppose, to Abishag, that she had some petition to make to him.

Ver. 17.] David swore this, as Abarbinel thinks, when Absalom his eldest son rebelled against him. And the rather, because Nathan had told him (as I observed before), a child should proceed from him that should sit upon his throne ; who therefore was then unborn. But all the rest, except Solomon, were born before this promise ; and therefore he concluded were none of them designed by God to be his successors.

Ver. 18.] This she saith, that she might not seem to accuse David of breaking his oath : and that she might aggravate the crime of Adonijah, in presuming to usurp the throne while his father was alive, and without his knowledge.

Ver. 19.] She very submissively calls herself his handmaid, and her son his servant : the more to win upon his affection unto those that humbly depended upon his pleasure.

Ver. 20.] This she said all Israel expected from the king, that she might free him from all fear of such a rebellion as Absalom raised ; the people not being joined to Adonijah, but continuing in suspense, till the king had declared his mind about his successor. Thus Abarbinel. And this power of naming a successor continued for some time after him as appears by the story of his grandson Rehoboam : who, though no great man, yet took upon him this authority of nominating a successor, and made one of his youngest sons, viz. Abijah, king after him (see 2 Chron. xi. 20, 22, &c.). But this custom did not last long ; not being in use among their neighbours : as the story of the Moabites shows, 2 Kings iii. 27. Yet it was the manner of excellent princes among the Romans to appoint their successor whom the people gladly received. So Augustus did : and M. Aurelius commends Nerva for so doing.

Ver. 21.] Guilty of death for aiming at the kingdom.

and my son Solomon shall be counted of offenders.

22 ¶ And, lo, while she yet talked with the king, Nathan the prophet also came in.

23 And they told the king, saying, Behold Nathan the prophet. And when he was come in before the king, he bowed himself before the king with his face to the ground.

24 And Nathan said, My lord, O king, hast thou said, Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne?

25 For he is gone down this day, and hath slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the king's sons, and the captains of the host, and Abiathar the priest; and, behold, they eat and drink before him, and say, God save king Adonijah.

26 But me, *even* me thy servant, and Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and thy servant Solomon, hath he not called.

27 Is this thing done by my lord the king, and thou hast not shewed it unto thy servant,

Ver. 22.] To confirm what she had said, according to his promise (ver. 14).

Ver. 23. *Behold Nathan the prophet.*] Whereupon Bath-sheba, it is likely, withdrew, as if she supposed he had some private message to deliver unto David.

He bowed himself] The prophets themselves, as well as other men, gave the profoundest reverence to the king (as Maimonides observes), that they might teach all his subjects their duty. Nor was the high-priest excepted (see Schickard *De Jure Regni*, cap. 4. Theor. 13). The Hebrew word is used for *religious* worship, in Ps. xlv. 12. xev. 6. but very often only for *political*, and that very anciently, in Gen. xxiii. 7. Ruth ii. 10. 2 Sam. xvi. 14. and many other places.

Ver. 24.] He knew very well he had given no such order; but he said this to awaken the king, to consider how presumptuous Adonijah was.

Ver. 25.] By this time Nathan had received perfect intelligence, what was the design of that great feast; and they had not only consulted to raise Adonijah to the throne, but actually proclaimed him king. Which was more than Bath-sheba had told him.

Ver. 26.] For he knew that they were all faithful to king David; and would follow his directions.

Ver. 27.] In a matter of this importance, he could not believe the king would act without his advice whom he was wont to consult on other occasions; and who had acquainted him with the mind of God concerning Solomon.

Ver. 28. *Call me Bath-sheba.*] Who was withdrawn, as I said, into another room, upon the coming in of Nathan: or stood at a distance in the room where they were.

Stood before the king.] To understand his pleasure.

Ver. 29.] Unto whom he was so much indebted, that it could not be thought he would take his name in vain: but she might trust him now that he so solemnly swore again to her.

Ver. 30.] He had not forgotten his former oath, which he now renews: and resolves immediately to put it in execution.

Ver. 31. *Did reverence to the king.*] Most humbly acknowledged his goodness; by a lower reverence than she made before (ver. 16).

Let my lord king David live for ever.] There could be no higher expression of love and thankfulness, than to desire never to see Solomon on the throne, if it were possible for David always to enjoy it.

who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?

28 ¶ Then king David answered and said, Call me Bath-sheba. And she came into the king's presence, and stood before the king.

29 And the king sware, and said, *As the LORD liveth*, that hath redeemed my soul out of all distress,

30 Even as I sware unto thee by the LORD God of Israel, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead; even so will I certainly do this day.

31 Then Bath-sheba bowed with *her* face to the earth, and did reverence to the king, and said, Let my lord king David live for ever.

32 ¶ And king David said, Call me Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. And they came before the king.

33 The king also said unto them, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon

Ver. 32.] They were such trusty and resolute persons, that he knew would not fear to execute his commands.

Ver. 33. *Take with you the servants of your lord,*] His constant guards, the Cherethites and Pelethites (see ver. 38).

Cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule,] The rest of David's sons were wont to ride upon mules, when they went abroad (2 Sam. xiii. 29). And Absalom rode upon a mule, when he was hanged in the oak (xviii. 9). But David had a mule peculiarly reserved for himself alone; on which Solomon being set, it was the beginning of his royal authority: for no private person whatsoever, as Abarbinel observes, might ride upon the king's mule. He also further notes, that David ordered him to ride upon a mule, and not upon a horse, because a horse is prepared for battle (Prov. xxi. 31) but a mule is a quiet creature: signifying the peace, tranquillity, and security which they enjoyed in Solomon's reign. But the first is the more pertinent observation: for it was capital (as Maimonides observes) to ride upon the king's horse or mule; or sit in his throne; or use his sceptre, &c. without the king's order. As, on the contrary, to have the honour to ride upon his horse, by his order, was accounted the highest dignity among the Persians, as appears by the story of Mordecai in the sixth chapter of Esther.

Bring him down to Gihon:] A fountain on the west side of Jerusalem, which divided itself into two streams, as some say, and made two pools: that of Siloam, and that of Solomon, mentioned by Josephus, (lib. vi. De Bello Judaico, cap. 38). But Kimchi, and Abarbinel also, take them only for different names for one and the same rivulet; which was called Gihon, and also Siloam, as the Targum hath it. Hither they were ordered to bring down Solomon; for it is a maxim among the Jews, that they do not anoint a king, but near a fountain: though they have no authority for it, that I know of, but from this chapter: where we read of Adonijah's going to Enrogel (ver. 9), and Solomon's being brought to Gihon; which was a fountain or brook near Jerusalem: for thereabout a great number of people used always to be; whom they would have to observe it. The Jews give another reason for it, in the Talmud; that it might be a signification and good omen of the perpetuity of the kingdom; which should continue like

my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gihon :

34 And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel : and blow ye with the trumpet, and say, God save king Solomon.

35 Then ye shall come up after him, that he may come and sit upon my throne ; for he shall be king in my stead : and I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah.

36 And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king, and said, Amen : the Lord God of my lord the king say so too.

a fountain, which runs perpetually (see Schickard, in his *Jus Regium*, cap. 1. Theor. 4). But from what is said here of Solomon, we cannot safely make a general conclusion, that all kings were anointed at fountains. For Saul the first king was not; and in the history of David, who was anointed three times, there is no mention of it.

Ver. 34. *Let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there*] One of them poured out the oil, and the other anointed him, as the forenamed Schickard thinks it probable. Or, as others will have it, Zadok (as vicar of the high-priest, who in his absence performed all his offices) did both; and Nathan the prophet was witness of the Divine revelation and promise, that Solomon should succeed in the kingdom. For Abarbanel is of opinion, that no king was anointed but by the authority of a prophet: which is hard to be proved out of Scripture, as Carpzovius observes (see ver. 39).

Blow ye with the trumpet, and say, God save king Solomon.] Proclaim him to be the king of Israel. The history of Absalom shows that he was proclaimed king by the sound of the trumpet (2 Sam. xv. 10). And when God proclaimed his law, and himself the king of Israel, the sound of the trumpet preceded with great vehemence (Exod. xix. 16). And hence many places in the Psalms are explained, which say, God went up with the sound of a trumpet, when, after the manner of kings, he triumphed over his enemies (xlviii. 5. xlviii. 6).

Ver. 35. *Ye shall come up after him.*] Attend upon him to Jerusalem, and give him actual possession of the throne.

For he shall be king in my stead :] To have the same authority over all the people that David had.

Ver. 36. *Benaiah—said, Amen :*] Gave his consent in the name of all the rest: and I suppose swore allegiance to him.

The Lord God of my lord the king say so too.] They all said the same, ver. 47. Nothing doubting God would establish his authority.

Ver. 37.] He knew David loved his children so passionately, and desired their happiness so much, that he was assured he should not offend him with this wish. In the Targum it is, *As the Word of the Lord hath helped my lord the king, &c.*

Ver. 38. *So Zadok—and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites.*] This (and in ver. 43) is the last time that the Cherethites and Pelethites (whom Procopius Gazæus here calls *funditores et sagittarios*, “slingers and archers”) are mentioned in the holy Scriptures: for we read no more of them after the death of David. Which makes it probable, that in their room, David himself, in the conclusion of his reign, had appointed those troops which we read of in 1 Chron. xxvii. to attend upon him every month under their several commanders: which is the conjecture of Corn. Bonaventura Bertram, De Republ. Judaica. cap. 10. p.

37 As the Lord hath been with my lord the king, even so be he with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord king David.

38 So Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, went down, and caused Solomon to ride upon king David's mule, and brought him to Gihon.

39 And Zadok the priest took an horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon. And they blew the trumpet; and all the people said, God save king Solomon.

133. And these are they, he thinks, who guarded Joash (2 Kings xi. 4, &c.), called *Ceri*, or *Cerim*, i. e. *Ariates* (not much different from *Crethi*) and *Ratzim*, which he translates *Cursores*. But I leave this to better judgments.

Caused Solomon to ride upon king David's mule,] According as king David had ordered (ver. 34).

Ver. 39. *Zadok the priest*] Here the anointing of him is attributed to the priest alone. And indeed the unctions which are said to be made by a prophet, as Samuel anointed Saul and David, were private, but not public: which was always done by the priest, as Fortunatus Scacchus hath endeavoured to show in his third *Myrothecium*, cap. 49, 50. It must be confessed that the prophet anointed Saul in Gilgal when he was publicly declared king: but then they offered sacrifice, which could not be without the priests: and the Israelites made a covenant with David when they anointed him in Hebron, which must be by feasting upon a sacrifice offered by the priest. Yet a great many of the Jews are confident that no man, no, not the high-priest, could anoint a king, but only a prophet, as Samuel did David, and Nathan (Abarbanel here affirms) did Solomon, and Abijah did Jeroboam.

Took an horn of oil] A vessel of oil, as the Arabic translates it: which vessel was made of an ox's horn, as Boehartus observes, lib. ii. *Hierozoicon*, cap. 37, par. i. They commonly made cups of such horns; whence the Greek word *κεράσαι*, “to mingle wine with water” (see Fortunatus Scacchus, *Myrothec. i.* cap. 48).

Out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon.] This made his unction more solemn, and his person more sacred, because anointed with holy oil. Though the Jews are generally of opinion, that it was not necessary to anoint their kings with this holy oil made by Moses. And, indeed, they all agree there was no necessity of anointing them at all (the son being sufficiently anointed by the unction of his father), unless there arose a controversy about the succession of the crown. Thus Solomon was anointed because of the function of Adonijah, Joash because of Athaliah, and Jehu because of Joram (see Selden, lib. ii. De Success. in Pontif. cap. 9. and Schieckard's *Jus Regium*, cap. i. Theor. 4). Fortunatus Scacchus also hath spent a whole chapter, of a good length, to show that a private unction might be made with any oil: but a public, by oil taken from the tabernacle. Whence it is said of David, “with my holy oil have I anointed thee.” Yet he thinks that this oil, preserved in the tabernacle for that purpose, was not the same with the oil made by Moses, wherewith the high-priest alone was anointed. This he confirms by no contemptible arguments, in his *Myrothecium* iii. *Sacror. Elaochrysm.* cap. 48.

God save king Solomon.] After the unction followed the acclamation of the people (see ver. 34).

40 And all the people came up after him, and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them.

41 ¶ And Adonijah and all the guests that were with him heard it as they had made an end of eating. And when Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, Wherefore is this noise of the city being in an uproar?

42 And while he yet spake, behold, Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest came: and Adonijah said unto him, Come in; for thou art a valiant man, and bringest good tidings.

43 And Jonathan answered and said to Adonijah, Verily our lord King David hath made Solomon king.

44 And the king hath sent with him Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and they have caused him to ride upon the king's mule:

45 And Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king in Gihon: and they are come up from thence rejoicing, so that the

city rang again. This is the noise that ye have heard.

46 And also Solomon sitteth on the throne of the kingdom.

47 And moreover the king's servants came to bless our lord king David, saying, God make the name of Solomon better than thy name, and make his throne greater than thy throne. And the king bowed himself upon the bed.

48 And also thus said the king, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which hath given me to sit on my throne this day, mine eyes even seeing it.

49 And all the guests that were with Adonijah were afraid, and rose up, and went every man his way.

50 ¶ And Adonijah feared because of Solomon, and arose, and went, and caught hold on the horns of the altar.

51 And it was told Solomon, saying, Behold, Adonijah feareth king Solomon: for lo, he hath caught hold on the horns of the altar, saying, Let king Solomon swear unto me to-day that he will not slay his servant with the sword.

Ver. 40. *The people came up*] From Gihon unto Jerusalem.

Rejoiced with great joy.] To see a king settled by David's appointment: which they hoped might prevent all contests about the succession.

So that the earth rent with the sound of them.] An hyperbolic expression, to signify the very loud noise the people made with their shouts and their pipes: which were instruments that had their name among the Hebrews from the many holes that were in them: as the illustrious Spanhemius observes upon Callimachus' hymn ad Dianam, ver. 244. where he notes great variety of them.

Ver. 41. *Heard it as they had made an end of eating.*] But, perhaps, were not yet risen from the table (see ver. 49).

When Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, Wherefore is this noise?] By this time Solomon was got into Jerusalem; from whence they could hear the shouting, and the sound of the trumpet and music. Which Josephus saith was accompanied with a great feast: which is agreeable to 1 Chron. xxix. 21, 22. Joab was most concerned to inquire what the matter was; for if the city was in an uproar, as he seems to suspect, it was his business, as captain of the host, to suppress it.

Ver. 42. *Jonathan—the priest came.*] He had been employed by David to bring him intelligence (2 Sam. xv. 27), and it is likely was now left in Jerusalem by his father's order, to bring him news of what passed there.

Thou art a valiant man.] Or rather, "Thou art a virtuous man:" for so the word we here translate *valiant* is rendered in Prov. xii. 4. And so the Targum in this place, "thou art a man that fearest to sin:" and being a good man, he hoped brought good tidings, like himself.

Ver. 43.] He tells him (according to his character) he would not flatter him, but tell him the plain truth: that David had not only declared Solomon should succeed him in the throne, but actually made him king: and related the whole history of his proceedings in the following words.

Ver. 45. *Have anointed him king.*] By authority from God, which Nathan, I suppose, pronounced; and then Zadok anointed him.

Ver. 46.] He was in actual possession of the kingdom: though his father was alive. For to sit upon the throne was proper to the king: and none else, on pain of death, might be placed there. So Valerius Maximus speaks of the Persians, lib. v. cap. 16.

Ver. 47.] See ver. 37.

The king bowed himself upon the bed.] Worshipped God, and prayed it might be so.

Ver. 48.] He gave a solemn thanks to God for the happiness of seeing Solomon begin his reign with such affection of his people, as they expressed by their joy at his inauguration. Jonathan, it appears by this, had been a diligent observer of every thing that had been done in this matter, for he omits nothing, but gives them a full and faithful account.

Ver. 49.] They rose from the table where they were sitting, and departed every man to his own home in great haste, that it might not be known they had been with Adonijah; who wanted those marks of royalty which were bestowed on Solomon: for he neither rode on the king's mule, nor was he anointed, nor sat on the throne of the kingdom: nor do we read of any forces that he had with him to maintain his title. Yet Fortunatus Scacchus thinks Adonijah wanted none of the marks of royalty (inasmuch that Bath-sheba told David he reigned, ver. 18), but this one alone. Which defect threw down all the regal majesty of Adonijah, scattered all his forces, and translated the possession of the kingdom to Solomon, as soon as he was consecrated by his holy unction (lib. iii. Myrothec. cap. 47. p. 571).

Ver. 50.] He thought he had committed a crime worthy of death, by usurping the kingdom without his father's consent, and against the known design of God: and therefore he fled to the altar for safety and protection. It being a privileged place, not by the appointment of the law, but by the custom of all nations. It is a question to what altar he fled; whether to that at the tabernacle at Gibeon, or to that newly built in the thrashing-floor of Araamah the Jebusite. Some think to this last, which was nearest; and it is expressly said of Joab in the next chapter (ver. 29), that he fled to the tabernacle of the Lord; which is not said here.

Ver. 51.] He offered to surrender himself, and make

52 And Solomon said, If he will shew himself a worthy man, there shall not an hair of him fall to the earth: but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die.

no opposition, if he might but be secured of his life; which he humbly begged by taking sanctuary at the altar. These words, *to-day*, signify that he desired him from henceforth he would not punish him for what was past.

Ver. 52. *Solomon said,*] He did not swear unto him, as he desired, but only declared.

If he will shew himself a worthy man,] He gave him a full pardon for what was past; on condition he behaved himself as became a good subject for the time to come.

53 So king Solomon sent, and they brought him down from the altar. And he came and bowed himself to king Solomon: and Solomon said unto him, Go to thine house.

If wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die.] If he did any thing (as Abarbanel glosses) which showed that he had a rebellious mind, this pardon should signify nothing, because he had broken the condition of it.

Ver. 53. *He came and bowed himself to king Solomon.*] He owned him for his sovereign.

Go to thine house.] There to lead a private life, and not go abroad with such an equipage as he had done (ver. 5).

CHAPTER II.

1 David, having given a charge to Solomon, 3 of religiousness, 5 of Joab, 7 of Barzillai, 8 of Shimei, 10 dieth. 12 Solomon succeedeth. 13 Adonijah, moving Bath-sheba to sue unto Solomon for Abishag, is put to death. 26 Abiathar, having his life given him, is deprived of the priesthood. 28 Joab fleeing to the horns of the altar is there slain. 35 Benaiah is put in Joab's room, and Zadok in Abiathar's. 36 Shimei, confined to Jerusalem, by occasion of going thence to Gath, is put to death.

1 Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying,

2 I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man;

3 And keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself:

4 That the LORD may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel.

5 Moreover thou knowest also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, and what he did to the two captains of the hosts of Israel, unto Abner the son of Ner, and unto Amasa the son of Jether, whom he slew, and shed the blood of war

CHAP. II.

Ver. 1. *The days of David drew nigh that he should die;*] As he himself was sensible.

He charged Solomon] After the example of Abraham, the father of the faithful (Gen. xviii. 19).

Ver. 2. *I go the way of all the earth;*] And so was unable to govern any longer.

Shew thyself a man;] In wisdom and in courage.

Ver. 3. *Keep his statutes,—commandments,—judgments,—testimonies.*] Under these four words are comprehended all the laws of Moses: *statutes* being such constitutions as had not their foundation in reason, but in the will and pleasure of God: as not to sow two seeds of different kinds together, &c. (see Drusius and Grotius upon Numb. xix. 2, and Masius upon Josh. xxiv. 25). *Commandments* were moral duties, which had a manifest reason; as, not to steal, &c. *Judgments* were the laws belonging to civil government, in things between one man and another: such as are mentioned Exod. xxi. and the following chapters. And *testimonies* were such laws as preserved the remembrance of some great things; and testified to them the loving-kindness of the Lord; as the sabbath, the passover, and all the rest of the feasts.

As it is written in the law of Moses,] Which their kings were bound not only to read, but to write a copy of it with their own hands, for their own use, that they might learn to fear the Lord, &c. (Deut. xvii. 18, 19).

That thou mayest prosper] Or, "that thou mayest do wisely," &c. as it is in the margin. For there is no policy like true religion and piety.

Ver. 4.] To engage him to keep the charge of the

Lord, he represents unto him the gracious promise which God had made him, to perpetuate the kingdom in his family without interruption (2 Sam. vii. 15, 16. Ps. cxxxii. 12), provided his children sincerely and heartily served God, in faithful obedience to his commands.

Ver. 5. *Thou knowest also what Joab—did to me,*] After he had given him this general charge, he proceeded to direct him to do some particular pieces of justice and kindness. And, first of all, bids him remember how Joab had used him: how insolently, for instance, he had treated him in his great affliction, and threatened a new rebellion (2 Sam. xix. 7), and lately had set up Adonijah to reign, while he was yet alive. Or this may refer to what follows.

What he did—unto Abner—and unto Amasa] For this was a great dishonour to David, who had given Abner safe conduct; and passed his word to Amasa that he should be commander-in-chief of all his forces; and therefore he might say "it was done to himself." But it is an idle conceit of the Jews, in Jalkut, and in other books which refer these words, "what he did to me," unto his showing the letter which David wrote him concerning Uriah, unto the great commanders in the army (2 Sam. xi. 15), and thereby exposing the king as a murderer of one of his best subjects. D. Kimchi mentions this upon his place.

Shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war upon his girdle—and in his shoes] This was a high aggravation of his crime, that he did not only shed that blood in peace (speaking to them in a friendly manner when he shed it), but after he had

in peace, and put the blood of war upon his girdle that *was* about his loins, and in his shoes that *were* on his feet.

6 Do therefore according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace.

7 But shew kindness unto the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be of those that eat at thy table : for so they came to me when I fled because of Absalom thy brother.

8 And, behold, *thou hast* with thee Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite of Bahurim, which cursed me with a grievous curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim : but he came down to meet

done he was not at all ashamed of it, but appeared with their blood upon his belt, and in his shoes : as if he thought it a glory to him, and had slain them in a battle with them.

Ver. 6.] It was not safe to give any countenance to so bold a man as Joab, who was of great authority among the soldiers : in a new kingdom, and a young man being king. Therefore, if there was a fair occasion, and he could do it prudently, he advises Solomon to cut him off. For David had not remitted his former crimes (nor could he by the law), but only deferred the punishment of a man who was very powerful, and very serviceable in his wars. Though Abarinel is of opinion he was not cut off for those old crimes : but the new one in following Adonijah could not be forgiven ; because he had deserved so ill before on other accounts. But some move a doubt how Solomon, being but a youth, could cut off Joab : which David durst not do, when he most flourished. Which will easily be resolved, if it be considered that now it was a time of peace, when Joab was less necessary : and Solomon's reputation grew continually (ver. 12), and so he was more respected than Joab ; who now declined in his interest, by reason of his age.

Ver. 7. *But show kindness unto the sons of Barzillai* As Mephibosheth had done : who, it is likely, was now dead, for otherwise he would not have forgotten him. David's gratitude here is very remarkable ; which extended itself to all the sons of Barzillai : who only desired him to be kind to Chimham (2 Sam. xix. 37).

For so they came to me when I fled That is, such kindness they showed to David, inviting him to Barzillai's house, who sustained him in his great distress (2 Sam. xix. 32).

Ver. 8. *Thou hast with thee Shimei the son of Gera,* These words, "thou hast with thee," are understood by Abarinel as if David had said, I see that thou art very familiar with Shimei ; whom thou lovest and advisest withal. But, that he might not trust him, he remembers him how bitterly he was cursed by him in his distress : and therefore might do as much by Solomon, if he should fall into the like trouble. And he thinks Solomon, being young, might the more easily be drawn in to hearken to such a crafty man's counsel ; because he did not follow Adonijah : for he takes him to be the Shimei mentioned in the foregoing chapter (ver. 8). But the plain sense of his having "Shimei with him," is, that he was in his power, being one of his subjects.

Which cursed me] See 2 Sam. xvi. 5—7.

I will not put thee to death] See 2 Sam. xix. 18, 19, &c.

Ver. 9.] His intention was not, as Abarinel glosses, that he should put him to death for his cursing him : but he admonishes Solomon not to trust him, nor follow his advice ; but if (saith he) he do to thee as he

me at Jordan, and I swear to him by the Lord, saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword.

9 Now therefore hold him not guiltless : for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him ; but his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood.

10 So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David.

11 And the days that David reigned over Israel were forty years : seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem.

12 ¶ Then sat Solomon upon the throne of

did to me, that is, any ways offend thee, do not forgive him as I did, "But bring down his hoar head," &c. that is, though he be an old man, let not that move thee to clemency towards him ; but punish him according to his deserts. And David knew his humour so well, that he did not doubt he would give Solomon occasion to cut him off, and that he was so wise as not to spare him. In short, he did not bid him cut him off for cursing him ; but only that he should cautiously observe him : and if he committed any new offence worthy of death, not pardon him as he had done.

Ver. 10.] The author before mentioned is a little too connected in his interpretation of the first part of these words : which he will have to signify, not that David died (which is the common import of this phrase), but that his soul rested in the other world, with those just and good men that had been before him. But he observes well enough, that the latter part of this verse informs us he was not buried in the sepulchre of his father (as Saul was, 2 Sam. xxi. 12, &c.), for that was in Beth-lehem : but, he being a great king, was buried in the chief city of the kingdom ; which he himself had founded, and where was the throne of the house of David (Ps. cxxii. 5). He tells also, out of Josephus's Antiquities (see lib. vii. cap. 12), that there was a great vault over his sepulchre, in which was hid an immense treasure : unto which nobody knew the way, but those that understood the artifice wherewith it was built. Out of this vault they took, in the time of Antiochus, so much money as made him withdraw his army from them. Which Procopius Gazæus also mentions. And Herod took out of it a great many talents for the building of the temple : but in following times there was no man to be found to whom the secret was communicated, how to open it ; so that no more money was taken out from that time. What credit is to be given to this I shall not determine, but suspect its truth.

Ver. 11.] The very same account is given in 1 Chron. xxix. 27. But in 2 Sam. v. 5, it is said he reigned seven years and six months in Hebron (and the same is said before, ch. ii. ver. 11), which, with the three and thirty years in Jerusalem, make forty years and a half. To solve this difficulty (as some of the Jews esteem it) they have devised this conceit : that David had a leprosy six months, to punish him for his adultery with Bath-sheba ; all which time he being as a dead man, it is not accounted to his reign. But they did not consider that the six months was part of his reign in Hebron, before he committed that adultery in Jerusalem. Which shows that this is a frivolous fancy ; and the true account of this matter is, that the Scripture is wont to reckon only complete years (as Kimchi observes upon that place of Samuel), and therefore omits the six months, being but a part of the year (see vi. 38).

David his father; and his kingdom was established greatly.

13 ¶ And Adonijah the son of Haggith came to Bath-sheba the mother of Solomon. And she said, Comest thou peaceably? And he said, Peaceably.

14 He said, moreover, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And she said, Say on.

15 And he said, Thou knowest that the kingdom was mine, and that all Israel set their faces on me, that I should reign: howbeit the kingdom is turned about, and is become my brother's; for it was his from the LORD.

16 And now I ask one petition of thee, deny me not. And she said unto him, Say on.

17 And he said, Speak, I pray thee, unto Solomon the king, (for he will not say thee nay,) that he give me Abishag the Shunammite to wife.

18 And Bath-sheba said, well; I will speak for thee unto the king.

19 ¶ Bath-sheba therefore went unto king

Ver. 12.] This Abarbanel thinks may refer to the second solemn investiture of Solomon by all the estates of the realm. Who confirmed that which had been done by a few (though by David's order) at Gihon (1 Chron. xxix. 22, 23).

Ver. 13.] She had some reason to distrust him: because by her means he had lost the kingdom.

Ver. 14. He did not pretend to come to make her a visit; but about some business.

Ver. 15. *The kingdom was mine.*] By right of primogeniture.

All Israel set their faces on me.] The kingdom, he pretends, was his by the inclination of the generality of the people to him, as David's successor.

Become my brother's.] Lest she should imagine he meant any harm, or was inwardly disgusted at his being disappointed of the kingdom, he calls Solomon his brother; and entitles God to the change: and therefore he would not have her think he affected another change; which would be to oppose the Lord.

Ver. 16. *I ask one petition of thee, deny me not.*] In the Hebrew the words are, "turn not away my face:" which signify, that he should be very much ashamed if she did not grant his petition.

Ver. 17.] Both he and she surely were not ignorant, that it was unlawful for any man to marry his father's wife: but they thought, because David knew her not, the marriage was not completed.

Ver. 18.] For she did not understand the drift of this desire: but was only forward to do courtesies to a man, fallen from very great hopes.

Ver. 19. *The king rose up to meet her, and bowed himself unto her.*] For the high honour to which he was advanced, did not make him forget the honour due to a parent: unto whom he was also much indebted for his preferment to the kingdom.

Caused a seat to be set for the king's mother.] In the Hebrew it is, a throne to be set for her: it being a seat in the form of a throne, though not so glorious as the king's.

She sat on his right hand.] Which was the most honourable place, next to himself (Ps. xlv. 9; ex. 1).

Ver. 20. *I desire one small petition of thee.*] It is likely it was the first petition she had made to him; and as she thought, would cost him nothing: which made her call it, "a small petition."

I will not say thee nay.] If the thing were fit, and safe to be granted.

Solomon, to speak unto him for Adonijah. And the king rose up to meet her, and bowed himself unto her, and sat down on his throne, and caused a seat to be set for the king's mother; and she sat on his right hand.

20 Then she said, I desire one small petition of thee; I pray thee, say me not nay. And the king said unto her, Ask on, my mother: for I will not say thee nay.

21 And she said, Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah thy brother to wife.

22 And king Solomon answered and said unto his mother, And why dost thou ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? ask for him the kingdom also; for he is mine elder brother; even for him, and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruah.

23 Then king Solomon sware by the LORD, saying, God do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah have not spoken this word against his own life.

Ver. 21 *And she said, Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah thy brother to wife.*

Ver. 22. *Why dost thou ask Abishag—for Adonijah? ask for him the kingdom also.*] He gently reprehends her ignorance: for it is as if he had said, Do you call this a small petition? You had as good ask the kingdom for him.

For he is mine elder brother.] And hath that pretence to the kingdom: unto which he would add this.

Even for him and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruah.] Who were all in this plot. So the Hebrew words, in the opinion of Lud. De Dieu, are better rendered by the Chaldee paraphrast, than by any other interpreter, "Was not he, and Abiathar, and Joab, in this counsel?" The LXX. more plainly, "With him are Abiathar the priest, and Joab the chief commander of the army:" that is, they are his accomplices, and have laid their heads together to give him this counsel.

Ver. 23. *If Adonijah have not spoken this word*] Made this request, which he knew came originally from him.

Against his own life.] For he looked upon it as a treasonable design, to ask David's wife might become his. For, according to the custom of the Hebrews, no man who had been servant of the king, might serve any other master; nor might any man ride upon the king's horse; nor sit on his throne, nor use his sceptre: as they say, in the title Sanhedrin, cap. 2, sect. 2, 5. Much less might any private person marry the king's widow: who belonged only to his successor. Therefore God gave David all the wives of Saul (2 Sam. xii. 8). All which the Gemara upon that place (cap. 2, sect. 14) applies unto this history of Adonijah; whose desire to marry the king's widow (which was not lawful for any private person) was looked upon as an affecting the kingdom. So Cocceius glosses upon that place. And, indeed, Adonijah seems to have understood well enough, that Abishag was wholly in the power of Solomon; and did not return to her father's house after the death of David: but remained with him in his possession, as one of those things that were appropriated to him. Which moved Adonijah (as Abarbanel observes) to desire her of Solomon; and not address himself to her, or to her relations; but to him, because she belonged to the crown (see Selden lib. i. De. Uxor. Heb. cap. 10).

24 Now therefore, as the LORD liveth, which hath established me, and set me on the throne of David my father, and who hath made me an house, as he promised, Adonijah shall be put to death this day.

25 And king Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he fell upon him that he died.

26 ¶ And unto Abiathar the priest said the king, Get thee to Anathoth, unto thine own fields; for thou art worthy of death: but I will not at this time put thee to death, because thou barest the ark of the LORD God before David my father, and because thou hast been afflicted in all wherein my father was afflicted.

27 So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from be-

Ver. 24. *Hath made me an house,*] That is, a royal family.

As he promised,] In 2 Sam. vii. 12, 13.

Adonijah shall be put to death this day,] He repeats the oath, to signify it was his unalterable resolution he should not live; but be put to death, without delay: which in such cases is very dangerous.

Ver. 25.] For such executions were there done not by mean persons, but by men of eminence: who at the king's command cut off offenders (see Judg. viii. 20).

Ver. 26. *Unto Abiathar—said the king, Get thee to Anathoth,*] This was a city of the priests (Josh. xxi. 28), where he commanded him to lead a private life, either in that part of the suburbs which fell to his share, or in some land which he had purchased, as Jeremiah afterward did (Jer. xxxii. 6—8).

I will not at this time put thee to death,] He seems now only to reprove him, that he might keep him upon his good behaviour: for if hereafter he gave just cause, he might put him to death, as well as now put him out of his office.

Because thou barest the ark of the Lord God before David] He was faithful to him in the rebellion of Absalom: when he brought the ark from Jerusalem to accompany him (2 Sam. xv. 24, 29).

Because thou hast been afflicted in all wherein my father was afflicted,] Underwent all the hardships that David endured, all the time of his exile under Saul (1 Sam. xxii. 20, 21, &c.).

Ver. 27.] Which might partly move Solomon to deprive him (see 1 Sam. ii. 31, &c.).

Ver. 28. *Tidings come to Joab,*] That Adonijah was put to death, and Abiathar banished.

For Joab had turned after Adonijah,] The reason of which, Abarbinel thinks, was, because Solomon was very young, and not fit, he thought, to manage public affairs: and his mother also had a blot upon her.

Joab fled unto the tabernacle] Which was at Gibeon (see the foregoing chapter, ver. 51). This makes it appear that Joab had a hand in the counsel before mentioned (ver. 22), as Solomon suspected.

Caught hold on the horns of the altar,] Which were four, at each corner thereof: in height, as the Jews say, five hand-breadths; that is, a common cubit. Here he thought to save himself, according to the custom of all nations, who fled to their altars, when they were guilty of any great crime, and were in great danger. But Jewish doctors say, Joab was mistaken in two things. First, in fancying there was security from thence for a wilful murderer: and, secondly, in that he looked for safety by taking hold of the horns of the altar, whereas the refuge of the altar (as Kimchi saith) was on the top of it only. But I look upon

ing priest unto the LORD; that he might fulfil the word of the LORD, which he spake concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh.

28 ¶ Then tidings came to Joab: for Joab had turned after Adonijah, though he turned not after Absalom. And Joab fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD, and caught hold on the horns of the altar.

29 And it was told king Solomon that Joab was fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD; and, behold, he is by the altar. Then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, Go, fall upon him.

30 And Benaiah came to the tabernacle of the LORD, and said unto him, Thus saith the king, Come forth. And he said, Nay; but I will die

this as frivolous; Rasi's opinion is better: that as God appointed them cities of refuge whither the manslayer should flee when they came into the land of Canaan (Exod. xxi. 13), so, while they were in the wilderness, the camp of the Levites served for that purpose. And the following words (ver. 14) declaring, that if a man committed a presumptuous murder, he should be taken from the altar and put to death; it not only confirms what he saith, but intimates, that even in the land of Canaan, the altar continued a refuge for those that fled to it. But then this question arises, why Joab (who, as the Jews fancy, was president of the great Sanhedrin, and understood the law) should think to find shelter there, being a wilful murderer? To which the Jews answer, that he hoped thereby to save his estate, which otherwise would have been forfeited. So they say in the Gemara Sanhedrin, cap. 6. n. 7. He hoped to be condemned by the judgment of the Sanhedrin, and then his goods would go to his heirs: whereas if he was cut off by the king they would fall to him (see Cocceius there, Annot. 2). Others say, he hoped to obtain burial by this means. But I take these to be mere conceits. It is more probable, that, as Dr. Lightfoot conjectures, he hoped to obtain a pardon, as Abiathar had done, by consecrating himself to God and to his service: as he did, he thinks, by this solemn ceremony. For the laying hold of the altar had a vow in it for the future, as well as the hope of present safety. Which may be argued from the name of the altar: which made that which touched it to be holy (see his treatise of the Temple, ch. 34. sect. 3).

Ver. 29.] Which punishment, as Abarbinel observes, was not inflicted on him for killing Abner and Amasa: though the remembrance of that innocent blood which he shed moved him not to pardon the faults he had newly committed: first, in setting up Adonijah to be king while his father was living, which was no better than rebellion; being done without David's order: and, secondly, in this new attempt to pretend to the kingdom, by advising him to beg Abishag for his wife. Solomon did not punish him for the former, because he had pardoned Adonijah: and therefore would not be severe against his adherents. But he renewing his traitorous designs, he thought fit to cut them both off: and Joab thought he deserved no less, as appears by his flying to the altar. Which was an acknowledgment that he was guilty of that crime which Solomon charged upon him, in being one of the wicked counsellors of Adonijah, and therefore deserved to die. Thus he.

Ver. 30. *Come forth,*] The forenamed author thinks that Benaiah had a mind to bring him to Solomon, and try to get his pardon, so far as to have him only deposed from his office, as Abiathar was.

here. And Benaiah brought the king word again, saying, Thus saith Joab, and thus he answered me.

31 And the king said unto him, Do as he hath said, and fall upon him, and bury him; that thou mayest take away the innocent blood, which Joab shed, from me, and from the house of my father.

32 And the LORD shall return his blood upon his own head, who fell upon two men more righteous and better than he, and slew them with the sword, my father David not knowing thereof, to wit, Abner the son of Ner, captain of the host of

Israel, and Amasa the son of Jether, captain of the host of Judah.

33 Their blood shall therefore return upon the head of Joab, and upon the head of his seed for ever: but upon David, and upon his seed, and upon his house, and upon his throne, shall there be peace for ever from the LORD.

34 So Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went up, and fell upon him, and slew him: and he was buried in his own house in the wilderness.

35 ¶ And the king put Benaiah the son of Jehoiada in his room over the host: and Zadok

I will die here.] Which he said, that he might bring Solomon into the people's hatred for staining the house of God with blood.

Thus said Joab, and thus he answered me.] This interpreters generally take to be but the repetition of the same thing in different words: but Abarbinel takes them for two distinct answers of Joab, in which he refuses to come from the place where he was; and pronounces the sentence upon himself, and desires no pardon. For those words, "thus saith Joab," respect (he thinks) the sentence which he pronounced on himself, that he would die: and those words, "thus he answered," signify he would not come from the altar.

Ver. 31. *Do as he hath said, and fall upon him,]* Kill him at the very altar, where he resolves to die: after which he would not deny him burial suitable to his quality (ver. 34). But many think he did not kill him at the very altar; but dragged him from thence and then slew him. For what need was there to defile the holy place with blood! And so the command is, Exod. xxi. 14. Though others are of opinion, that Solomon did think fit to have him killed at the very altar; to let all men see that no place, though ever so holy, should secure any man from the hand of justice.

That thou mayest take away the innocent blood, which Joab shed,] He means the blood of those two persons mentioned in the next verse: whose murder (as I said before) was not the immediate reason of Joab's death: but the words of Solomon are to be understood (Abarbinel thinks) as if he had said to Benaiah, Do not imagine thou shalt offend God, by killing Joab at the very altar, but rather perform an acceptable service to him: by cutting off a man who deserves to die, not only upon the account of Adonijah; but of the innocent blood which he shed heretofore. So the business of Adonijah was the principal cause of his death: the other only the secondary; which he remembers, that he might warrant Benaiah to kill him in the tabernacle.

From me, and from the house of my father,] The crimes of Joab in killing those two men could not be punished by the house of judgment, because there were no witnesses of that murder: but David might have done it by such proofs as satisfied him of his guilt. Yet he omitted it, because Joab was so potent in the army; and so Solomon feared the guilt might stick upon his family, if it were not wiped off by this execution upon Joab.

Ver. 32. *Return his blood upon his own head,]* Make him alone bear the punishment of his iniquity.

Who fell upon two men—my father David not knowing thereof,] His crime was the more heinous, because it brought a suspicion upon David, as if it had been done by his order: which calumny he laboured to wipe off, by the unfeigned grief he expressed for Abner (2 Sam. iii. 37).

Ver. 33. *Upon the head of his seed for ever:]* Why

doth he repeat what he said before? Abarbinel answers, it is not a mere repetition; but Solomon pronounces that the curse of David should come upon him: so that Joab's own death should not expiate the guilt; but his posterity should suffer for it in future generations, according to what David said, 2 Sam. iii. 28, 29.

But upon David, &c.] He prays and prophesies that his family and kingdom might never suffer upon this account, now that the sin which had not been punished in David's lifetime, had received a just punishment from him.

Ver. 34. *So Benaiah—went up,]* He is said "to go up," because Gibeon, where Joab was at the tabernacle, was a high place.

He was buried] It is not said who took care of his burial; but it is likely Benaiah (see ver. 21). Because Joab was a man of dignity, and one of the royal family.

In his own house in the wilderness,] He did not bury him in the house, but in some ground belonging to it, and accounted a part of the habitation, which was in the wilderness; so they call those parts of the country, which were but thinly inhabited. And Abarbinel is of opinion, that here Joab had built a hospital, where he provided, in several rooms, a bed, a table, and a candlestick, for poor travellers.

Ver. 35.] It is evident that Zadok was a great man before this; at least the vicar of the high-priest Abiathar: who was, as some of the Jews fancy, deprived by David himself, or suspended from his office, upon his anointing Adonijah. But no such anointing is mentioned in the story of Adonijah; nay, it is most likely (as I before observed) that he wanted it. And therefore he remained high-priest till now that Solomon removed him, and translated that great office from the family of Ithamar, to that of Eleazar (according to the threatening against Eli, 1 Sam. ii. 30), in which it continued till the time of the captivity; no notice being taken of Jonathan the son of Abiathar, mentioned in the foregoing chapter, ver. 42, and in 1 Sam. xv. 27. See Selden, De Successione, in Pontif. lib. i. cap. 4, 5, and Grotius, De Imperio Sum. Pontestat. where he observes (cap. 10), that the *sagan*, or vicar of the high-priest, had rather a hope, than a right, to succeed in the office of high-priest. For Maimonides saith, the Sanhedrin chose him out of the family of Aaron; but here it is plain the king disposed of that office. For otherwise it could not be said truly, that Solomon put Zadok in the room of Abiathar, by the same authority that he put Benaiah in the room of Joab. Bellarmine, indeed, for fear kings should be thought superior to the high-priest, saith, Solomon did this not as a king but as a prophet (lib. ii. De Pontific. cap. 29). But Solomon was not yet a prophet; and all they who had royal authority in the time of the Macedonians, and Romans, and the posterity of Herod, challenged to themselves this power of making a high-priest; though they left to

the priest did the king put in the room of Abiathar.

36 ¶ And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Build thee an house in Jerusalem, and dwell there, and go not forth thence any whither.

37 For it shall be, *that* on the day thou goest out, and passest over the brook Kidron, thou shalt know for certain that thou shalt surely die: thy blood shall be upon thine own head.

38 And Shimei said unto the king, The saying is good: as my lord the king hath said, so will thy servant do. And Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days.

39 And it came to pass at the end of three years, that two of the servants of Shimei ran away unto Achish son of Maachah king of Gath. And they told Shimei, saying, Behold, thy servants *be* in Gath.

40 And Shimei arose, and saddled his ass, and went to Gath to Achish to seek his servants: and Shimei went, and brought his servants from Gath.

41 And it was told Solomon that Shimei had

gone from Jerusalem to Gath, and was come again.

42 And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, Did I not make thee to swear by the LORD, and protested unto thee, saying, Know for a certain, on the day thou goest out, and walkest abroad any whither, that thou shalt surely die? and thou saidst unto me, The word *that* I have heard is good.

43 Why then hast thou not kept the oath of the LORD, and the commandment that I have charged thee with?

44 The king said moreover to Shimei, Thou knowest all the wickedness which thine heart is privy to, that thou didst to David my father: therefore the LORD shall return thy wickedness upon thine own head;

45 And king Solomon *shall be* blessed, and the throne of David shall be established before the LORD for ever.

46 So the king commanded Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; which went out, and fell upon him, that he died. And the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon.

the Jews an *αἰρονομία* ("the government of themselves by their own laws") in other things.

Ver. 36.] It was fit to confine such a turbulent man as Shimei was: and not suffer him to go about whither he pleased, throughout the tribes of Israel, where he might stir up sedition. But it was very kind to confine him to such a pleasant place as Jerusalem, and the suburbs of it: which made Abarbinel renew his conceit (from those words of David, "thou hast with thee Shimei"), that Solomon had a great love to him, and made him his familiar. But it is more reasonable to think that Solomon suspected his fidelity; and therefore would have him always in his eye, in the royal city.

Ver. 37. *It shall be, that on the day thou—passest over the brook Kidron, thou shalt—surely die.*] He mentions the brook Kidron, because that was in the way to Bahurim, where Shimei dwelt: as appears by comparing 2 Sam. xv. 23, with xvi. 5. But Solomon's intention was, that if he went out of Jerusalem any way, to a greater distance than Kidron was from thence, he should die for it. For when he went to Gath after his servants, he went directly the quite contrary way; that city lying westward of Jerusalem, as Kidron did eastward.

Thy blood shall be upon thine own head.] He should be guilty, and nobody else, of his death: for it was in his power to preserve his life.

Ver. 38. *The saying is good.*] He confesses the king's kindness in this injunction; and that he was beholden to him, for laying no greater burden upon him. Which he confirmed by an oath (ver. 42, 43).

Many days.] Three years, as it follows in the next verse.

Ver. 39.] Achish had been so great a friend to David, that though David had conquered the Philistines, yet he suffered Achish still to retain the title of king, and to be only tributary to him: so that there was a friendly correspondence between this city and Jerusalem; where Shimei might easily hear, by somebody or other who had been at Gath, that his servants were there.

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Ver. 40. *Shimei—went to Gath to Achish to seek his servants.*] In three years' time he thought Solomon might have forgotten his injunction; or he presumed he would not hold him strictly to it: especially since he did not go from Jerusalem for his pleasure, but to recover what he had lost; which he thought was pardonable. For these servants, it is likely were worth a great deal of money: wherewith he had purchased them.

Brought his servants from Gath.] Where Achish would not protect them; being in friendship with the Israelites.

Ver. 41.] If Solomon had not constant spies about Shimei, to watch his motions; yet such a journey as this could not be well undertaken so secretly, but some or other would observe it, and inform against him.

Ver. 42.] He repeats their agreement; and only adds that he made Shimei solemnly swear that he would stand to it, and did thankfully accept it.

Ver. 43.] He lay under a double guilt, of breaking his oath to God, and of disobeying the king's command.

Ver. 44.] He knew upon what wicked principles he cursed David, and what inward hatred and malice he had to him, and what villainous designs against him, if he could have accomplished them. Upon which, if he reflected, he could not but see the justice of God, in letting him fall into other crimes, which deserved death.

Ver. 45.] To which Shimei wished confusion: but the Lord turned his curses into blessings, as David hoped (2 Sam. xvi. 12).

Ver. 46. *Which went out, and fell upon him, that he died.*] He went out from the presence of the king, and carried Shimei along with him: and then did execution upon him.

The kingdom was established.] By the removal of these bad men before mentioned: and by the alliances he made, mentioned in the next chapter, &c.

CHAPTER III.

1 *Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter.* 2 *High places being in use, Solomon sacrificed at Gibeon.* 5 *Solomon at Gibeon, in the choice which God gave him, preferring wisdom, obtaineth wisdom, riches, and honour.* 16 *Solomon's judgment between the two harlots maketh him renowned.*

1 AND Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her into the city of David, until he had made an end of building his own house, and the house of the LORD, and the wall of Jerusalem round about.

2 Only the people sacrificed in high places, because there was no house built unto the name of the LORD, until those days.

3 And Solomon loved the LORD, walking in

CHAP. III.

Ver. 1. *Solomon—took Pharaoh's daughter,*] To be his wife. Which was not unlawful, if she was first made a proselyte to the Jewish religion; as in all probability she was. For though his wives drew him in to worship strange gods; yet the gods of the Egyptians are not reckoned among them (xi. 5, 6, &c.), which is a sign she was not a worshipper of other gods. Hitherto also Solomon loved the Lord as it is said, ver. 3, and was beloved of him, as his appearing to him in Gibeon shows, ver. 5.

Brought her into the city of David,] Unto his palace at Jerusalem: which was after he had begun to build the temple, as they say in Seder Olam Rabba, cap. 15.

Until he had made an end of building his own house, and the house of the Lord,] After which he built a house on purpose for this wife to dwell in (ix. 24, 2 Chron. viii. 11). But first he built God's house, then his own, and then the walls of Jerusalem.

And the wall of Jerusalem round about.] If David encompassed it with a wall, as some think is signified 2 Sam. v. 9, Solomon made another wall, and thereby made it stronger than David left it. Or else, he repaired the wall which David had built, and raised it higher.

Ver. 2.] This is a short account of the happiness of Solomon's reign hitherto, that there was nothing in it blamable, but only the people's sacrificing in high places. Which having been ancient places of worship (in groves or woods, on the top of hills), the people continued to resort thither, to perform that worship which God had appointed. So that there was no fault in the worship itself, but only in the place of it. And he gives the reason why the people took this liberty, because there was not a house built, to be a settled place for worship; the tabernacle had also been removed from place to place a long time; and was not fixed till it came to Jerusalem. Concerning *high places*, see upon Deut. xii. Cornel. Bertram, indeed, fetches the original of them from the cities of the Levites, where they kept schools, and had places for prayer; and where he thinks the people at last sacrificed in the highest part of the city (De Repub. Judaica, cap. 15). But this custom seems, more likely, to have been derived from the ancient patriarchs, and was imitated by the gentiles as well as Jews.

Ver. 3. *Walking in the statutes of David*] Following his directions, who commanded him carefully to observe all God's laws, ii. 2, 3.

Only he sacrificed—in high places.] Which David his father had never done (as far as appears

the statutes of David his father: only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places.

4 And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place: a thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar.

5 ¶ In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.

6 And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto

by his history), which renders Solomon's fault the greater, in following the common practice of all the nations, rather than the example of his pious father.

Ver. 4. *The king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there;*] Because the tabernacle was there, and the great brazen altar which Moses made. For after Shiloh was destroyed, it was carried to Nob; and the priests being there slain by Saul, it was carried to Gibeon (2 Chron. i. 3), where the Jews say, there was the greatest synagogue in all the land.

A thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar.] It is not easy to apprehend how so many sacrifices should be consumed upon an altar, which was but five cubits square; for I suppose he speaks of Moses's altar, which was of no larger dimensions. But Kimchi hath well observed, that we must not fancy they were all offered upon one day; but during the time he stayed at Gibeon, before he returned to Jerusalem. Yet if we suppose this was at some of the great festivals, none of which lasted above seven days, it must be acknowledged a wonderful thing, that so many should be consumed, though offered both at morning and evening sacrifice. The Jews therefore do acknowledge a miracle herein, as there were many, they say, continually at the temple; which are disbelieved, because the Jews are accounted fabulous writers. But if well considered, some of them at least carry good reason in them. For instance, they say the smoke of the sacrifices went always directly up to heaven in a steady pillar, and was not blown about with every puff of wind, as smoke commonly is. For if it had not been so, when there was a vast number of sacrifices offered, no man would have been able to stand in the court of the Lord's house. The fire also upon the altar was exceeding quick and devouring, being celestial fire, which despatched the sacrifices sooner than ordinary fire would have done. So Dr. Lightfoot observes in his treatise of the Temple, ch. 34, sect. 1. From whence it was called Ariel, the Lion of God, because it was so devouring. And therefore, after the return from their captivity from Babylon (as L'Empereur observes out of the Gemara), the altar was made larger; because the fire burnt more slowly, when they wanted that heavenly flame, which was strong and powerful (Annot. in Cod. Middoth. cap. 1, sect. 1, p. 103).

Ver. 5. *In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night*] Perhaps he thought he saw the Divine glory shine round about him: or else the meaning is, God revealed himself in a dream, as the Targum here expresses it, "The Lord was revealed to Solomon by night;" when men have often seen

thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as *it is* this day.

7 And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not *how* to go out or come in.

8 And thy servant *is* in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude.

9 Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?

that represented to them, which they found true when they were awake; as Tully shows by many instances; especially out of Aristotle's famous story of the two men that travelled together at Megara; one of which being killed in his inn, the other, who lay in a friend's house, had all the fact represented clearly and distinctly to him in his dream, as if he had seen it done; so that he found out the murderers in the morning (see lib. i. De Divinatione, cap. 24—26, &c.).

Ask what I shall give thee.] He heard a voice speaking to him, and bidding him ask what he desired, and it should be bestowed upon him. This voice he took to be from God (as appears by his answer), who herein showed himself very gracious to Solomon, and also made a trial of his inclinations.

Ver. 6.] Thankful acknowledgments of mercies already received (as St. Chrysostom notes), invite new blessings to be bestowed upon us. *Uprightness of heart*, here ascribed to David, doth not signify that he was without fault (for the contrary is evident, that he was guilty of great transgressions against the moral law), but it is spoken in opposition to Saul, who was rejected for controlling the orders of God.

Ver. 7.] There are those, particularly Rasi, who think he was but twelve years old when he spake these words; and therefore calls himself *naar*, a child. But Abarbanel hath shown, that they ground this upon an uncertain computation; and that, if he was but a child of twelve years old now, he must have begun to reign when he was but seven or eight years old: for he had sat some time upon the throne, as appears by the foregoing story, when he had this dream. And his father calls him a *wise man*, when he left the throne to him (ch. ii. 6, 9). And, from many other strong arguments, he concludes him to have been at least twenty years old when he began to reign; and therefore calls himself here a child, with respect only to his skill in managing public affairs; as is signified in the last words, "I know not how to go out," &c. i. e. to govern so great a people, for want of experience. Thus Benjamin is called a child, Gen. xli. 20; and Moses calls Joshua by the same name. Exod. xxxii. 10, though they were above thirty years old: and the sons of Eli, when they ministered as priests, 1 Sam. ii. 17.

Ver. 8. *A great people.*] And consequently great abilities were required to do exact justice to them all.

Ver. 9.] That is, without the Divine guidance and assistance, he thought it impossible to understand what was law in all cases; so as dexterously to dispatch business, and decide all differences. For young

10 And the speech pleased the LORD, that Solomon had asked this thing.

11 And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment;

12 Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.

13 And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among kings like unto thee all thy days.

14 And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep

men, as Aristotle observes, are unfit for government; because in them, τὸ βουλευτικὸν ἀτέλει, "their consultive power is very imperfect," as he speaks in the first book of his Politics, cap. 7. And therefore, in his book ad Nichomachum, he will not so much as admit a young man to the lectures of politics; τῆς πολιτικῆς οὐκ εἰν ἀρροῦτος οἰκίος ὁ νέος. But this is not universally true, as we see not only in the example of Solomon, who was extraordinarily accomplished by God in his youth for the greatest things; but by some examples among the heathen of young men who managed the weightiest affairs with as much prudence as they who were of the greatest experience. Witness Scipio and Octavianus Augustus. But such persons were rarely found: so that Solomon himself saith, "Woe to the land whose king is a child" (Eccles. x. 16).

Ver. 10.] For it was a token of a virtuous mind and a public spirit, that desired above all things the honour of God, and the good of his people.

Ver. 11. *Neither hast asked riches, &c.*] Which are things of which men are naturally most desirous.

But hast asked for thyself understanding.] As far transcending long life, wealth, and victory over enemies.

Ver. 12.] For other wise men gather their knowledge by study, and observation, and other helps (as Abarbanel here notes), but Solomon had his by inspiration: so that he went to bed an ignorant man, but awaked in the morning like an angel of God. At once, as his words are, he who was like other men, was made like the Son of God. For he had not only the skill of government imparted to him; but a general knowledge of all other things, as the following history tells us. Whence he fancies he calls himself *Agur* (Prov. xxx. 1), because in him there was a *collection* of all manner of wisdom and knowledge, and this imparted from God. Which is the reason, he imagines, why he does not call himself *Oger*, which is an active word, but *Agur*, which is a passive: because he did not gather all his wisdom himself, but it was given him from the hand of God.

Ver. 13.] These are absolutely promised him: but here is no mention of long life; for that depended upon the condition of his steadfast obedience to God, as it follows in the next verse. He promises he should excel all the kings that were in his time, in riches and renown: though there were richer in future ages, as Alexander and others were.

Ver. 14.] This God himself, mentions, in the first place (ver. 11); as the greatest worldly blessing;

my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days.

15 And Solomon awoke; and, behold, it was a dream. And he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings, and made a feast to all his servants.

16 ¶ Then came there two women, *that were harlots*, unto the king, and stood before him,

17 And the one woman said, O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house; and I was delivered of a child with her in the house.

18 And it came to pass the third day after that I was delivered, that this woman was delivered also: and we *were together*; there was no stranger with us in the house, save we two in the house.

19 And this woman's child died in the night; because she overlaid it.

20 And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me while thine handmaid slept,

especially when accompanied with great riches and honour: which Solomon was not to expect, unless he continued obedient to God.

Ver. 15. *Behold, it was a dream.*] He saw and heard all the foregoing things so clearly and distinctly in his sleep, as if he had been awake: and did not know till he awoke that all was done in a dream; which was one way of God's revealing himself to his prophets. But Maimonides, I think, is here a little too curious; for from these words, "Behold it was a dream," he concludes this was an inferior degree of prophecy from what others had in dreams. For they that prophesied in dreams, do not call it afterward a dream; but simply say, it was a prophecy. So when the patriarch Jacob awoke out of a dream of prophecy, he did not say it was a dream, but said absolutely, "Surely God is in this place," &c. Gen. xxviii. 16 (*More Nevoch. lib. ii. cap. 45.*)

He came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark] Which was there in a tabernacle which David pitched for it (2 Sam. v. 17), though the tabernacle which Moses made remained at Gibeon; where Solomon had been to worship.

Offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings,] Giving thanks to God, that he had been pleased to speak with him, and reveal himself to him.

Made a feast to all his servants.] Upon the sacrifices of peace-offerings, it is likely, which he had offered; whereby he endeared himself unto them. For nothing more wins men's affection than bounty, affability, clemency, and such-like virtues.

Ver. 16. *Then came there two women that were harlots.*] They kept a house of public entertainment, as the Targum translates it, and perhaps were also common women: but then, the Jews suppose, they were not Israelites, but strangers; and so not comprehended in the law, Deut. xxiii. 17.

Stood before him] As they used to do, who brought any cause before a court to be judged.

Ver. 17.] This case, as Abarinel thinks, should have been first brought into some of the inferior courts, near the place where they lived; and if they could not have determined it, then to the great Sanhedrin: and if they found it too hard for them, then they should have brought it to the king; who otherwise might have easily erred, no inquisition having been made into the matter, if a Divine Spirit had not directed him. But this opinion of Abarinel is

and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom.

21 And when I rose in the morning to give my child suck, behold, it was dead: but when I had considered it in the morning, behold, it was not my son, which I did bear.

22 And the other woman said, Nay; but the living is my son, and the dead is thy son. And this said, No; but the dead is thy son, and the living is my son. Thus they spake before the king.

23 Then said the king, The one saith, This is my son that liveth, and thy son is the dead: and the other saith, Nay; but thy son is the dead, and my son is the living.

24 And the king said, Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king.

25 And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other.

26 Then spake the woman whose the living

grounded on another fancy, that there was a great Sanhedrin in these days, which cannot be proved.

Ver. 18. *This woman was delivered also.*] Of another son; which being born so soon after the other, they could not be distinguished by their age.

Save we two in the house.] So that there was no witness of what passed between them; but all relied on their own credit; which made the case more difficult.

Ver. 19.] Some marks upon the body, it is likely, discovered that it was smothered: and Kimchi here notes, that if it had died of a disease it would have cried, and the neighbours been called in, and the thing been known.

Ver. 20.] This made the matter obscure; for how should she know what her companion did, when she was asleep.

Ver. 21. *When I had considered it in the morning,*] When it was perfect day; which it was not when she arose to suckle the child.

It was not my son, which I did bear.] There was some resemblance, it is likely, in the features of the two children; so that the neighbours did not know the one from the other: but the mother, who had carefully observed it, knew by some tokens that this dead child was none of her's.

Ver. 22.] One affirming what the other denied; but having no evidence to make proof of what they said.

Ver. 23.] From hence the Jews argue, that he had judges before they pronounced sentence were bound to sum up the evidence that had been given on both sides; that it might be seen they had observed and understood their allegations, and accordingly gave judgment. For thus Solomon doth in this case, where there was no more than he repeated; there being no witnesses on either side.

Ver. 24.] As much as to say, Here is nothing but affirming on one part, and denying on the other, without any proof: I must therefore try some other way to decide this controversy.

Ver. 25.] For both pretended to it, and this he thought the best way to end the dispute. For he knew the woman, whose the child really was, would be moved with such tender compassion to it, that she would never suffer it to be divided: and so he should discover the true mother. Thus interpreters commonly expound it. But Abarinel thinks this would have been no extraordinary proof of Solomon's wisdom above other men's; nor have begot such a fear

child *was* unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it.

27 Then the king answered and said, Give her

in the Israelites as this judgment did. Therefore he thinks Solomon made a discovery of the truth, antecedent to this experiment; by observing the countenance, the manner of speech, and all the motions of the women, whereby he discerned the secrets of their hearts, and penetrated to the bottom of the business; which this command to divide the child discovered to all.

Ver. 26.] Natural affection clearly discovered the truth, without any other evidence.

the living child, and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof.

28 And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God *was* in him, to do judgment.

Ver. 27. *She is the mother thereof.*] As appeared by the pity which her love excited to it.

Ver. 28. *All Israel—feared the king.*] Very much revered, and stood in awe of him.

For they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment.] That is, saith Abarbanel, the wisdom proper to God; which searches the reins, and trieth the hearts. Therefore they *feared him*, persuading themselves, they could not have a thought of any evil design against him, which he would not discover.

CHAPTER IV.

1 *Solomon's princes. 7 His twelve officers for provision. 20, 24 The peace and largeness of his kingdom. 22 His daily provision. 26 His stables. 29 His wisdom.*

1 So king Solomon was king over all Israel.

2 And these were the princes which he had; Azariah the son of Zadok the priest.

3 Elihoreph and Ahiah, the sons of Shisha, scribes; Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, the recorder.

4 And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over

the host: and Zadok and Abiathar were the priests:

4 And Azariah the son of Nathan was over the officers: and Zabud the son of Nathan was principal officer, and the king's friend:

6 And Ahishar was over the household: and Adoniram the son of Abda was over the tribute.

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 1. *Solomon was king over all Israel.*] Reigned with the full consent of all the tribes of Israel.

Ver. 2. *All these were the princes which he had.*] The principal officers employed under him.

Azariah the son of Zadok the priest.] He was the son of Ahimaz, the son of Zadok; and therefore was Zadok's grandson (1 Chron. vi. 8, 9). But such are usually called sons in Scripture, as Rasi observes upon Gen. xx. 12. And Zadok, it is probable, in his old age, bred him up in his house as his child. It is not said here what office he had, unless we translate the word *priest*, as we do in the margin, *chief officer*, or prime minister of state. But this Abarbanel thinks is a mistake; and he takes him to have been one of the scribes, together with those two that follow in the next words, Elihoreph and Ahiah. For thus he thinks the words should be translated, "Azariah the son of Zadok the priest, and Elihoreph, and Ahiah the sons of Shisha, were scribes;" there wanting a *vau* before Elihoreph, as is frequent in Scripture (Exod. i. 1, 2). And these three secretaries had each their several employments. One, he thinks, was in matters of judgment; the other in the revenue; and the third was concerned in writing annals, or keeping the records, and was a public registrar.

Ver. 3. *The recorder.*] Or master of requests. So Rasi understands the word *hanamaskir*: one that heard all men's causes, and brought them before the king.

Ver. 4. *The priests.*] That is, the principal, or high-priests. Kimchi thinks this was not that Abiathar whom Solomon ejected, and placed Zadok in his room (ii. 35), but another of that name. But Rabbag takes him to be the same that was thrust out of the priesthood; yet suffered to minister, when Zadok was not well, or could not attend: and Abarbanel approves of this opinion. Or, perhaps, Solomon permitted him, upon his petition, to come to Jerusa-

lem, not to officiate as high-priest, but to live upon the altar (according to the prediction, 1 Sam. ii. 36), and he retained the name and title of high-priest, though Zadok only enjoyed the office. L'Empereur thinks he is here joined with Zadok, because in the beginning of Solomon's reign he did discharge the office of high-priest: and after he was deposed, he retained the title of that dignity as long as he lived, because of his precedent function (Annot. upon Bertram De Rep. Jud. p. 420).

Ver. 5. *Over the officers.*] That is, the twelve officers mentioned below (ver. 7, 8, &c.) who gave accounts unto him, who was their overseer.

Principal officer.] The word *cohen* signifies here, as it doth 2 Sam. viii. 18, *minister of state*, among whom Zabud was the chief: one whom the king entrusted with the management of all affairs, and with his most secret counsels, he being always with him, as Abarbanel observes. Dr. Hammond notes upon St. Matt. ix. Annot. 2, that the king's friend was an officer of nearness to the king; as Mr. Selden observed before him, in his Uxor. Hebr. lib. ii. cap. 16, p. 201, 202. For Nathan having bred up Solomon (see 2 Sam. xii. 25), it was easy for him to get his sons preferred by him to the highest dignities under him, when he came to be king; especially since he was very instrumental in placing him upon the throne.

Ver. 6. *The household.*] Lord high-chamberlain (as we speak in our language), who took in, and displaced officers in the family.

The tribute.] Which was imposed on the people for the support of the government. Such contributions were raised several ways in several kingdoms: but good and wise princes took care not to lay burdens on such things as were necessary for the livelihood of the poor; and that they were not too heavy upon any thing: as Solomon's were, if the people's complaints were just, after his death: but perhaps this word *tribute*, which we translate *levy* in the margin, may refer not to the levying of money, but of

7 ¶ And Solomon had twelve officers over all Israel, which provided victuals for the king and his household: each man his month in a year made provision.

8 And these are their names: The son of Hur, in mount Ephraim:

9 The son of Dekar, in Makaz, and in Shaal-bim, and Beth-shemesh, and Elon-beth-hanan:

10 The son of Hesus, in Aruboth; to him pertained Sochoh, and all the land of Hopher:

11 The son of Abinadab, in all the region of Dor; which had Taphath the daughter of Solomon to wife:

12 Baana the son of Ahilud; to him pertained Taanach and Megiddo, and all Beth-shean, which is by Zartanah beneath Jezreel, from Beth-shean to Abel-meholah, even unto the place that is beyond Jokneam:

13 The son of Geber, in Ramoth-gilead; to him pertained the towns of Jair the son of Ma-

men. Concerning which we read in the next chapter, ver. 13, 14, where Adoniram is said to be over the levy: and so he might be over both, of men and money.

Ver. 7.] The country being divided into twelve parts, there were so many persons (called Nitzavim, because there they were placed) constituted to buy provisions for the king and his family, at the best hand, and every thing in its proper season; to be sent to the place where the king resided, by every one in his month. By which means there was great plenty for all that belonged to the court; both for his house, and his stables of horses; for domestics, and for all foreigners that came thither about business, or to hear his wisdom; who were there entertained without any grievance to his people.

Ver. 8. *The son of Hur.*] He tells only the name of the father, who it seems was more illustrious than the son: unless we translate these words *Ben-hur*.

In mount Ephraim.] And the territory belonging to it: which must be understood of the rest of the places mentioned in the following verses.

Ver. 9. *The son of Dekar.*] Or *Ben-dekar*, as those that follow may be translated: though it is probable, as I said before, that the fathers are named, not the sons, because they were very illustrious persons, and better known: who managed, perhaps, this affair by their sons.

In Makaz, &c.] It is not material in what country these places were: and therefore I shall not inquire after them.

Ver. 10.] There were more Sochohs than one, as we find Josh. xv. 35, 48. It is uncertain which is here meant. The land of Hopher possibly may be the portion given to the daughters of Hopher (Josh. xvii. 3, &c.)

Ver. 11.] Solomon had no daughters marriageable when these officers were made; but in process of time this man, and Ahimaaz mentioned ver. 15, had behaved themselves so well in their office, that Solomon did them the honour to give them two of his daughters to be their wives.

Ver. 12.] These places have been named in the foregoing books; where I have noted as much as I can find about them. Here the author names the person himself that was employed (as he doth in some of the following verses) and not merely the father. The reason of which I cannot give, unless it were that he was a very noted person.

Ver. 13.] These countries beyond Jordan are also

well known, being often mentioned in the foregoing books.

Ver. 14.] And the territory belonging to it, which was very fertile; but this seems to some not to bear proportion to the rest, being not a twelfth part of the whole country. Therefore they follow the marginal translation, to *Mahanaim*: that is, all the territory from the places before named unto this place.

Ver. 15.] As Abinadab had married another of his daughters (see ver. 11).

Ver. 16.] This man, perhaps, was the son of Hushai, the friend of David; and therefore preferred by Solomon.

Ver. 17.] It appears by this, and the foregoing and following verses, that some of these officers had whole tribes assigned them for their province.

Ver. 18.] Concerning this person, see ch. i. ver. 8. Ver. 19. *In the country of Sihon, king of the Amorites, and of Og*] That is, in the rest of the country of Gilead before mentioned, ver. 13.

He was the only officer which was in the land.] There is nothing in the Hebrew answering to those words, *he was*: therefore this doth not relate to the officer before mentioned; but the meaning is, as Abarbanel expounds it, that besides all those officers before named, there was another who took care of strangers, who were going to court, or coming from it; as the other twelve took care of his family, and all belonging to it. This officer made provision in that country where the king then dwelt; and therefore is not named, because he was not fixed and settled in his office, as the others were; but chosen by the citizens of that city, where the king resided.

Ver. 20. *Judah and Israel were many.*] The same Abarbanel thinks this and the next verses explain the reason why this officer was appointed: first, because Israel and Judah were so great a people; and, secondly, because strangers came from several regions, to bring presents, or about other business. And therefore it was necessary this officer should set a reasonable price upon all things sold in the market, that they might not exact upon any body, when they saw a multitude of buyers, which might tempt them to sell their commodities too dear.

Eating and drinking, and making merry.] In perfect security; and being well-pleased and highly satisfied.

Ver. 21. *From the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt.*] The bounds of his kingdom were Euphrates on the east, the country of the Philistines on the west, and Egypt on the

presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life.

22 ¶ And Solomon's provision for one day was thirty measures of fine flour, and threescore measures of meal,

23 Ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and an hundred sheep, beside harts, and roebucks, and fallowdeer, and fatted fowl.

24 For he had dominion over all the *region* on this side the river, from Tiphshah even to Azzah, over all the kings on this side the river: and he had peace on all sides round about him.

south. For so God promised that their dominion should be extended, "from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates" Gen. xv. 18). And accordingly David conquered so far, and Solomon maintained his conquests.

They brought presents, and served Solomon] This explains what went before: which is not to be understood as if all those countries had no other king than Solomon; but that their kings were tributaries to him, and made him presents in token of their subjection.

Ver. 23.] By *meal* is meant a coarser sort of flour for inferior servants: and the measure here spoken of contained ten ephahs. So here was bread enough provided for near three thousand persons, as some compute it.

Ver. 23.] This and the foregoing verse Abarbinel thinks are added, to satisfy some questions that arise about the constitution of so many officers: for why might he not be supplied out of the neighbouring cities and towns! which he shows here could not be; because of the vast quantity of provision which was necessary for one day. And it is observable, that oxen are here mentioned in the first place (both those fatted at home, and those fatted in the pastures), being anciently esteemed the most noble meat: as appears by Homer's heroes. Who, as Dioscorides notes, never had any thing in their feasts, no, not at marriages, but fat oxen. See Bochartus, in his Hierozoi-con, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 32, where he mentions the great entertainments made by Agamemnon, Menelaus, Nestor, Alcinoüs. Nor did they that courted Penelope, though the most voluptuous of all men, eat any other meat.

Beside harts, and roebucks, and fallowdeer.] Which were meats highly esteemed among the Jews, and mentioned next to the foregoing (Deut. xiv. 4, 5).

And fatted fowl.] Many restrain the word *barburim* to birds, or fowl, as we do: and some think they were capons: Kimchi and others say, *fatted fowl* out of Barbary; from whence they had the name of *barburim*. But the name of Barbary was not known in Solomon's time: and therefore Bochart thinks the word should be translated, "the choicest of all fatted things" (Hieroz. par. ii. lib. i. cap. 19), and so Goussset, in his late Commentaries of the Hebrew Tongue.

Ver. 24. *He had dominion over all the region on this side the river.*] It might be objected to what was said before, that all the country of Israel could not afford such a constant supply of provisions: which he prevents by this observation, that his dominion extended to a great many other regions, from whence they might be furnished with more than his own country afforded.

From Tiphshah even to Azzah.] This is an explication of what is said, ver. 21, that he reigned from the river, that is Euphrates, to the land of the Philistines: for Tiphshah is the same with the city Tapsæus; where there was a bridge, and a ferry over Euphrates, as

25 And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, all the days of Solomon.

26 ¶ And Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.

27 And those officers provided victuals for king Solomon, and for all that came unto king Solomon's table, every man in his month: they lacked nothing.

28 Barley also and straw for the horses and dromedaries brought they unto the place where

Strabo testifies in many places (see lib. xvi. p. 747): and the very name implies as much, for *transire*, to pass over, in the Hebrew language.

He had peace on all sides] None of his neighbours gave him any disturbance: so that the Israelites had nothing to divert them (as Abarbinel observes) from improving their lands, and increasing their rents: whereby there was a greater plenty of all things. Machiavel magnifies those who by force of arms achieved mighty things and raised themselves to a great height of glory: but Hermannus Conringius well corrects him with this observation, that Solomon among the Jews, and Numa Pompilius among the Romans, got a more lasting name in all future ages by the art of peace. For which he refers to Cicero, lib. ii. De Officiis.

Ver. 25. *Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree.*] This he saith (the same author thinks) to show the great plenty of corn, and wine, and oil, as well as of cattle and all other things: *vines* and *fig-trees* are particularly mentioned, because they were planted in Judea more than any other trees; for the sweetness of their fruit, and the benefits of their shade.

All the days of Solomon.] That is, till the end of his life. When some adversaries were stirred up against him: but for so short a time, in his old age, that he had peace the far greater part of his reign (1 Chron. xxii. 9).

Ver. 26. *Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses*] In 2 Chron. ix. 25, it is said he had but four thousand. But there is no disagreement between these two places: for he speaks here of his horses, and there of their stalls or stables; there being ten in every stable, which make forty thousand, as Abarbinel observes. But this doth not satisfy Bochartus, who rather inclines to Jacobus Capellus' opinion, that the Hebrew word *arbain* here signifies *four* not *forty* (Hierozoi-con, lib. ii. par. i. p. 155, &c.). But this is without example; therefore others think that in the Chronicles the author speaks of those stalls for horses which he had in Jerusalem for his constant guard, which were but four thousand: whereas here he speaks of those which were dispersed throughout his whole kingdom.

Twelve thousand horsemen.] Which were distributed, it is likely, in every tribe; to keep them in peace, and to be ready to oppose any enemy that might invade them: wherein Abarbinel thinks that Solomon did not offend against the law in Deuteronomy, which commanded them not to multiply horses (xvii. 16), because he did it not out of pride and vanity; but to preserve peace, by keeping all his neighbours in awe. And he professes not to trust in them, Prov. xxi. 31.

Ver. 27.] This is repeated, to show their diligence, exactness, and care, which were remarkable: especially since they took care of his stables, as well as of his household, as it follows in the next verse.

Ver. 28. *Barley also and straw*] Barley was anciently horse-corn, as appears by many places in

the officers were, every man according to his charge.

29 ¶ And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore.

30 And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt.

Homer; which Bochartus hath observed in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 9.

For the horses and dromedaries] The Hebrew word *reches* signifies swift horses, as Abarbinel thinks (see Esther viii. 14). But others take them for mules, as we translate it in the margin. Bochartus thinks it certain, that this word imports a kind of horse, Micah i. 13 (see Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 6, 21).

Where the officers were.] Or rather, "where the beasts were." For there is no word for officers in the Hebrew.

Every man according to his charge.] Which lasted for a month, every year.

Ver. 29. God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding] Knowledge of all manner of things; and prudence in the administration of the government.

Largeness of heart.] A mind very comprehensive of all sort of knowledge; and a heart to do a vast deal of good.

Even as the sand that is on the sea shore.] As the sand there encloses a vast body of waters; so his mind contained an ocean of knowledge, as the lord Bacon somewhere observes.

Ver. 30. And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country,] Some, by these eastern sages, understand the Chaldeans: who were rather a northern people, as Jeremiah describes them (i. 14), and were not famous for learning in Solomon's time; nor began to be so till the reign of Nabonassar: nor are the Tyrians here meant, as Pineda imagines; for they were a western people: but the Oriental Arabians; who were famous for wisdom in ancient times, as appears by the book of Job. And in after ages Porphyry reports (as St. Cyril tells us, lib. x. contra Julianum), that Pythagoras travelled into this country, to improve himself in learning: where were many of those wise men called *magi*, as well as among the Persians. Thus Cœringius in his Supplementum 5, ad L. De Antiq. Academicis. But after all Abarbinel takes the word *kedem* not to signify east, but ancient time. And so the children of *kedem* are those who were born in the days of old: when men lived some hundreds of years; and so improved themselves in knowledge (especially in astronomical learning), far more than it was possible for men to do, after their lives became very short. This makes our wisdom defective, as was observed by Hippocrates in his Aphorisms, "Art is long, and life is short." But Solomon, by a special gift of God, was more knowing than they who lived above ten times as long as he did. But this is a forced sense, as appears by the next words, concerning Egypt.

And all the wisdom of Egypt.] Which country was celebrated for wisdom in Moses' time, as appears from Acts vii. 22, and in aftertimes Macrobius calls Egypt, *matrem artium*, "the mother of arts." But it was famous, especially, for the knowledge of the motions of the heavenly bodies: for he saith (lib. i. Saturnal. cap. 15), *Primos omnium cœlus scrutari et metiri ausos fuisse*; "that they were the first who attempted to search and measure the heavens:" for which the great serenity of their air gave them opportunity. As for their civil prudence, it is sufficiently indicated in the words of Isaiah, xix. 11.

31 For he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol: and his fame was in all nations round about.

32 And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five.

33 And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that

Ver. 31. For he was wiser than all men:] Of that age wherein he lived. But some extend this to all men that were before him, or should come after him. For in Midrasch Koheleth (upon Eccl. vii. 24,) they thus gloss, "Wiser than *col Adam*, all men (this is the first Adam), and than Ethan (this is Abraham), and than Heman (this is Moses)." But Maimonides discreetly confines the words to the men of that age, whom he mentions, Ethan, Heman, &c. and will by no means allow him to have been wiser than Moses (see More Nevochim, par. iii. cap. 4).

Than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda.] If these were the sons of Zerah the son of Judah, mentioned 1 Chron. ii. 6, then it is not true that Solomon is compared only with the wise men of his age; for these lived long before him. And the two former are thought to have been endued with the spirit of prophecy, being the authors, as some think, of two psalms. For Psalm lxxxviii. is said to be an instructive Psalm of Heman the Ezrahite, and the next (lxxxix.) of Ethan the Ezrahite. Of this opinion is Dr. Lightfoot. But it is more probable that other men are here meant; for we read of Heman the grandchild of Samuel, 1 Chron. vi. 33, who was also a prophet, 1 Chron. xxv. 5, and in the same time there was one Ethan, a Levite of the posterity of Merari, 1 Chron. vi. 46, who is joined with Heman and Asaph as principal singers, 1 Chron. xv. 17. Now the fore-mentioned psalms may more reasonably be ascribed to them; there being express mention of David and his kingdom in one of them: and then Solomon is compared only with the wise men of his own time, and not with those that lived before Moses. They that think otherwise of these men, were misled by the Jews, who would have some psalms to have been composed before David. This they began to suppose (as a most learned friend of mine, Dr. Alix, hath observed to me) after the times of the apostles, as Justin Martyr affirms in his Apology, p. 76.

The sons of Mahol.] This confutes those that make them the sons of Zerah: unless we suppose him to have had two names, as it must be confessed was common among the Jews. And this last name might be given him, because he was a skilful musician: for *Mahol* signifies a pipe.

His fame was in all nations] All the neighbouring countries heard the fame of his wisdom.

Ver. 32. He spake three thousand proverbs:] Being an excellent moral philosopher, as well as a natural. St. Jerome thinks these are those we read in the book of the Proverbs, which doth not contain so many: but is more probable than what Josephus affirms, that he wrote three thousand books of Proverbs: which is an extravagant conceit; for the Scripture mentions only three thousand proverbs, many of which we must confess to have been lost, as other composures of his are.

His songs were a thousand and five.] He was a great poet also: for anciently wise men were wont to give good instructions in songs; which made them to be more easily remembered. But none of these compositions were thought to be divinely inspired, but only the *Song of songs*: which was therefore joined to the sacred books. The rest were not adapted to

springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.

stir up a sense of piety; as the Psalms of David were: who is therefore called the *sweet singer of Israel*, 2 Sam. xxiii. 1.

Ver. 33. *He spake of trees from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall:*] That is, of all sorts of plants, from the greatest to the smallest. For *ezub* (which we commonly translate *hyssop*) seems to be the same with the Ethiopian word *azub*, which signifies *mint*; and is more agreeable to this place, being more directly opposed to the cedar than hyssop: which hath a stalk, and sometimes of great strength, as De Dieu and Job Ludolphus have observed. And for this reason Hottinger (in his *Sinegma Oriental.* p. 580), takes it for the wall-flower, which is less than hyssop. But Bochartus maintains hyssop to be here meant; of which the Jews reckoned four sorts: and one of them may well be thought to grow upon walls. Though there is no necessity, he thinks, to put that interpretation upon the word *bekir*, which we translate *on the wall*: which may signify, as the particle *beth* doth in many places, *near or hard by the wall*. Of Jerusalem, that is, which was encompassed with mountains: and the Arabians observe that hyssop grew in the mountains, especially about Jerusalem (see Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 50). From Solomon's great skill in the properties and virtues of all plants, Nachmanides makes bold to conclude that he wrote a book of medicine.

He spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.] This shows the vastness of his learning, which comprehended the whole history of animals, as well as of plants; whose nature and qualities he understood. Some Jews fancy that Aristotle saw these books, and published them in his own

34 And there came of all the people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.

name, in his *Historia Animalium*. It is a rule given by those who write books of civil prudence, that they who apply themselves to the management of public affairs should not follow other studies; which by their delight may draw their minds too much from business; but Solomon had so vast a genius, that he pursued all manner of knowledge, while he governed his kingdom with great prudence. For he composed a great number of songs, and discoursed of all sorts of creatures, both in the sea and in the land: which belonged to contemplative, not to practical studies. So that in his days the wish of Plato was fulfilled, that "either philosophers might be kings, or kings be philosophers."

Ver. 34.] It is a conceit of Kimchi, that kings came from all parts of the countries round about to hear his wisdom; and their people, when they returned, came to their kings to learn what Solomon had said. But this is not the literal sense of the words; nor is it probable that any but the queen of Sheba came in person to hear his wisdom. For they would have been mentioned, as she is. Therefore the plain meaning is, that people came from all the neighboring nations, being sent by their kings, who heard of his fame. Nay, their own natural desires might carry them to him. For, as Dion Prusseus observes (Orat. De Regno, p. 6), there is no spectacle so grateful as a wise and good king. All men flock to see him, and partake *της καλής διαγωγής και αγαθής* "of his good and pious mind." Especially if he be mild and gentle, there is no spectacle so sweet and lovely; insomuch, that they who see him are loath to leave him (as he speaks a little before), and they that hear him, *επιθυμουντες ιδειν*, &c. "are desirous to see him," more than children are to find their unknown father.

CHAPTER V.

1 Hiram, sending to congratulate Solomon, is certified of his purpose to build the temple, and desired to furnish him with timber thereto. 7 Hiram, blessing God for Solomon, and requesting food for his family, furnisheth him with trees. 13 The number of Solomon's workmen and labourers.

1 AND Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants unto Solomon; for he had heard that they had anointed him king in the room of his father: for Hiram was ever a lover of David.

2 And Solomon sent to Hiram, saying,

3 Thou knowest how that David my father could not build an house unto the name of the LORD his God for the wars which were about him on every side, until the LORD put them under the soles of his feet.

4 But now the LORD my God hath given me rest on every side, so that there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent.

5 And, behold, I purpose to build an house unto the name of the LORD my God, as the LORD spake unto David my father, saying, Thy son, whom I will set upon thy throne in thy kingdom, he shall build an house unto my name.

6 Now therefore command thou that they hew me cedar trees out of Lebanon; and my servants

CHAP. V.

Ver. 1. *Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants*] That is, he sent ambassadors to condole with king Solomon on the death of his father (as the manner was), and to congratulate his accession to the throne. Eusebius calls this king Suron (as he is called Hiram in the book of the Chronicles), and makes mention of those letters which were sent by these ambassadors (see Eusebius in his *Prepar. Evang.* lib. ix. cap. 33, 34).

For Hiram was ever a lover of David.] And therefore was desirous to continue in friendship with his son.

Ver. 2. *Solomon sent to Hiram.*] There were three embassies passed between them, as Abarbanel observes; for Hiram began, and Solomon returned it; and then Hiram sent to him again, ver. 8. But two only are mentioned in 2 Chron. ii. 3. 11. For Ezra there (as he observes) minded only what concerned the building of the temple; and so omitted the first embassy, which was no more than a compliment.

Ver. 3.] This was one reason, but not the chief: for God commanded him to desist, when he had it in design.

Ver. 4.] Nothing to make him fear any disturbance.

Ver. 5. *I purpose to build an house unto the name of the LORD*] For his worship and service.

shall be with thy servants : and unto thee will I give hire for thy servants according to all that thou shalt appoint : for thou knowest that *there is* not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Sidonians.

7 ¶ And it came to pass, when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly, and said, Blessed be the Lord this day, which hath given unto David a wise son over this great people.

8 And Hiram sent to Solomon, saying, I have considered the things which thou sentest to me for : and I will do all thy desire concerning timber of cedar, and concerning timber of fir.

9 My servants shall bring *them* down from Lebanon unto the sea : and I will convey them by

As the Lord spake unto David] This he spake by the prophet Nathan, 2 Sam. vii. 13.

Ver. 6. *Command—that they*] That is, his servants who were skilled in such work.

Hew me cedar trees] Which were the most firm and durable, as well as most fragrant of all other.

Out of Lebanon] Which was, if not all, yet a great part of it within the dominion of Solomon. Who therefore doth not ask trees of him which were his own ; but only that his servants should hew and prepare them for his use, which they understood better than the Israelites.

My servants shall be with thy servants] To assist them, as they should be directed by them ; and to receive the timber from them, and convey it to Solomon, when it was prepared.

Unto thee will I give hire for thy servants] Pay them what wages they pleased to demand for their work.

There is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Sidonians.] Both Tyre and Sidon were now under one and the same king, and both of them very ingenious in mechanics ; especially the Sidonians, whom Homer calls *πολιτεὺς ἄριστοι*, excellent artists in divers things. For he ascribes to them all the neater sort of work, both in his Iliads and his Odyssey, as Bochart observes, in his Phaleg. lib. iv. cap. 35. By which arts they grew very rich, in a time of long peace, which they enjoyed, as we learn from Judg. xviii. 7. where the Sidonians are made the example of those that lived very securely. But as for the Israelites, they did not mind manufactures, but applied themselves wholly to agriculture and feeding of cattle. There had been most admirable workmen among them, who knew how to cut and engrave precious stones, to cast and work up metals, &c., but this was before they came into the land of Canaan, in the time of Moses, when Bezaleel and Aholiab excelled in many different arts, which were necessary for the work of the tabernacle. But the Scripture acquaints us, that they had their skill by inspiration from God ; and it doth not appear that they had any successors ; so that in the time of Solomon there were no professed artificers who could undertake the work of the temple.

Ver. 7. *When Hiram heard the words of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly.*] Which demonstrates a more than ordinary friendship which he had for king David and the people of Israel. If he was not become a proselyte to the Jews' religion (which one would have expected should have been recorded if he had), yet he had a great veneration for the God of Israel, who was properly called the Lord ; and, it is likely, he worshipped him together with his own God.

Ver. 8.] The word which we translate *fir*, others

sea in floats unto the place that thou shalt appoint me, and will cause them to be discharged there, and thou shalt receive *them* ; and thou shalt accomplish my desire, in giving food for my household.

10 So Hiram gave Solomon cedar trees and fir trees according to all his desire.

11 And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand measures of wheat for food to his household, and twenty measures of pure oil : thus gave Solomon to Hiram year by year.

12 And the Lord gave Solomon wisdom, as he promised him : and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon ; and they two made a league together.

13 ¶ And king Solomon raised a levy out of

think signifies *pine* or *cypress*. For fir seems not so fit for this work, being a light wood, and not durable, and apt to take fire. Their conjecture is most reasonable, who think it was a kind of *cedar* ; and therefore comprehended under that name, ver. 6. where Solomon desires of him only, that his servants might hew him *cedar-trees*.

Ver. 9. *Unto the sea*] The Mediterranean Sea ; in which his city stood.

I will convey them by sea in floats] Some think they were tied together, and drawn in the water by vessels ; as the manner now frequently is : but they wanted not vessels wherein to convey them ; for Diodorus Siculus saith (lib. vi.), that Sidon had in his time, *πεντήρεις καὶ πεντήρεις πλοῖους τῶν ἰκατῶν*, "more than a hundred three-oar and five-oar vessels belonging to it" and that city was but two thousand furlongs from Tyre, as Strabo saith.

Unto the place that thou shalt appoint me.] Which was Joppa : a famous sea-port in the country of Israel (2 Chron. ii. 16).

Thou shalt receive them] When they were landed in that place.

In giving food for my household.] For, living in barren islands, they wanted corn ; though they had plenty of money ; being great merchants. And in aftertimes, it appears, they were supported by provisions from Judea (Acts xii. 20).

Ver. 10. That is, he agreed to give him all that he desired : but the trees were not yet cut down and prepared.

Ver. 11. *Twenty measures of pure oil*] In 2 Chron. ii. 10. it is said twenty thousand baths of oil. How *corin* and *bathin* differ I shall not examine ; but that place in the Chronicles plainly speaks of what was given to the workmen, who had other things besides (there mentioned) to support them in their labors : but here the prophet speaks of what was given for the use of Hiram's family, as Kimchi and Rabgal solve this seeming contradiction. Abarbanel hath another solution (see Buxtorf's Vindiciæ Hebr. Veritatis, par. ii. cap. 2. p. 424).

Year by year.] During their lives.

Ver. 12. *The Lord gave Solomon wisdom.*] His wisdom appeared more and more in all his transactions.

They two made a league together.] It was lawful in ancient times, before the law of Moses was given, to make leagues with strangers to their religion for their mutual benefit ; as appears by the story of Jacob and Laban, Isaac and Abimelech (though some doubt whether he was an idolater), and the law of Moses made no alteration, as Grotius observes, lib. ii. De Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 16. sect. 9. If Hiram therefore worshipped other gods, Solomon might notwithstanding make a league with him (insomuch that Hi-

all Israel; and the levy was thirty thousand men.

14 And he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month by courses: a month they were in Lebanon, and two months at home: and Adoniram was over the levy.

15 And Solomon had threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens, and fourscore thousand hewers in the mountains;

16 Beside the chief of Solomon's officers which

ram calls him brother, ix. 13), he being none of the seven nations of Canaan.

Ver. 13.] To cut down the trees which Hiram's servants were to hew.

Ver. 14. *A month they were in Lebanon, and two months at home:*] That they might not be tired with their labor; nor neglect their own families while they were employed abroad.

Adoniram was over the levy.] Took care to raise them, and to see them disposed according to Solomon's order (see iv. 6).

Ver. 15. *Threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens,*] viz. Porters, carters, seamen, and such-like.

Fourscore thousand hewers in the mountains;] That is, hewers of stone, for timber was hewed by Hiram's servants in Lebanon. And these hundred and fifty thousand were not Israelites, as the thirty thousand before mentioned were: but strangers of other nations, as may be gathered from ix. 21, 22. It may seem strange to some, that so many men should be employed about the building of so small a place as the temple was: but they must consider that there were many other works besides which Solomon designed, and which he finished (ix. 15); for which we read of no other preparation of materials but what was now made.

Ver. 16.] In 2 Chron. ii. 18, they are said to have been three thousand and six hundred: for three hundred were overseers even of the three thousand three

hundred over the work, three thousand and three hundred, which ruled over the people that wrought in the work.

17 And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house.

18 And Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders did hew them, and the stonesquarers: so they prepared timber and stones to build the house.

hundred, who were to oversee the rest. That is, superior officers, who surveyed the whole, as Kinchi observes. Or, as Abarinel takes it, there were three hundred supernumeraries, who were employed in the more exquisite sort of work: or when any of the other failed, were ready to supply their places.

Ver. 17.] All things being now prepared, Solomon himself seems to have been present at the laying of the foundation of the house; which was not only very strong, but also very magnificent. For he caused stones of great bigness to be laid for the foundation, and some of great price (such as marble, some think, see vii. 10), and those also hewn and polished, not rough, that they might lie more regularly and even; which shows the nobleness of his mind, in making that which was not exposed to open view suitable to that which was seen.

Ver. 18. *Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders did hew them.*] It seems Solomon's servants learned of Hiram's; or at least were directed by them to assist in the work.

And the stonesquarers:] Or the Giblites, as it is in the margin, who are mentioned in Josh. xiii. 5, being Phœnicians, inhabitants of Gabala, a promontory mentioned by Pliny (see Ps. lxxxiii. 7), who were the most excellent artists in those parts.

So they prepared timber and stones to build the house.] Made all ready not only to lay the foundation but to build the house.

CHAPTER VI.

1 *The building of Solomon's temple.* 5 *The chambers thereof.* 11 *God's promise unto it.* 15 *The ceiling and adorning of it.* 23 *The cherubims.* 31 *The doors.* 36 *The court.* 37 *The time of building it.*

1 AND it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month

CHAP. VI.

Ver. 1. *In the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt,*] These years are variously computed by the Jewish doctors; with which I shall not trouble the reader; but only observe, that they are plainly divided into two intervals, by the words of Jephthah to the Ammonites, Judg. xi. 26, where he tells them the Israelites had dwelt in the land of Canaan three hundred years. Unto which if we add the forty years wherein they wandered in the wilderness, there were three hundred and forty years past at that time, since they came out of Egypt. And so the other interval from thence unto the building of the temple was a hundred and forty years: which is not hard to make out according to Sir John Marsham's computation (see my annotations on that place of the book of Judges).

In the fourth year of Solomon's reign] But why did

Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the Lord.

2 And the house which king Solomon built for the Lord, the length thereof was threescore cu-

he not begin the work sooner, according to the command of his father David, who left him all things necessary, gold, silver, brass, &c. for the building of it; and also a draught of it: so that he might have begun when he began to reign? To which Abarinel answers that Solomon would not make use of what his father had prepared, but resolved to build the house at his own cost and charge; and put into the treasury of the Lord's house, that which David had dedicated to this work (vii. 51), and therefore he stood in need of four years' time, to gather so much gold and silver as was necessary to defray the charges of this work.

He began to build the house of the Lord.] Either to lay the foundation of it, or to build upon the foundation before mentioned.

Ver. 2. *Built for the Lord,*] For his worship and service: and wherein his Divine presence might dwell among them (ver. 13).

The length thereof was threescore cubits,] Forty of

bits, and the breadth thereof twenty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits.

3 And the porch before the temple of the house, twenty cubits was the length thereof, according to the breadth of the house; and ten cubits was the breadth thereof before the house.

4 And for the house he made windows of narrow lights.

5 ¶ And against the wall of the house he built chambers round about, against the walls of the house round about, both of the temple and of the oracle: and he made chambers round about:

which belonged to the holy place; and twenty to the most holy.

And the breadth thereof twenty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits.] The length and breadth of it was twice as big (Abarbinel and others observe), as the tabernacle of Moses: which was in length but thirty cubits, and in breadth but ten. Whereas the temple was twenty cubits wide through the whole, and sixty long: besides the porch. When it is said the height was thirty cubits, it must be understood of the holy place: for the holy of holies was only twenty (see ver. 20). And so the height of the holy place was three times more than it was in the tabernacle; for his temple was to resemble a high tower; having chambers above it, in three stories one above another, as the Jewish doctors observe (see 1 Chron. xxviii. 11).

Ver. 3.] He gives no account of the height of it; but in 2 Chron. iii. 4, Ezra seems to say, it was a "hundred and twenty cubits." Which words Kimchi imagines relate to the porch alone; but Abarbinel wonders how this could come into his head; when this height belongs to the whole house. For if it belonged only to the porch, then nothing is there said of the house itself: and besides, it immediately follows that he "overlaid it with pure gold." Which is not true of the porch (for that was not overlaid with gold) but only of the house of God. Which, from the foundation to the covering of it, was thirty cubits high: and above that covering were three stories of chambers, which were ninety cubits: and so in all the height of the house was a hundred and twenty.

Ver. 4.] Or, as it is in the margin, "broad within and narrow without." By which means the house was better secured from the weather; and yet had lights enough. See Casaubon upon Athenæus, p. 363, where he observes, the Greeks call such windows *ροζίκαι*, fenestras longas et angustas, ad emittenda tela, quam ad lucem admittendam factas; "long and narrow windows made to shoot out weapons, rather than to let in light." And he translates these Hebrew words, fenestras, prospectu clausas, viz. from the outward part.

Ver. 5. *Against the wall of the house*] Or, "joining to it," as it is in the margin: for the beams were not fastened in the walls of the house, as we read in the next verse; but a wooden wall, some think, went round the house, unto which these chambers were fastened.

He built chambers round about, against the walls of the house round about.] But not of the porch where the entrance into the house was. It appears out of Ezekiel and Josephus, as Peter Martyr observes, that there were twelve of these chambers on the south side, and as many on the north; and six on the west.

He made chambers round about:] In the Hebrew, he made ribs: by which some understand galleries. Which encompassed all the forenamed chambers, as our ribs do the entrails of our bodies. Without which

6 The nethermost chamber was five cubits broad, and the middle was six cubits broad, and the third was seven cubits broad: for without in the wall of the house he made narrowed rests round about, that the beams should not be fastened in the walls of the house.

7 And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor ax nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building

8 The door for the middle chamber was in the right side of the house: and they went up with

there could not have been a convenient passage to the several chambers: which were made to serve the priests to lay their garments in, and wherein they rested, and ate of the sacrifices, and other uses.

Ver. 6. *The nethermost chamber was five cubits broad, and the middle was six cubits broad, and the third was seven cubits broad.*] It appears by ver. 10, that they were but five cubits high, and built over one another three stories, increasing in breadth, every story, one cubit, by the contrivance which follows.

For without—he made narrowed rests round about.] In the margin we translate it, *narrowings or rebatements*. By which seems to be meant, that the wall to which they were adjoined was thicker below and above narrower: so that there was more space to make the upper chambers wider.

That the beams should not be fastened in the walls] But in that outward wall which I mentioned before, made of wood: for he would have no holes made in the wall of the temple (see L'Empereur upon Codex Middoth, p. 147, 148, and Dr. Lightfoot of the Temple, p. 40).

Ver. 7. *Was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither:*] So fitted for their several uses and places, that they might be joined together, without any other labor, by putting them one by one, or upon another.

So that there was neither hammer, &c. heard in the house.] The sense is plain, that the stones were laid without any noise, there being nothing to be done but to join them together. But the Jews are so foolish as to fancy, that they were not hewn nor planed by any instrument before they came thither; but a worm called *samir*, which God created on purpose, did the business: and that the stones of their own accord came to the temple; and there the angels laid them in their place and order (see L'Empereur upon Codex Middoth, p. 183). Which fable arose from somebody that did not understand the word *samir*, which signifies a very hard stone called *smiris* (as Bochartus hath observed), with which stones might be cut and polished as diamonds are (see Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. vi. cap. 11). An emblem this was, as all interpreters note, of that peace and quiet which should be in the Christian church, where all things should be done without contention. Utinam Deus hoc tandem aliquando elargiatur, ut omnes in domo suo idem dicamus et sentiamus, as P. Martyr prays upon this place.

Ver. 8. *The door for the middle chamber*] By which they were to go into the middle row of chambers.

Was in the right side of the house:] On the south side, which in the Hebrew is called the *right side*, because, when men look towards the east, the south is on their right hand. Some think there was the like door in the north; but it is more likely, that one door served to carry them round to all the chambers.

winding stairs into the middle *chamber*, and out of the middle into the third.

9 So he built the house, and finished it; and covered the house with beams and boards of cedar.

10 And *then* he built chambers against all the house, five cubits high: and they rested on the house with timber of cedar.

11 ¶ And the word of the Lord came to Solomon, saying,

12 *Concerning* this house which thou art in building, if thou wilt walk in my statutes, and execute my judgments, and keep all my commandments to walk in them; then will I perform my word with thee, which I spake unto David thy father:

13 And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake my people Israel.

14 So Solomon built the house, and finished it.

They went up with winding stairs into the middle chamber] That they might take up the less room.

Out of the middle into the third.] There was the like pair of stairs into the third story.

Ver. 9. *So he built the house.*] That is, the walls of the house. He also covered the top of it.

With beams and boards of cedar.] In the margin, the "vaultings and the ceilings" of cedar. That is, the roof was an arch within, which made it look more noble, though without it was flat.

Ver. 10. *Then he built chambers*] The word *then* is not in the Hebrew; and being omitted the sense is plain, that he gives an account of the height of these chambers, as before (ver. 6), of the breadth. But it is very briefly; and we are to understand that those below, and those in the middle, and those above, were every one of an equal height; viz. five cubits. So they were fifteen cubits in all: which was five less than the height of the house, for that was twenty cubits. Otherwise there would have been no room for the windows; which, I suppose, were above all these chambers, in the top of the house.

Ver. 11. *The word of the Lord came to Solomon,*] By the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite, as the Jews say in Seder Olam Rabba, cap. 20. For it is not said that God appeared to him now as he did iii. 5. and ix. 2, 3. In which latter place it is said God appeared to him, the *second time*; which is a proof (as Abarbinel notes) that now God did not appear to him, but spake to him by a prophet.

Ver. 12] See 2 Sam. vii. 13. Here Abarbinel makes a query, why this prophecy is inserted in the middle of the work, which might seem to have been more proper in the beginning, or after it was ended: but Solomon laying the foundation, and raising the building very firm and strong, which might last to many generations, God would not have him presume upon its duration, unless he and the people of Israel were obedient to him; and therefore told him he had better not proceed, nor be at any further charge, unless he intended to be a good man, and observe all his laws. And the continuance of this house, and of God's presence among them, depending on this, plainly signified, that let him build it ever so strong it should be demolished, if he proved disobedient.

Ver. 13. *I will dwell among the children of Israel,*] As he had done in the tabernacle (Exod. xxv. 8).

Will not forsake my people] But protect them in the good land he had given them.

Ver. 14.] God spake the foregoing words, while he was building it, that he might desist, if he did not intend to be obedient to him. But these words im-

15 And he built the walls of the house within with boards of cedar, both the floor of the house, and the walls of the ceiling: *and* he covered *them* on the inside with wood, and covered the floor of the house with planks of fir.

16 And he built twenty cubits on the sides of the house, both the floor and the walls with boards of cedar: he even built *them* for it within, *even* for the oracle, *even* for the most holy place.

17 And the house, that is, the temple before it, was forty cubits long.

18 And the cedar of the house within was carved with knops and open flowers: all was cedar; there was no stone seen.

19 And the oracle he prepared in the house within, to set there the ark of the covenant of the Lord.

20 And the oracle in the forepart was twenty

port, that notwithstanding this admonition, he went on to build the house, as magnificent and durable as he intended; resolving to keep God's commandments.

Ver. 15. *He built the walls of the house within with boards of cedar.*] He wainscotted, as we now speak, the whole house with cedar.

Both the floor of the house, and the walls of the ceiling:] Or, as we translate it in the margin, From the floor of the house unto the walls of the ceiling. That is, from the bottom to the top.

He covered them on the inside with wood.] The word *them* is not in the Hebrew. Which, if we retain, it relates to the walls of the ceiling: that is, to the top of the house, which in the inside was covered with wood (ver. 9).

Covered the floor of the house with planks of fir.] Or, with another sort of cedar, which was a great deal firmer, and more lasting than fir (see ch. v. 8).

Ver. 16. *Sides of the house*] *The house* here meant is the most holy place; for he had spoken of the other part of the house, called the sanctuary, in the foregoing words.

Both the floor and the walls] Or, as the foregoing verse, from the floor to the walls of the ceiling.

Even for the oracle, even for the most holy place.] Here he explains what he meant by the *house* in the beginning of the verse. And this was most properly the *house* of all the parts of the temple; because here the Divine Glory inhabited, and from hence God gave answer, when he was consulted. It is called *debir*: as the outward house is called *hechal*.]

Ver. 17. *The house*] That is, the holy place, as the next words explain it.

The temple before it,] The part of the house which was before the most holy place. In the Hebrew the words are *before my face*: that is, before the place where the Divine Glory appeared.

Was forty cubits long.] As long again as the most holy place (see ver. 2. 16).

Ver. 18. *And the cedar of the house within was carved with knops*] Of an oblong figure, like an egg, as Forsterus thinks, comparing this place with 2 Kings iv. where there is the like word, and there translated *gourds*.

Open flowers:] Not buds, but flowers, spread and full-blown.

All was cedar;] This relates, I suppose, to the knops and flowers, which were all of cedar: and so doth not contradict 2 Chron. iii. 5.

Ver. 19.] In the innermost part of the house he fitted the most holy place to receive the ark of God.

cubits in length, and twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in the height thereof: and he overlaid it with pure gold; and so covered the altar which was of cedar.

21 So Solomon overlaid the house within with pure gold: and he made a partition by the chains of gold before the oracle; and he overlaid it with gold.

22 And the whole house he overlaid with gold, until he had finished all the house: also the whole altar that was by the oracle he overlaid with gold.

23 ¶ And within the oracle he made two cherubims of olive tree, each ten cubits high.

It seems to be called the innermost part, because it was furthest from the entrance into the building. The Jewish doctors have a conceit, that this signifies a room which he made under ground (under the floor of the oracle), where the ark might be hid in case the house should be laid desolate. And he made this cave in very deep and winding burrows, putting a stone upon the mouth of it, upon which the ark stood. Here Josiah they fancy hid the ark, and the pot of manna, and the rod of Aaron, and the holy oil, where they were found after their return from Babylon. For which story there is no foundation; and it contradicts what they all acknowledge, that there was no ark in the second temple. It is far more reasonable to think, that by *debir*, which we translate *oracle*, is here meant the partition which separated the holy place from the most holy: which Solomon is here said to have prepared or established, "in the midst of the house," as the words are in the Hebrew. This Gousset hath made probable: though it appears from ver. 23 (where the cherubims are said to be *within the oracle*) that this word signifies not only the partition which made the separation, but the place itself, which was separated thereby from the sanctuary, to be God's dwelling-place.

Ver. 20. *The oracle in the forepart*] That is, in the innermost part before mentioned; which is also called the fore-part, because it was before him that entered into the house.

Was twenty cubits in length, &c.] It was a perfect square.

He overlaid it with pure gold;] Not merely gilt it, but covered it with plates of gold; for the gold amounted to six hundred talents, as Ezra saith, 2 Chron. iii. 8.

So covered the altar] Of incense, which was before it in the holy place.

Which was of cedar.] Or, "he covered the altar with cedar," that the gold might the better lie upon it.

Ver. 21. *Overlaid the house within with pure gold:*] That is, the most holy place (called the oracle in the foregoing verse), which he made as sumptuous as he could for the Divine residence.

He made a partition by the chains of gold] The most holy place was separated from the sanctuary by a partition: before which there was a veil also, which hung upon golden chains. Thus this passage is to be understood, for the partition itself did not depend upon chains.

Overlaid it with gold.] That is, overlaid the partition.

Ver. 22. *The whole house he overlaid with gold.*] This is meant of the sanctuary, which was overlaid with gold, as well as the oracle.

Until he had finished all the house:] Some think the very chambers, which were without the house, were likewise made thus splendid. But I see no ground to affirm it.

24 And five cubits was the one wing of the cherub, and five cubits the other wing of the cherub: from the uttermost part of the one wing unto the uttermost part of the other were ten cubits.

25 And the other cherub was ten cubits: both the cherubims were of one measure and one size.

26 The height of the one cherub was ten cubits, and so was it of the other cherub.

27 And he set the cherubims within the inner house: and they stretched forth the wings of the cherubims, so that the wing of the one touched the one wall and the wing of the other cherub

Also the whole altar—he overlaid with gold.] That is, the altar of incense; thence called the *golden altar*; which was in the upper end of the sanctuary, near the entrance in the oracle. This he covered with cedar (ver. 20), and now overlaid with gold.

Ver. 23.] These were different from those made by Moses, which were of solid gold: and arose out of each end of the mercy-seat; being of one piece with it, and looking one upon the other (Exod. xxv. 18, 19). But these were made of olive wood; or, as it is in the Hebrew, of *tree of oil*. For many such sorts of wood there were beside olive; as pine, cedar, &c. And these two are plainly distinguished; olive and oily-wood, in Neh. viii. 15. Here it may be proper to note, that the word *debir* (which we constantly translate *oracle*) comes from *dabar*, which signifies to *speak*; because God, who dwelt between the cherubims, declared his mind from hence when he was consulted by the high-priest with *urim* and *thummim*; and it still retained this name (though we never read of any answer by *urim* and *thummim* while this temple stood), because it had been the place from whence God had been wont to speak to the high-priest. I have observed elsewhere, that there might be the use of *urim* and *thummim* in this temple, though it be not recorded: but it is highly probable that upon their rejecting the government of God, and turning the theocracy into a human government by kings, God ceased to direct and govern them by that Divine oracle. During the reign of David, indeed, there are some footsteps of it, their new government by kings being not yet well established: so that we may think there was a mixture of the theocracy still with it, as may be gathered from 2 Sam. ii. 1. iii. 19, 23, xxi. 1. But after that, there is not the least glimpse of it: but they inquired of God by the prophets, 1 Kings xxii. 3. 2 Kings iii. 11. 29, xxii. 14, where the high-priest himself, being sent by king Josiah to inquire of God, went to Huldah the prophetess. Which is a demonstration, that the answer by *urim* and *thummim* ceased, when God's government was cast off by them; to which that oracle properly appertained.

Ver. 24.] Whereas those of Moses were only so long as to cover the mercy-seat; which was but two cubits and a half in length (Exod. xxv. 17).

Ver. 25.] So that they filled the whole breadth of the house, which was twenty cubits.

Ver. 26.] They stood upon their feet, upon the floor of the house (2 Chron. iii. 13), each being ten cubits high, as was said at the first (ver. 23), that is, half as high as the house.

Ver. 27. *He set the cherubims within the inner house;*] With their faces towards the sanctuary: so that they looked upon him that entered into the oracle.

They stretched forth the wings of the cherubims,] Or rather (as in the margin) "the cherubims stretched forth their wings."

touched the other wall; and their wings touched one another in the midst of the house.

28 And he overlaid the cherubims with gold.

29 And he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers, within and without.

30 And the floor of the house he overlaid with gold, within and without.

31 ¶ And for the entering of the oracle he made doors of olive tree: the lintel and side posts were a fifth part of the wall.

32 The two doors also were of olive tree; and he carved upon them carvings of cherubims and

palm trees and open flowers, and overlaid them with gold, and spread gold upon the cherubims, and upon the palm trees.

33 So also made he for the door of the temple posts of olive tree, a fourth part of the wall.

34 And the two doors were of fir tree: the two leaves of the one door were folding, and the two leaves of the other door were folding.

35 And he carved thereon cherubims and palm trees and open flowers: and covered them with gold fitted upon the carved work.

36 ¶ And he built the inner court with three rows of hewed stone, and a row of cedar beams.

The wing of the one touched the one wall and the wing of the other—touched the other] That is, the south and the north walls of the house. Whereas the wings of those cherubims that Moses made stretched from east to west: for they looked one upon the other over the mercy-seat.

Their wings touched one another in the midst of the house.] Where they must needs meet, being five cubits long on each side (ver. 24), and the house twenty cubits wide.

Ver. 28. *He overlaid the cherubims with gold.*] So that there were four cherubims in the most holy place of Solomon's temple. Two lesser made by Moses of massy gold; and two larger made by Solomon, overlaid with gold. These made by Moses were part of the mercy-seat, and inseparable from it; these of Solomon seem to have spread their wings over it, being added only for the greater ornament, and glory of God's house. So Abarbinel observes, that Solomon did not make a new ark, which was the only thing made by Moses, which Solomon did not imitate and make more glorious. But this he durst not presume to open, and to take out the book of the law, and put it into an ark of his own making. It being unlawful for him to touch it, and therefore he let it remain, with its cover, the mercy-seat, and the cherubims belonging to it; and only placed these new cherubims over it, as a covering to it, for the greater beauty of the house.

Ver. 29.] Both in the most holy place, and in the sanctuary.

Ver. 30.] This hath the same meaning with the foregoing words: that the floor of the whole house, both the inward and outward part, was overlaid with gold, which made it wonderfully splendid and magnificent.

Ver. 31. *Doors of olive tree.*] Or some tree that was oily (see Dr. Lightfoot of the Temple, p. 87).

The lintel and side posts were a fifth part of the wall.] These words are very obscure; for the words "of the wall" are not in the Hebrew, but only a fifth. Which may be understood to signify, that they held the proportion of a fifth part of the doors. But there are those who think the meaning is, that this gate was the fifth in number belonging to the house. The first they make account was that which led into the court of the people; the second, into the court of the priests; the third, was the door of the porch; the fourth, of the holy place; and this fifth of the oracle. And accordingly they interpret these words, ver. 33, the fourth.

Ver. 32. *The two doors.*] Or, as it is in the margin, "the leaves of the doors:" explaining what sort of doors they were, viz. folding doors; as it follows, ver. 34.

And spread gold upon the cherubims, and—palm trees.] The meaning seems to be that he laid plates

of gold upon the doors of the house, and gilt the cherubims, trees, and flowers.

Ver. 33. *Door of the temple.*] That is, of the holy place.

A fourth part of the wall.] See ver. 31.

Ver. 34. *Fir tree.*] Or, of a kind of cedar; as was before observed.

The two leaves of the one door were folding.] Whereby they took up less room, when they were opened.

Ver. 35.] This was said before, ver. 32, therefore repeated, I suppose, to signify that both sides of the doors were thus carved and covered with gold. I have not meddled with the mystical signification of any of these things: in which men's fancies differ very much; though in one thing they all agree: that by the *cherubims*, which were so plentiful in every part of the house, the hosts of angels are represented, there attending upon the Divine Majesty, as his ministers to execute his pleasure.

Ver. 36. *He built the innercourt.*] Which was that wherein the priests officiated.

With three rows of hewed stone, and a row of cedar beams.] That the people who were in the outward court might see what the priests did: the wall which separated the priests from the court of the people being but three cubits high (as most understand these words); for the cedar was not laid upon the top of the wall, but was the facing of it within side. The priests likewise from hence might speak and deliver any message from God to the people.

I conclude this account of Solomon's works with an observation of Abarbinel: That this Divine writer doth not mention several things belonging to the house of God, as the *altar of burnt-offering*, the *candlestick*, the *table*, the *laver* (though they were ten times as many as Moses made (see 2 Chron. iii.) because his intention was only to explain the great things which he did, and such as wrought in men admiration: not things in which there was no majesty, nor any great cost bestowed upon them. Therefore he takes notice of the great and precious stones (that is, stones of great price) wherewith he laid the foundation of the house (ver. 17) and the rest of the things mentioned in this chapter; which were very chargeable, and which showed the greatness of his mind, his wisdom, prophecy (as his words are), and riches: but other things, as the court of the temple, &c. he passes over compendiously. But this observation is not altogether true; for though this Divine writer does not take notice of every thing made by Solomon in this chapter; yet in the next, I think, he omits nothing, save only the brazen altar of burnt-offering, which is not mentioned in this book among Solomon's works; but taken particular notice of in 2 Chron. iv. 1, where its large dimensions are described. All other things, as the *lavens*, the *candlestick*, the *table*, &c. are here mentioned in the following chapter.

37 ¶ In the fourth year was the foundation of the house of the Lord laid, in the month Zif:

38 And in the eleventh year, in the month

Ver. 37.] He repeats this (which was said ver. 1) to subjoin in the next words, how long the house was in building.

Ver. 38. *Bul, which is the eighth month,*] As Zif was the second.

Was the house finished—according to all the fashion of it.] Every thing was completely finished, according to his design; without any need of addition or alteration.

So was he seven years in building it.] And a half: but the lesser number is omitted, as is usual in these books, and in other authors: particularly half a year is omitted in the reign of David, who is only

Bul, which is the eighth month, was the house finished throughout all the parts thereof, and according to all the fashion of it. So was he seven years in building it.

said to have reigned forty years (see the second chapter of this book, ver. 11). And considering the curiosity of the work, and the scarcity of men of skill, it is no wonder that it was so long before it was perfected: but rather the alacrity and diligence of Solomon (as Abarbanel notes) is to be admired; who finished this work with all the speed he could make; when he was almost as many more years in building his own house, which was not so costly and sumptuous. An account of which is given us, in the beginning of the next chapter: where the author tells us he built two houses, and sets down the dimensions of one of them.

CHAPTER VII.

1 *The building of Solomon's house.* 2 *Of the house of Lebanon.* 6 *Of the porch of pillars.* 7 *Of the porch of judgment.* 8 *Of the house for Pharaoh's daughter.* 13 *Hiram's work of the two pillars.* 23 *Of the molten sea.* 27 *Of the ten bases.* 38 *Of the ten lavers.* 40 *and all the vessels.*

1 But Solomon was building his own house thirteen years, and he finished all his house.

2 ¶ He built also the house of the forest of Lebanon; the length thereof was an hundred cubits, and the breadth thereof fifty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits, upon four rows of cedar pillars, with cedar beams upon the pillars.

3 And it was covered with cedar above upon the beams, that lay on forty five pillars, fifteen in a row.

4 And there were windows in three rows, and light was against light in three ranks.

5 And all the doors and posts were square, with the windows: and light was against light in three ranks.

6 ¶ And he made a porch of pillars; the length thereof fifty cubits, and the breadth thereof thirty cubits: and the porch was before them: and the other pillars and the thick beam were before them.

7 ¶ Then he made a porch for the throne

With cedar beams upon the pillars.] Upon which was laid the floor of the next story.

Ver. 3.] So there were but three rows of pillars in the second story, which were sufficient for the support of the roof. And we may guess from hence that there were threescore pillars below.

Ver. 4. *Light was against light*] Directly opposite one against the other, which we call thorough lights.

In three ranks.] Or, on three sides of the house, the south, the north, and the east; that it might have the freer air. On the west side was the porch, and so no windows were there. Others interpret it, the windows were exactly one under another in three rows.

Ver. 5. *All the doors and posts were square, with the windows.*] The figures of the doors and of the windows were one and the same; viz. square.

Light was against light] This is meant of the smaller windows that were over the doors; which, it is likely, were also square.

Ver. 6. *He made a porch of pillars.*] This was for his guard, and for people to walk in who came about business (as well as for state and ornament), and therefore was covered to keep them dry in rainy weather.

The porch was before them.] That is, before the pillars of the great house, before spoken of.

The other pillars and the thick beam were before them.] That is, they were directly opposite one to the other. Or, if we follow the marginal translation "according to them," the sense is, that it had its pillars and beams just like the great house; and, it is likely, rooms built upon those beams for his servants.

Ver. 7. *The porch of judgment.*] So it was called,

CHAPTER VII.

Ver. 1.] He did not begin to build his own house till he had finished the house of God; that nothing might hinder that holy work. This appears from ix. 10. where we read he was twenty years in building both.

Ver. 2. *He built also the house of the forest of Lebanon;*] The forenamed house was in Jerusalem: near to which he built another, in a cool, shady mountain; which made it resemble mount Lebanon. And here he dwelt in summer, as in the other in winter. But it is not likely it was in mount Lebanon; for that was in the very extremity of his kingdom, where he would not have set his throne (as he seems to have done in this house, ver. 7); for that was too far distant from the usual place of his residence. And for the same reason he would not have there placed the golden shields that he made; as we find he did, x. 17. It was therefore near to Jerusalem (as appears from xiv. 25, 26) and called by the name of the Forest of Lebanon: just as many pleasant and delightful places in that country were called Carmel. Because it was in a lofty place like Lebanon; and the trees which grew there made it very shady and cool.

The length thereof was an hundred cubits.] Which was not longer than the house of God, if we take in all the courts belonging to it.

The height thereof thirty cubits.] The height of the first story was so many cubits: upon which, in all likelihood, there was another of the like height.

Upon four rows of cedar pillars.] Which supported the building; and made four walks under it.

where he might judge, *even* the porch of judgment: and *it was* covered with cedar from one side of the floor to the other.

8 ¶ And his house where he dwelt *had* another court within the porch, *which* was of the like work. Solomon made also an house for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had taken *to wife*, like unto this porch.

9 All these *were* of costly stones, according to the measures of hewed stones, sawed with saws, within and without, even from the foundation unto the coping, and *so* on the outside toward the great court.

10 And the foundation *was* of costly stones, even great stones, stones of ten cubits, and stones of eight cubits.

11 And above *were* costly stones, after the measures of hewed stones, and cedars.

12 And the great court round about *was* with

because here he sat to hear and determine the causes that people brought before him. With whom he would not have his house cumbered; but made this porch without the house, where he dispatched such business.

From one side—to the other.] In the Hebrew, "from floor to floor:" that is, from the ground to the roof of the porch.

Ver. 8. *His house where he dwelt had another court within the porch.*] There was a court between the porch and the house, which may be called the inner court; and then another beyond the porch, which may be called the outward. So that it stood between two courts, which were both alike.

Made also an house for Pharaoh's daughter.] Near, I suppose, to his own house; she being a person of the highest quality, and his first wife. See iii. 1.

Like unto this porch.] Not for figure, or bigness; but for the materials of which it was built.

Ver. 9. *All these were of costly stones—within and without.*] All the forementioned buildings were polished on both sides: so that they appeared both within and without; that is, both on the inside which was towards the palace of Solomon, and on the outside which was towards the great court.

From the foundation unto the coping.] From the bottom of the building to the top of it.

So on the outside towards the great court.] Not only on the front of the house, but on the back side of it towards the great court.

Ver. 10.] By costly stones (mentioned here and in the foregoing and following verses) are not to be understood precious stones; but stones that being bigger and firmer, and better polished than others, were of greater price: as Bochartus explains it, both here and v. 17.

Ver. 11.] The roof was finished after the same manner; with stones and cedar-beams.

Ver. 12. *Great court*] viz. Of Solomon's palace.

Was with three rows of hewed stones, and a row of cedar beams.] Just like the inner court of the house of the Lord (vi. 36), and so the following words are to be understood.

Both for the inner court] Or rather, "as for the inner court of the Lord's house; for so the particle *vau* sometimes signifies.

Porch of the house.] Of Solomon's own house.

Ver. 13. *Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre.*] For though he was an Israelite by birth, yet he dwelt at Tyre: and it is likely had the privileges of that city, and so was one of king Hiram's subjects.

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three rows of hewed stones, and a row of cedar beams, both for the inner court of the house of the Lord, and for the porch of the house.

13 ¶ And king Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre.

14 He *was* a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali, and his father *was* a man of Tyre, a worker in brass: and he was filled with wisdom, and understanding, and cunning to work all works in brass. And he came to king Solomon, and wrought all his work.

15 For he cast two pillars of brass, of eighteen cubits high apiece: and a line of twelve cubits did compass either of them about.

16 And he made two chapters of molten brass, to set upon the tops of the pillars: the height of the one chapter *was* five cubits, and the height of the other chapter *was* five cubits:

17 And nets of checker work, and wreaths of

And therefore in 2 Chron. ii. 13. that king saith he sent him to Solomon: that is, granted his request, that this man might come and serve him. And accordingly Solomon sent for him, and fetched him to Jerusalem.

Ver. 14. *He was a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali.*] She herself was of the tribe of Dan (2 Chron. ii. 14), but her first husband was of the tribe of Naphtali, by whom she had this son.

His father was a man of Tyre.] When she was a widow she married a man of Tyre; who is called Hiram's father, because he bred him up, and was the husband of his mother.

A worker in brass.] And in stone, and purple, and a great many other things, as we read in the place above mentioned. But brass is only mentioned here; because he is going to speak only of such works.

And cunning to work all works in brass.] He had an excellent genius to this work; and besides the instructions of his father, it is not improbable that God endued him with great skill in contriving, and also working all manner of work of this sort.

He came to king Solomon, and wrought all his work.] He presently found him to be an excellent artist; and so employed him in all his business.

Ver. 15. *For he cast two pillars of brass, of eighteen cubits high apiece.*] In 2 Chron. iii. 15. it is said, he made two pillars of thirty-five cubits high: which doth not contradict these words, it being evident that there he speaks of both the pillars (as Abarbanel observes), which were thirty-five cubits. But here he speaks of them singly, which were each but eighteen cubits. Both of them, indeed, make thirty-six cubits; but one cubit must be allowed for the bases of each, which is not considered in the book of Chronicles. This seems a better solution of this small difficulty than that of L'Empereur, in his preface to Codex Middoth, where he saith, one of these writers speaks of the common cubit, and the other of the sacred, which was double to the common. Each pillar, therefore, he thinks was eighteen sacred cubits, but thirty-five common; to which one common cubit must be added for the basis. But this distinction of common and sacred cubits is not allowed by everybody.

And a line of twelve cubits did compass either of them about.] So they were four cubits in thickness (see Dr. Lightfoot, of the Temple, p. 61—63, and L'Empereur's preface to Benjamin Tudelensis). Eupolemus, a heathen writer, takes notice of these pillars, and says they were as high as the temple (Eusebius, lib. ix. Prepar. Evang. cap. 34).

Ver. 16.] This account of them Ezra also gives,

chain work, for the chapters which were upon the top of the pillars; seven for the one chapter, and seven for the other chapter.

18 And he made the pillars, and two rows round about upon the one network, to cover the chapters that were upon the top, with pomegranates: and so did he for the other chapter.

19 And the chapters that were upon the top of the pillars were of lily work in the porch, four cubits.

20 And the chapters upon the two pillars had pomegranates also above, over against the belly which was by the network: and the pomegranates were two hundred in rows round about upon the other chapter.

21 And he set up the pillars in the porch of

the temple: and he set up the right pillar, and called the name thereof Jachin: and he set up the left pillar, and called the name thereof Boaz.

22 And upon the top of the pillars was lily work: so was the work of the pillars finished.

23 ¶ And he made a molten sea, ten cubits from the one brim to the other: it was round all about, and his height was five cubits: and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about.

24 And under the brim of it round about there were knops compassing it, ten in a cubit, compassing the sea round about: the knops were cast in two rows, when it was cast.

25 It stood upon twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, and three looking toward the west, and three looking toward the south, and

2 Chron. iii. 15. Yet in 2 Kings xxv. 17. they are said to be but three cubits. But it is to be observed, that it immediately follows in that place, there was a wreathen work, and pomegranates upon the chapters; which in all made five cubits; and are all here comprehended in the word chapter.

Ver. 17.] This curious work encompassed the chapter, and contained, as it were, the pomegranates afterwards mentioned; which might be seen through these nets. Some think that each chapter was adorned with leaves, and flowers, and fruit, in four orders; which were bound about with three chains. But it is very hard to explain this work, which is so very briefly described (see Dr. Lightfoot, in the foregoing place).

Ver. 18. *He made the pillars.*] That is, he finished them in this manner (see the same author, p. 63).

Two rows round about, &c.] There were two rows of pomegranates; which took up one of the five cubits, whereof the chapter consisted.

Ver. 19. *Were of lily work*] In imitation of lilies. *In the porch,*] Such as were in the porch of the temple.

Four cubits.] The other four cubits were of lily-work, except the middle.

Ver. 20. *The chapters upon the two pillars had pomegranates also above, over against the belly which was by the network:*] This is very obscure, because shortly delivered. But the meaning seems to be, that the lily-work being above and below, at the top and the bottom of the chapters, the middle cubit (called the belly) was all covered with pomegranates.

And the pomegranates were two hundred—round about upon the other chapter.] In the book of Jeremiah, li. 23, it is said that there were ninety-six on a side; but all of them, upon the net-work, were a hundred in all; which Abarbinel thus explains: The pomegranates on the net-work were towards the four quarters of the world, being twenty-four towards each quarter; which in all made ninety-six. And in each angle there being one great pomegranate, they made up the number a hundred.

Ver. 21.] It is generally thought that these pillars were made and erected only for ornament; because they supported no building. But Abarbinel's conjecture is not improbable, that Solomon had respect to the pillar of the cloud, and the pillar of fire, that went before them and conducted them in the wilderness, and was the token of the Divine providence over them. These he set at the porch or entrance of the temple (Jachin representing the pillar of the cloud, and Boaz the pillar of fire), praying and hoping that the Divine Light, and the cloud of his glory would vouchsafe to enter in there; and by them God and

his providence would dwell among them in this house.

Ver. 22.] This seems to have been said before (ver. 19), but the next words "So was the work of the pillars finished," show that this was a new addition, to crown all, after the pillars were erected, as Abarbinel observes.

Ver. 23. *He made a molten sea,*] The Hebrews call any great collection of waters by the name of a sea. So the lake of Gennesaret, and others, are called in the gospel; and here it signifies a great vessel, containing abundance of water. Which served for the washing of the sacrifices, and of the priests and Levites; who washed their hands and their feet; not in it, but with water drawn out of it by pipes or conduits.

It was round all about,] Of a circular figure.

His height was five cubits:] Besides the height of the oxen whereon it stood.

A line of thirty cubits did compass it round about.] For the diameter being ten cubits, this must be the compass of it. This sea was filled with water by the Gibeonites; who were afterwards called Nethinims.

Ver. 24. *Under the brim—round about there were knops compassing it,*] They were in the shape of an egg; on the top of every one of which was an ox head; from whose mouth water gushed out: so Abarbinel gathers from 2 Chron. ii. 3, where they are called oxen, from the figure of their head.

Ten in a cubit, compassing the sea round about:] So there were three hundred of these knops in all; the sea being thirty cubits round.

The knops were cast in two rows,] They were not carved afterward, but cast at first, when the sea was molten. And there being two rows of them, Abarbinel thence concludes there were six hundred in all, one under another. From whence water might flow out of the sea, to wash a great number at a time.

Ver. 25. *It stood upon twelve oxen.*] Oxen were used not only for drawing the plough, but for carrying burdens upon their backs; as they are still employed among the Indians. Whence Solomon placed the figure of these creatures under his molten sea, as the supporters of it. There was so little danger of their being worshipped, that the meanness of the use to which they served, had made some believe that Solomon made them in contempt of the golden calf, which the Israelites worshipped in the wilderness; and placed them under the sea, that the people might see there was nothing worthy of adoration in these figures. Josephus, indeed, thinks Solomon offended in making these images; but this is confuted by the glory of the Lord filling the temple after it was finished. Which showed that he approved of all this

three looking toward the east: and the sea *was set* above upon them, and all their hinder parts *were* inward.

26 And it *was* an hand breadth thick, and the brim thereof *was* wrought like the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies: it contained two thousand baths.

27 ¶ And he made ten bases of brass; four cubits *was* the length of one base, and four cubits the breadth thereof, and three cubits the height of it.

28 And the work of the bases *was* on this manner: they had borders, and the borders *were* between the ledges:

29 And on the borders that *were* between the ledges *were* lions, oxen, and cherubims: and upon the ledges *there was* a base above: and beneath the lions and oxen *were* certain additions made of thin work.

work; which it is likely *was* done by his instruction: but some great men think Josephus is in the right.

Three looking toward the north, &c.] This seems to import that this sea *was* square (the oxen looking towards the four quarters of the world), whereas it is said before (ver. 25), that it *was* round all about. And so it *was* (as the Jewish interpreters, particularly Abarbanel and Ralbag, expound this) in the brim of it, it *was* perfectly round, and so it continued in the two upper cubits; but below the brim (in the three lower cubits) it *was* square. And, as Kimchi thinks, in the two upper cubits there *were* no knobs; but in the three lower, just above the oxen that supported the sea.

All their hinder parts were inward.] Under the sea, that they might not be seen.

Ver. 26. *With flowers of lilies:*] In the shape of lilies: that is, not plain and straight, but bending downwards, after the manner of those flowers (see Dr. Lightfoot, of the Temple, p. 230, &c.).

Two thousand baths.] A bath, being of the same bigness with an ephah (Ezek. xlv. 11), is thought to contain eight gallons: so that this sea contained five hundred barrels; that is, it had thus much water constantly in it. But if it had been filled up to the brim, it would have held three thousand baths, as we read 2 Chron. iv. 5, which quantity they *were* not wont to put into it, lest with the wind it should run over. Or, as the most learned of the Jews reconcile these two places, these words in the book of the Kings are to be understood of moist things; but those in the Chronicles of dry; which being heaped up, it would contain a third part more than of things liquid. With which compare those words of our Saviour (Luke vi. 38), "Good measure heaped up, shaken together, and running over."

Ver. 27. *He made ten bases of brass;*] Tables or stands upon which the lavers (mentioned below, ver. 38) *were* to rest (see Dr. Lightfoot, of the Temple, p. 228, &c.).

Four cubits the breadth] They *were* made so broad that the lavers might stand more firmly, being each four cubits; but not so high, that the priests might more easily reach to wash the sacrifices in them (2 Chron. iv. 6).

Ver. 28. *They had borders,*] To keep up the lavers from falling.

Between the ledges:] It is not easy to apprehend what he means by *ledges*; because, as P. Martyr observes, we have no such work in these days.

Ver. 29. *Between the ledges were lions, oxen, and*

30 And every base had four brasen wheels, and plates of brass: and the four corners thereof had undersetters: under the laver *were* undersetters molten, at the side of every addition.

31 And the mouth of it within the chapter and above *was* a cubit: but the mouth thereof *was* round after the work of the base, a cubit and an half: and also upon the mouth of it *were* gravings with their borders, foursquare, not round.

32 And under the borders *were* four wheels; and the axletrees of the wheels *were* joined to the base: and the height of a wheel *was* a cubit and half a cubit.

33 And the work of the wheels *was* like the work of a chariot wheel: their axletrees, and their naves, and their felloes, and their spokes, *were* all molten.

34 And *there were* four undersetters to the

cherubims:] Oxen are called *cherubims* in Ezek. x. 14. Therefore the meaning here is, that, besides lions and oxen, there *were* other cherubims (the figures of eagles perhaps) which adorned these borders.

Upon the ledges there was a base above:] This is so darkly expressed, that I do not apprehend the meaning; unless it be this, that the upper ledge *was* over the heads of these animals; and the under ledge *was* that upon which their feet rested, as the next words signify.

Beneath the lions and oxen were certain additions—of thin work.] Under these figures there *was* some other work added (which *was* not east together with them) and drawn very thin.

Ver. 30. *Every base had four brasen wheels,*] They ran upon wheels like a coach, or chariot; so might easily be removed from place to place, as the convenience of the priests required.

Plates of brass:] Between the wheels and the bases (see Dr. Lightfoot in the same book, p. 226).

Four corners] For they *were* square (ver. 27).

Had undersetters:] In the Hebrew, *shoulders*. Which *were* fitly so called, because, as burdens are borne upon men's shoulders, so *were* the lavers upon these; which supported them, when set upon the bases, and kept them from falling when they run upon the wheels.

Under the laver were undersetters molten,] These *were* molten with the bases, when they *were* cast.

Ver. 31. *The mouth of it*] The bases seem to have been hollow at the top; that the feet of the lavers might enter in, and be fastened there: and this he calls the *mouth* of it.

Within the chapter] Nothing of a chapter is mentioned until now: therefore it is hard to know what is meant by it. Many take it for a smaller basis, rising out of the greater; in which *was* the mouth, or hollow place before spoken of.

Was a cubit:] In height. See ver. 35, where it is said, "on the top of the base *was* a round compass half a cubit high." Which seems to be meant of this chapter, which rose but half a cubit above the base, the other half being below it.

A cubit and an half:] This *was* the wideness of it.

Upon the mouth of it were gravings with their borders,] Though this hollow place, called the mouth, *was* round within; yet on the outside it *was* square, and had borders which *were* engraved.

Ver. 32.] So that the bottom of the base *was* not far from the ground.

Ver. 33. *Like the work of a chariot wheel:*] Only

four corners of one base : and the undersettors were of the very base itself.

35 And in the top of the base was there a round compass of half a cubit high : and on the top of the base the ledges thereof and the borders thereof were of the same.

36 For on the plates of the ledges thereof, and on the borders thereof, he graved cherubims, lions, and palm trees, according to the proportion of every one, and additions round about.

37 After this manner he made the ten bases : all of them had one casting, one measure, and one size.

38 ¶ Then made he ten lavers of brass : one laver contained forty baths : and every laver was four cubits : and upon every one of the ten bases one laver.

39 And he put five bases on the right side of the house, and five on the left side of the house : and he set the sea on the right side of the house, eastward over against the south.

40 ¶ And Hiram made the lavers, and the shovels, and the basons. So Hiram made an end of doing all the work that he made king Solomon for the house of the Lord :

41 The two pillars, and the two bowls of the

chapters that were on the top of the two pillars ; and the two networks, to cover the two bowls of the chapters which were upon the top of the pillars ;

42 And four hundred pomegranates for the two networks, even two rows of pomegranates for one network, to cover the two bowls of the chapters that were upon the pillars ;

43 And the ten bases, and ten lavers on the bases ;

44 And one sea, and twelve oxen under the sea ;

45 And the pots, and the shovels, and the basons : and all these vessels, which Hiram made to king Solomon for the house of the LORD, were of bright brass.

46 In the plain of Jordan did the king cast them, in the clay ground between Succoth and Zarthan.

47 And Solomon left all the vessels unweighed, because they were exceeding many : neither was the weight of the brass found out.

48 And Solomon made all the vessels that pertained unto the house of the LORD : the altar of gold, and the table of gold, whereupon the shewbread was,

the hinder-wheels and the fore-wheels were all of a height.

All molten.] Cast together with the wheels.

Ver. 34.] He mentioned the undersettors before (ver. 30). Now he relates the number of them ; and that they were of the same piece with the base itself ; being cast together with it, and not made afterward.

Ver. 35. *A round compass*] See ver. 31.

Were of the same.] Cast altogether at the same time.

Ver. 36.] In the Hebrew, according to the nakedness of every one ; which seems to signify that these figures were as big as the void spaces in the plates would admit.

Ver. 37.] They were cast in the same mould ; and all of the same bigness and shape.

Ver. 38. *Ten lavers of brass.*] Which were to stand upon the bases forementioned.

One laver contained forty baths.] See ver. 26. From whence it will appear that each of these lavers contained ten barrels of water.

Every laver was four cubits.] Some think that they were of this height. But these words rather relate to the diameter of them, which was four cubits : and then their compass was twelve cubits.

Upon every one of the ten bases one laver.] The bases being exactly fitted to receive them : for they were each four cubits in length and breadth (ver. 27.)

Ver. 39. *He put five bases on the right side*] That is, on the south side (see vi. 8).

Of the house.] That is, of the court where the priests ministered.

Five on the left side of the house.] That is, on the north side of that court.

He set the sea—over against the south.] That is, in the south-east : so that as soon as the priests entered (which they did at the east gate) they might have water to wash their hands and their feet.

Ver. 40.] These seem to have been the last things that he made : and so he finished all the work, which he recapitulates, with the addition of some other not mentioned before. *Shovels*, for instance, or *besoms*, wherewith they cleansed the altar from the ashes, that they might not hinder the fire from burning : and

basons, wherein the priests received the blood of the sacrifices that were offered.

Ver. 42.] Being to sum up all the works he had finished, he now adds the number of pomegranates that were upon the pillars : which had not been mentioned before.

Ver. 45. *The pots.*] Pots or caldrons were those vessels wherein they boiled those sacrifices which were divided between the priest and the people that offered them : that is, *peace-offerings*, that they might eat them before the Lord, and feast with him upon his own meat.

Shovels, and the basons.] They are mentioned before, but here I suppose have a different signification (though in the Hebrew the words are the same) from what they had in ver. 40. And the first word signifies *flesh-hooks*, wherewith they took the meat out of the pots : and the second the *platters*, or dishes, into which it was put, to be set before them.

Of bright brass.] Or polished brass : or, the purest and finest that could be got. The Syriac and Arabic translators render it *Corinthian brass*. But it is not credible, that it was known in the days of Solomon.

Ver. 46.] In the Hebrew the words for “clay-ground” are, “in the thickness of the ground.” That is, the earth was stiff and glutinous, and upon that account more fit to make moulds of all kinds. And in a plain country, such moulds were more easily fixed than on the sides of hills, or steep places.

Ver. 47.] In the Hebrew, it was not searched, or inquired into ; because it would have been very troublesome to take an exact account of it.

Ver. 48. *Solomon made all the vessels*] He made them all new, except the ark, the mercy-seat, and the cherubims annexed to it.

The altar of gold.] That is, the altar of incense, which stood in the holy place before the oracle.

The table of gold, whereupon the shewbread was.] That is, all the table-work : there being no less than ten (2 Chron. iv. 7, 8). Upon one of which, in all probability, which was more noble than the rest, the shew-bread was placed. Unless we suppose the table, which Moses made was preserved for that use ; and

49 And the candlesticks of pure gold, five on the right side, and five on the left, before the oracle, with the flowers, and the lamps, and the tongs of gold.

50 And the bowls, and the snuffers, and the basons, and the spoons, and the censers of pure gold; and the hinges of gold, both for the doors of the inner house, the most holy place, and

Solomon added the rest for the greater ornament of the place. And (as Josephus writes), the gold and silver basons were set upon them; together with a vast number of phials.

Ver. 49. *The candlesticks of pure gold.*] He made ten candlesticks, instead of one which was in the tabernacle of Moses: because the place was more capacious; and the vessels were not to be removed from place to place as they were before: and therefore there might well be more of them.

The flowers.] Which were wrought upon the candlesticks.

The lamps, and the tongs of gold.] Wherewith to take coals from the altar of burnt-offering.

Ver. 50. *The bowls, and the snuffers, and the basons, and the spoons, and the censers.*] The use of these is visible. The first being to keep oil for the lamps; the next to trim them: the *basons* (which were a hundred, as we learn from the book of Chronicles) were to receive the water of sprinkling, and the blood of the sacrifices which were sometimes brought into the most holy place: the *spoons* served to take up the oil: the *censers* were for offering incense; though some translate this word *dish-spans*, wherein the incense was kept. There were other censers of silver, which received the coals from the altar upon all days but the tenth of Tisri (which was the great day of expiation), when the golden censer received them, and by it the most holy place was incensed. On other days it was not employed, but at the altar of incense; where the coals were poured out of the silver censer (which received them from the altar of burnt-offering) into the golden, to burn the incense: as the Talmudists say, both in Codex Joma and Tamid. Where they also

for the doors of the house, *to wit*, of the temple.

51 So was ended all the work that king Solomon made for the house of the Lord. And Solomon brought in the things which David his father had dedicated; *even* the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, did he put among the treasures of the house of the Lord.

say, that the foregoing word *capoth*, which we translate *spoons*, signifies a vessel which contained the *incense* that was to be offered upon the coals in the golden censer. See Braunius, in his *Selecta Sacra*, lib. ii. cap. 5, where he hath learnedly explained both these words, *caph* and *machtah*, which we translate *spoons* and *censers*, where he hath demonstrated the latter signifies the instrument that received the coals from the altar of burnt-offering, and the former that which had the incense in it to be poured upon them.

The hinges of gold.] This shows the vast riches of Solomon, and his great piety, which made him spare no cost to beautify the house of God, and the meanest thing belonging to it. Whereby the people, who were much taken with outward splendor, were preserved from idolatry: for they could go nowhere and see a place comparable to this of Solomon; there being then nothing in the whole world like to it for riches and glory.

Ver. 51.] I observed upon vi. 1. that Abarbinel thinks he would use none of the things that were dedicated by his father; but do all at his own cost and charges. Yet others think these words mean no more, but that all the remaining silver and gold, which David left, and was not spent in this work, Solomon would not employ to his own uses; but religiously preserved in the treasury of the temple. Where the altar of burnt-offering, which Moses made, and some other things, which were now of no use (far better and larger being made), were also laid up, as the tabernacle itself was. For the temple being built, there was no further occasion for the tabernacle; and yet it was fit to preserve it as a place that had been holy to the Lord.

CHAPTER VIII.

1 *The feast of the dedication of the temple.* 12, 54 *Solomon's blessing.* 22 *Solomon's prayer.* 62 *His sacrifice of peace offerings.*

1 THEN Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto king Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring up

the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the city of David, which is Zion.

2 And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto king Solomon at the feast in the

CHAPTER VIII.

Ver. 1. *Elders of Israel.*] That is, the judges in their several cities.

All the heads of the tribes.] Every tribe had one or more principal ruler in it.

The chief of the fathers.] The principal persons of every family in those tribes.

Jerusalem.] Where the house of the Lord was now fixed.

That they might bring up the ark—out of the city of David.] For thither David had brought it from the house of Obed-edom, and made a tabernacle for it (2 Sam. vi. 12, 17), until a fixed house should be prepared for it, which was now built upon a neighboring mountain.

Ver. 2. *All the men of Israel.*] All the forenamed persons, with their attendants, which, no doubt, were numerous.

At the feast in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month.] Here the Targum thus paraphrases, "In the month which anciently was called the first month, but now is the seventh;" and called *Ethanim*, because more sacred solemnities (which were the support and strength of their religion and government) were appointed in this month than in any other. And among the rest the feast of tabernacles; which is here meant, as Kimchi, and Abarbinel, and others think. And upon the occasion of this assembly the Jews observe, in Seder Olam Rabba, cap. 15, that "the Shechinah doth not dwell but in the congregation."

month Ethanim, which is the seventh month.

3 And all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark.

4 And they brought up the ark of the LORD, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle, even those did the priests and the Levites bring up.

5 And king Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel, that were assembled unto him, were with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be told nor numbered for multitude.

6 And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD unto his place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims.

Ver. 3. *All the elders*] All the forementioned great persons were called *elders*, and are here comprehended under that name.

The priests took up the ark.] The ark had been carried by the priests three times before this: when they went over Jordan; when they encompassed the walls of Jericho; and when David sent it back, when he fled from Absalom (2 Sam. xv. 29, 30). It was the office of the Levites to carry the ark upon their shoulders, except upon special occasions: and now they could not, because it was not lawful for them to enter into the holy place, into which it was to be carried, and then into the most holy. It is said, indeed, 2 Chron. v. 4, "the Levites took it up:" but the meaning is, that they took it up and carried it to the temple, and then the priests took it up (ver. 6), and carried it into the holy place.

Ver. 4. *They brought up the ark—and the tabernacle of the congregation.*] Together with the ark, they brought up the tabernacle. But the question is, what tabernacle, whether that made by Moses, which was in Gibeon (2 Chron. i. 3), or that made by David, which was at Jerusalem (2 Sam. vi. 17). I think the latter is never called "the tabernacle of the congregation," as the former frequently is. But it may be probably thought that both of them were now carried into the temple and laid up there; to avoid all danger of superstition and idolatry; and that no worship might be performed anywhere, but only at this house of God, which he now dedicated to him.

All the holy vessels] viz. The altar of incense, and the table, and the candlestick, and every thing belonging to them: which remained in the tabernacle, when the ark was removed from it.

Did the priests and the Levites bring up.] The priests brought up the ark; and the Levites carried the tabernacle, and the vessels of the sanctuary.

Ver. 5. *All the congregation—were with him before the ark.*] When it was brought into the house of God, and settled there; for it is not likely such a multitude of sacrifices as follow could be offered in the way from Mount Zion to the Temple, as some were when David brought it from the house of Obed-edom to Jerusalem (2 Sam. vi. 13).

Could not be—numbered for multitude.] That is, a vast number; which might have been told, but not easily; as was said before of the weight of the brass employed about the vessels of the house of God, vii. 47 (see there). Here is no mention of Solomon's dancing before the ark as David did; for all holy men were not alike moved by God; their tempers and conditions being very different. Solomon was now in a state of great tranquillity, and constant pleasure; but David had been disturbed by the stroke upon Uzzah,

7 For the cherubims spread forth their two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims covered the ark and the staves thereof above.

8 And they drew out the staves, that the ends of the staves were seen out in the holy place before the oracle, and they were not seen without: and there they are unto this day.

9 There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt.

10 And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD.

a little before his great transport of joy, at the safe conduct of the ark to Jerusalem.

Ver. 6. *The priests brought in the ark—to the most holy place.*] Before the glory of the Lord filled the house, the priests were permitted to enter into the oracle: but afterward none but the high-priest might approach so near unto the Divine presence, which dwelt there: and he but once a year.

Even under the wings of the cherubims.] Which Solomon had made. For the cherubims made by Moses were fixed to the mercy-seat, and inseparable from it: and stood together with the ark under these cherubims.

Ver. 7.] For they were very large, stretching forth their wings from one side of the house unto the other (vi. 22, 24. &c.)

Ver. 8. *The ends of the staves were seen out in the holy place*] By the *holy place* is here meant the most holy, where the ark was under the cherubims: which covered both the ark and the staves. But the staves were so drawn out that the ends of them might be seen: whereby the high-priest was directed in the way he should go just before the mercy-seat on the day of expiation; when he went between these two staves to sprinkle the blood before God. See 2 Chron. v. 9. and Buxtorf. in his *Arca Fœderis*, where he explains both this and the next verse, and gives a large account of drawing out the staves (p. 96, 97.)

They were not seen without.] In the sanctuary.

There they are unto this day.] And in this posture.

Ver. 9.] The very same words, in a manner, are repeated, 2 Chron. v. 10. But it is commonly observed that both these places seem to contradict the apostle's words, Heb. ix. 4. For it is said here in these books, that nothing was in the ark save only the two tables of stone; but there, that the pot of manna and Aaron's rod were also in the ark. For so they generally interpret those words *ἐν ᾧ*, "in which," i. e. in the ark, *σάμωος χρυσῆς*, "the golden pot containing the manna," &c. Many learned men have endeavored to reconcile these places several ways, which Andreas Sennertus hath collected in a treatise on purpose about it. Which might have been spared by this easy observation, that the preposition *ἐν* doth not always signify in but by: and so the place in the Hebrews is to be rendered, not *in which*, but *by which*. Bochartus hath given a great many instances of such use of the particle *bet* in the Old Testament (Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. ii. cap. 50). And indeed it is never said there that the pot of manna was laid up in the ark, but "before the Lord and before the testimony" (Exod. xvi. 33, 34); and the same is said of Aaron's rod (Numb. xvii. 4). Which signifies no more than putting them by the ark (see Huetius *Demonst. Evang.* p. 322).

Ver. 10. *When the priests were come out of the holy*

11 So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of the LORD.

12 ¶ Then spake Solomon, the LORD said that he would dwell in the thick darkness.

13 I have surely built thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in for ever.

14 And the king turned his face about, and blessed all the congregation of Israel: (and all the congregation of Israel stood;)

15 And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, which spake with his mouth unto David my father, and hath with his hand fulfilled it, saying,

16 Since the day that I brought forth my people Israel out of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel to build an house, that

place, That is, the oracle, where they had set down the ark.

That the cloud filled the house] In this cloud was the glory of the Lord (ver. 11), which now filled the temple, as it had anciently done the tabernacle, when it was first erected (Exod. xl. 34). Only there the cloud covered the tabernacle without, and the glory of the Lord shined within: but here the house itself was filled with the cloud, out of which the glory of the Lord broke; and after it had filled the whole house, settled in the most holy place.

Ver. 11.] By this it appears that the cloud filled the sanctuary, as well as the most holy place: for in the sanctuary the priests ministered at the altar of incense. And it appears also by the next verse, that, at the first, nothing but a dark cloud filled the house, which was very astonishing: but afterward the glory of the Lord (as I said) broke out, which was more amazing. Inasmuch that Moses himself was not able to enter into the tabernacle of the congregation, when this cloud and glory first appeared (Exod. xl. 35).

Ver. 12. *Then spake Solomon.*] When he saw the priests come out of the house of God in great consternation, he uttered these words which follow, with his face turned towards the altar, to compose and comfort them. This shows that the cloud filled the house before Solomon prayed; whereas in 2 Chron. vii. 1—3, it appears the Divine glory did not fill it till after he had prayed. Which Abarbinel reconciles with very good reason:—The cloud, in which was the glory of the Lord, or the fire, came into the temple before Solomon prayed: which made him say here, “the Lord dwelleth in thick darkness.” Which he beholding, prayed to God, who gave such a sensible token of his presence there. Now when he had made an end of his prayer, then the fire that was in the cloud broke forth, and consumed the sacrifices on the altar: and the glory of the Lord filled the house, as it is recorded in the book of Chronicles.

The Lord said that he would dwell in the thick darkness.] As much as to say, Be not afraid; but look upon this cloud as a token of God’s presence and protection; and that he owns this for his house where he intends to dwell, according to what he said, Lev. xvi. 2. This cloud is called *thick darkness*, because it hindered the sight of any other thing that was in the holy place; either the altar, candlestick, or table. Nothing was seen but the glory of the Lord when it broke out, which dazzled their eyes rather than enlightened them. And it is observable, that the better to represent this, the high-priest when he went into the most holy place was to fill it with a cloud of

my name might be therein; but I chose David to be over my people Israel.

17 And it was in the heart of David my father to build an house for the name of the LORD God of Israel.

18 And the LORD said unto David my father, Whereas it was in thine heart to build an house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart.

19 Nevertheless thou shalt not build the house; but thy son that shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house unto my name.

20 And the LORD hath performed his word that he spake, and I am risen up in the room of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised, and have built an house for the name of the LORD God of Israel.

21 And I have set there a place for the ark,

smoke by the incense he offered, which made the place dark (Lev. xvi. 12, 13), that he might not lose his life by the splendor of the Divine glory.

Ver. 13. *I have surely built thee an house to dwell in.*] He turns his speech from them to God; and expresses his hope that he would be pleased to continue in this house: which he perceived by this glorious cloud he intended to make his habitation.

A settled place] Not like the tabernacle, which was a movable habitation; but a place wherein he hoped he would settle, and never remove from it. From hence the Jews call this Beth-haolam, the eternal house, or the house of ages. Which was not like Gilgal, Shiloh, Nob, and Gibeon (as Abarbinel explains it), which did not last long, though God for some time dwelt there: they not being in the place which the Lord had chosen to place his name there: which was in Mount Moriah.

Ver. 14. *The king turned his face about.*] From the court of the priests to the court of the congregation, having the altar on his back.

Blessed all the congregation] In that form, perhaps, which God had himself prescribed (Numb. vi. 23, 24, &c.).

All the congregation of Israel stood;] Both out of reverence to God, and respect unto the king.

Ver. 15.] He acknowledges the goodness of God in his gracious promise; and his faithfulness in fulfilling it. Which promise was made by Nathan, unto whom the word of the Lord came about this matter (2 Sam. vii. 4).

Ver. 16. *I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel to build an house.*] He had often told them that they should worship him in the place which he should choose; but he never declared his choice of a place till David’s time (2 Sam. vii. 6).

I chose David] See 2 Sam. vii. 8. to whom he showed the place which he would make his dwelling, and where he would be worshipped.

Ver. 17.] This is, as I said before, where God would dwell among them, and be graciously present with them (see 2 Sam. vii. 2).

Ver. 18.] He accepted and commended his good intentions, but would not let him put them in execution. This honor he reserved for his son, as it follows in the next words.

Ver. 19.] See 2 Sam. vii. 12, 13.

Ver. 20.] He concludes, as he began, with a thankful acknowledgment of the faithfulness of God in performing his promise.

Ver. 21. *And I have set there a place for the ark.*] The token of God’s presence among them.

wherein is the covenant of the LORD, which he made with our fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt.

22 ¶ And Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven :

23 And he said, LORD God of Israel, *there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart :*

24 Who hast kept with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him : thou spakest also with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled *it* with thine hand, as *it is* this day.

25 Therefore now, LORD God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that thou pro-

Wherein is the covenant? That is, the tables of the covenant : which by a figure are called "the covenant," because they contained it.

When he brought them out of—Egypt.] And told them, that by the tenure of this covenant they were to hold the land of Canaan.

Ver. 22. *Solomon stood before the altar*] Having spoken the foregoing words with his face towards the people, and blessed them ; now he turned about again with his face towards the altar, to make a solemn prayer to God.

In the presence of all the congregation] Being advanced upon a scaffold which he had made, of three cubits high (as we read in 2 Chron. vi. 13), so that all might see and hear him.

Spread forth his hands toward heaven:] Which was a solemn posture of prayer among other nations. And it is evident both from that place in the Chronicles, and from ver. 54. of this chapter, that when he had stood awhile with his face towards the altar, he fell down upon his knees, and spread forth his hands towards heaven.

Ver. 23.] He acknowledges the transcendent excellences of the Divine majesty ; and particularly again commemorates his faithfulness to those who serve him sincerely.

Ver. 24.] This relates to that part of God's promise to David, that his son should build him a house (see ver. 15, 16, &c.).

Ver. 25. *There shall not fail thee a man in my sight*] He looked upon that as an earnest he would fulfil the other part of his promise to David, which he made at the same time, concerning his kindness to his posterity (2 Sam. vii. 12, 13).

So that thy children take heed to their way.] He speaks like a wise man, who was fully acquainted with the mind of God : whose promise concerning the inheritance of the kingdom he acknowledges depended upon this condition, "if they took heed to their way," &c. ; that is, continued in the faith and worship of God as David did. But if they proved idolaters, then they made themselves unworthy of this privilege to the seed of David (as Abarinel speaks), and lost the inheritance of the kingdom, because they were none of his children. And therefore, after Solomon and Jeroboam also turned away from God and followed idols (as he goes on), God might justly have taken the divided kingdom away from their children. And when all Israel forsook the Lord, and worshipped the gods of the nations round about them, he did forsake their land, and would no longer dwell among them, nor continue the kingdom to them.

misedst him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel ; so that thy children take heed to their way, that they walk before me as thou hast walked before me.

26 And now, O God of Israel, let thy word, I pray thee, be verified, which thou spakest unto thy servant David my father.

27 But will God indeed dwell on the earth ? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee ; how much less this house that I have builded ?

28 Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer, which thy servant prayeth, before thee to-day :

29 That thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, *even* toward the place of

Ver. 26.] This is not an unnecessary repetition ; but (as Abarinel notes) God, when he spake to David of building the temple by his son, promised two things : first, the stability of his kingdom in his family (2 Sam. vii. 16) ; and secondly, that he would show the greatest kindness and friendship to them ; such as a father doth to his son (ver. 13). Solomon here begs with God in this prayer both these benefits : the first in the foregoing verse, and the other in this.

Ver. 27.] He would not have the people possessed with such gross imaginations as were among the heathens ; who fancied their gods were confined to their temples. No, saith Solomon, the heaven itself, no, not the highest heaven, can comprehend his infinite majesty.

Ver. 28.] But he would have them know that God, who could be confined nowhere, was in a special manner present here, to grant the requests of those who piously made their supplications to him, as he now did, in this place.

Abarinel observes upon ver. 39, that Solomon uses three words in this verse, which in some places signify the very same thing ; but being all used here together, he thinks have distinct meanings. For the word *rinnah* (which we translate *cry*), he thinks signifies setting forth with a loud voice the praises of God : concerning which their wise men in Beracoth say, "Let a man first commemorate the praises of God, and then let him pray." Then the word *tephillah* (which we translate *prayer*), he thinks, signifies men's judging and condemning themselves before God for their offences : confessing they are unworthy to have their petitions granted. And the other word *tehinah* (*supplication* we translate it) imports men's petitions to God for what they want, and deprecating his displeasure, &c.

Ver. 29. *That thine eyes may be open toward this house*] He prays that God would have a gracious respect unto all that came to make their petitions there. For as, in the former verse (as Abarinel observes), he prays God would hear his own petitions : so in this, that he would hear all other pious worshippers.

Hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place.] He beseeches God to hear him, if he looked towards this place in his prayer ; though he was not present at the temple to prefer his petition. For thus pious men were wont to direct their prayer, when they were far distant from it ; nay, when the temple was demolished (Dan. vi. 10). And when they were at the temple, they could only look towards the most holy place : for the people

which thou hast said, My name shall be there : that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place.

30 And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place : and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place : and when thou hearest, forgive.

31 ¶ If any man trespass against his neighbour, and an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house :

32 Then hear thou in heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, condemning the wicked, to bring his way upon his head ; and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness.

33 ¶ When thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee, and shall turn again to thee, and confess thy name, and pray, and make supplication unto thee in this house :

came no nearer than into the outward court of the temple, and the priests no further than to the next court to it. Save only when they went to order the lamps, and burn incense morning and evening, and renew the shew-bread: otherwise they also stood and officiated at a distance in the court appointed for them, called the court of the priests. So both people and priests stood in their several courts, and worshipped with their faces towards the temple, where the ark and mercy-seat were. From whence came the expression of worshipping the Lord *towards his holy temple*: that is, towards the place where the mercy-seat was. And also the expression of *worshipping towards his footstool*: for if the glory of the Lord sat upon the cherubims, under which the ark stood, then it was his footstool (see Ps. xcix. 5. cxxxviii. 2).

Ver. 30. *And of thy people Israel.*] Here, as the same Abarbinel observes, he desires, whether there was one or many that prayed, he would hear them.

Hear thou in heaven.] He directs the people's mind up to heaven, the place where he dwells in the highest majesty and glory: of which the bright cloud in the temple was a token and resemblance.

When thou hearest, forgive.] For sins unpardoned would hinder his blessing from descending on them; and therefore, in the first place, he implores forgiveness of them.

Ver. 31. *If any man trespass—and an oath be laid upon him.*] This seems to relate to such as were accused of denying that which was said to be deposited with them by their neighbour. Who were to purge themselves by an oath, there being no witness to convince them.

The oath come before thine altar.] It was the custom of all nations to touch the altar when they made a solemn oath: calling God, that is, to witness the truth of what they said, and to punish them if they did not speak the truth.

Ver. 32.] He desires God to hear the complaint of him who was defrauded, or unjustly accused: and shew who had right on his side; by punishing the offender, and acquitting the injured person.

Ver. 33. *Confess thy name.*] Acknowledge him to be God alone, and renounce all false gods.

Make supplication unto thee in this house.] Or, towards this house; expecting help from God alone.

Ver. 34.] Deliver them out of the captivity into which their enemies had carried them, and restore

34 Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest unto their fathers.

35 ¶ When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou afflictest them :

36 Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, that thou teach them the good way wherein they should walk, and give rain upon thy land, which thou hast given to thy people for an inheritance.

37 ¶ If there be in the land famine, if there be pestilence, blasting, mildew, locust, or if there be caterpillar; if their enemy besiege them in the land of their cities; whatsoever plague, whatsoever sickness *there be*;

38 What prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his

them to their own country. The Jews think the Shechinah was always in captivity with them, and brought them forth from thence.

Ver. 35. *When heaven is shut up.*] As God is said to "bring the wind" (Ps. cxxxv. 7), so he doth the rain "out of his treasures." Which when he shuts up, no showers can fall, till he open them again.

And turn from their sin, when thou afflictest them.] That had been the frequent fruit of their affliction in former ages; though as soon as God had delivered them, they revolted from him; as we read in the whole book of Judges.

Ver. 36. *That thou teach them the good way.*] These words are better translated in 2 Chron. vi. 27 (where the Hebrew words are the very same with these here). *When thou hast taught them the good way wherein they should walk.* He doth not desire their pardon, till their affliction had taught them better obedience.

Give rain upon thy land.] He first desires their amendment, and then that the times and seasons might be amended.

Ver. 37. *If there be in the land famine.*] Which arose sometimes from other causes, besides want of rain.

If there be—mildew, locust, or if there be caterpillar.] These two creatures, locusts and caterpillars, made great desolations where they swarmed (Exod. x. 4, 5. Ps. cv. 34, 35). Mildew, also, the heathens themselves were sensible was a punishment sent from heaven. And therefore Numa Pompilius (as Strigelius observes) ordained a solemn festival called *rubigalia*, in the beginning of May, to pray for their preservation from this *rubigo*, as they called it, which corrupted their corn (see Pliny's Nat. Hist. lib. xviii. cap. 29).

If their enemy besiege—their cities.] In their gates; whereby they were so straitened, that none could go in, or out.

Whatsoever plague.] The word *plague* signifies some extraordinary stroke by the hand of God.

Ver. 38. *By all thy people Israel.*] Who in national calamities were wont to beseech God's mercies with public fasting and prayer; which, if they neglected, he entreats him not to reject the supplications of any particular person who besought his favor for himself and family.

Every man the plague of his own heart.] We are

own heart, and spread forth his hands toward this house :

39 Then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest ; (for thou, *even* thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men ;)

40 That they may fear thee all the days that they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers.

41 Moreover concerning a stranger, that is not of thy people of Israel, but cometh out of a far country for thy name's sake ;

42 (For they shall hear of thy great name, and of thy strong hand, and of thy stretched out arm ;) when he shall come and pray toward this house ;

43 Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for : that all people of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee, as *do* thy people Israel ; and that they may know that this house, which I have builded, is called by thy name.

taught by Ezra, in 2 Chron. vi. 29, to understand these words of any private trouble or grief which any man labored under : for so the words are there, "when every one shall know his own sore, and his own grief." That is, shall make his secret moan for any affliction which lies heavy upon his spirit.

Spread forth his hands] That is, pray as Solomon now did to God (see ver. 22).

Ver. 39. *Whose heart thou knowest ;*] He would have the people know that God could not be deceived with words ; but have them expect an answer from him, according to the sincerity of their hearts, in their professions of repentance.

Thou only, knowest the hearts] This sense begets in men the greatest awe of the Divine majesty.

Ver. 40.] That they might learn by his great goodness, to worship him alone religiously all their days : and by that means possess in peace and plenty the good land he had bestowed upon them.

Ver. 41.] To become a proselyte to the true religion, and worship God alone, though he was not circumcised, and thereby bound to keep the whole law. Such strangers came to pray at the temple, though they might not offer any sacrifices, except only a burnt-offering. And therefore we may observe, that in the New Testament the Greeks are said to come to a feast, *ἵνα προσκυνήσωσι*, "that they might worship," not that they might keep the pass-over (John xii. 20). And the like is said of the eunuch, Acts viii. 22 (see Selden, lib. ii. De Jure Nat. et Gent. cap. 4, 5).

Ver. 42. *They shall hear of thy—stretched out arm ;*] All the stupendous wonders he had done : which declared him to be above all gods ; the most High, and Holy One.

When he shall come and pray toward this house ;] In the court behind that of the Israelites : which was made on purpose for the religious uncircumcised gentiles. Such, saith Victorinus Strigelius (whose words I think fit here to transcribe), were Naaman the Syrian ; Nebuchadnezzar, and his son Evilmerodach : Darius the Mede ; Cyrus the Persian ; Cornelius, and the Ethiopian eunuch, mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles ; and many such-like heathens ; who were members of the true church. By which means, and by the dispersion of the Jews among other nations,

44 ¶ If thy people go out to battle against their enemy, whithersoever thou shalt send them, and shall pray unto the Lord toward the city which thou hast chosen, and toward the house that I have built for thy name :

45 Then hear thou in heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause.

46 If they sin against thee, (for *there is* no man that sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives unto the land of the enemy, far or near ;

47 Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness ;

48 And so return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies, which led them away captive, and pray unto thee toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which thou

many heathens were called to the acknowledgment of the only true God (see Josephus's last book of Antiquities, ch. 2).

Ver. 43. *Do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for ;*] He had the same sense with St. Peter, that "God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts x. 35).

That all people of the earth may know thy name ;] By this it is evident, that truly good men in ancient time desired all the gentile world might be incorporated with them : unto which, in our Saviour's time, the Jews were unaccountably averse.

That this house—is called by thy name.] Hath thy glorious presence in it.

Ver. 44.] Some of the Jews wonder that Solomon should mix his prayer for strangers with those for the people of Israel, and not rather finish first what he had to desire for the Israelites, and then pray for the gentiles. If there be any thing in this, it was to show that God made no difference between them and pious people of other nations. It is here remarkable, that they were not to make war, without a warrant and commission from God, upon the neighboring nations. Not to satisfy their ambition and vainglory, but by his command, or upon just and necessary reasons ; which would warrant them to implore and expect God's blessing upon their arms.

Ver. 45. *Maintain their cause.*] Show the justice of it, by making them victorious.

Ver. 46. *If they sin against thee, (for there is no man that sinneth not.)*] The weakness of human nature, and its proneness to sin, doth not excuse wilful offences against God ; especially apostacy from him, which was the cause of all their calamities.

So that they carry them away captives] A good cause sometimes miscarries for the iniquity of those that are engaged in it.

Ver. 48.] In these, and in the foregoing words (ver. 47), he gives a full description of true repentance. Which begins in the serious reflection which men make upon their past lives, and their present miseries into which their sins have brought them. Which begets an unfeigned sorrow and resolution of amendment, with earnest supplication for mercy and grace :

hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name :

49 Then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwelling place, and maintain their cause,

50 And forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee, and give them compassion before them who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them :

51 For they *be* thy people, and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest forth out of Egypt, from the midst of the furnace of iron :

52 That thine eyes may be open unto the supplication of thy servant, and unto the supplication of thy people Israel, to hearken unto them in all that they call for unto thee.

53 For thou didst separate them from among all the people of the earth, *to be* thine inheritance, as thou spakest by the hand of Moses thy servant, when thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord God.

54 And it was so, that when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication unto the LORD, he arose from before the

confessing themselves unworthy of it, and condemning themselves for their sins and the high aggravations of them (expressed here by "doing perversely, and committing wickedness,") which at last concludes in their quitting that wicked course of life, and their sincere conversion to the service of God.

And pray unto thee toward—the house which I have built] The very looking towards the place, with earnest imploring the mercy of God, and desire of his help, was to own him that dwelt here, and acknowledge him alone for their God. Which was a means (as that excellent person Dr. Alix admonishes me) to keep them from idolatry; all the nations of the world turning their faces towards the east, when they worshipped; but the Jews to the west, where the holy place was. And for this cause, when the temple and the holy city were destroyed, and the ark of the testimony was gone; yet good men looked and prayed towards the place where it was wont to be, as appears by the prophet Daniel. And therefore Solomon much more supposes they would do so, when they were all standing. Which may seem, as Mr. Mede observes, to have been done out of the use of all mankind, without any special precept to that purpose; which is nowhere to be found. Nature having taught mankind, as in their addresses to great persons, to look unto their face; so in their addresses to the Divine majesty, to look that way, or towards that place, where his presence is more demonstrated than elsewhere. From whence he concludes, that to worship towards the place, where there is any sign or specification of his presence, is no idolatry (see his Discourse upon Ps. cxxxii. 7).

Ver. 49. *Maintain their cause.*] In the Hebrew *their right*: which they had forfeited by their disobedience; but he prayed it might be restored unto them upon their repentance.

Ver. 50.] Treat them mercifully while they continued their slaves; and give them their liberty to return to their own land. Solomon enlarges much upon this in the following verses, as a thing of the greatest importance. Because he knew that they, as well as all men else, were prone to offend God (ver. 46) and might provoke him to expel them from this

altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven.

55 And he stood, and blessed all the congregation of Israel with a loud voice, saying,

56 Blessed *be* the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant.

57 The LORD our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not leave us, nor forsake us :

58 That he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, which he commanded our fathers.

59 And let these my words, wherewith I have made supplication before the LORD, be nigh unto the LORD our God day and night, that he maintain the cause of his servant, and the cause of his people Israel at all times, as the matter shall require :

60 That all the people of the earth may know that the LORD is God, and that there is none else.

land. Towards which the Jews now at this day turn their faces when they pray to God; but to no purpose; for it only demonstrates they have so provoked God by a crime more heinous than ever was committed, that he will have no regard to their petition.

Ver. 51.] Wherewith they wrought with cruel labour (see Deut. iv. 20.)

Ver. 52.] He brings two arguments for the Divine compassion towards them. First, that it might not lose the glory of what he had formerly done for them; and then that it might appear he dwelt in this house, and had respect unto the penitent prayers that were here made to him.

Ver. 53.] See Exod. xix. 5. Here he adds a third argument: the peculiar laws that he had given them; whereby they were distinguished from all people: in the observance of which he beseeches him to preserve them. It was not a mere angel that brought them out of Egypt, but the Divine *Αγγελος* conducted them; to whom therefore this prayer of Solomon's was directed. For the Shechinah or Divine glory that settled in the temple, and there was worshipped, was this Divine person, and not an angel personating God.

Ver. 54.] See ver. 22.

Ver. 55.] Now he turned about again, with his face the other way, from the altar to the people.

Ver. 56.] He celebrates again the faithfulness of God, which continued now, as it had done in the days of Joshua (see Josh. xxi. 45. xxiii. 14).

Ver. 57.] Of which there was no doubt, if they cleaved steadfastly unto him, as it follows in the next words.

Ver. 58.] This was the greatest blessing he could ask for them; as the means to preserve them in his favor.

Ver. 59. *Be nigh unto the Lord our God day and night.*] Be ever acceptable to him.

He maintain the cause of his servant,] That is, of Solomon, and his successors.

As the matter shall require.] That is, according to his and their necessities.

Ver. 60.] That by his signal favors to the Israelites, all the world might be invited to acknowledge him to be God alone.

61 Let your heart therefore be perfect with the LORD our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day.

62 ¶ And the king, and all Israel with him, offered sacrifice before the LORD.

63 And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered unto the LORD, two and twenty thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the LORD.

64 The same day did the king hallow the

Ver. 61.] When they were perfectly free from all false worship, and served God alone: as he exhorted them to continue still to do, with sincerity of heart.

Ver. 62.] Which was a solemn act of worship, whereby they acknowledged him to be their God. And these sacrifices seem to have been laid upon the altar before Solomon begun his prayer, ready to be offered: and when he had done, fire came from heaven (as we read 2 Chron. vii. 1) and consumed the sacrifices. Which was another token of God's presence in this house; as the cloud had testified, and hereby was further confirmed: for the fire from heaven declared how acceptable the sacrifices were that were offered in that place.

Ver. 63. Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace offerings.] Besides the burnt-offerings before mentioned.

Two and twenty thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep.] Which could not be all offered upon that day when he made his prayer, but while the feast lasted, which was in the whole fourteen days, ver. 65 (see upon iii. 4). The heathen imitated these sacrifices in their hecatombs, which they offered of a hundred beasts of a kind; as, suppose, a hundred oxen, a hundred goats, and a hundred swine. They are described by Julius Capitolinus, in the life of the emperors Papius Maximus and Balbinus; the last of which, he saith, was so transported with joy, being fuller of fear, that he offered a hecatomb; which was such a sacrifice as this. A hundred altars of turf were raised in one place, at them a hundred swine and a hundred birds were killed. But if it were the sacrifice of an emperor, a hundred lions, a hundred eagles, and a hundred of other such kind of animals were offered: but no such ravenous creatures were ever offered to the true God.

Dedicated the house of the Lord.] By this prayer of Solomon, and by the sacrifices, whereby all the people supplicated and gave thanks to God, this house was set apart for God's worship and service. For then a thing or place is said to be *dedicated*, when it is first employed to that use unto which it is hereafter designed. Concerning which see Selden, lib. iii. De Synedriis, p. 204, &c.

Ver. 64. The same day did the king hallow the middle of the court] That is, the court of the priests, which he did not consecrate (for that was done before), but employed it to holy uses, and, as it were, honored it by religious acts (as Mr. Mede speaks upon Lev. xix. 30). And so the name of God is said to be *hallowed*, or sanctified by us, when we use it holily and reverently. Thus they explain it in the Gemara, he *hallowed it*; that is, he set up another altar there, as L'Empereur observes upon Codex Middoth, cap. 3. sect. 1.

There he offered burnt offerings.] In the middle of the court he erected several altars, for the reason following: and, indeed, the whole court was little enough upon this occasion, as Dr. Lightfoot acknowledges in his book of the Temple, p. 192, 193.

middle of the court that was before the house of the LORD: for there he offered burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings: because the brazen altar that was before the LORD was too little to receive the burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings.

62 And at that time Solomon held a feast, and all Israel with him, a great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt, before the LORD our God, seven days and seven days, *even* fourteen days.

Because the brazen altar] Near the door of this court.

Was too little] Therefore, by a special license from God, he set up other altars: which were to serve only during this present solemnity, when such a vast number of sacrifices were to be offered. But afterward no other altar was to be allowed, but that one brazen altar where God by Moses appointed all sacrifices should be offered; that they might be preserved in the worship of one only God. Therefore the Jews say these other altars which Solomon erected were of stone; which were soon pulled down again. But Fortunatus Scacchus hath said a great deal to make it probable that he did not erect any altars besides the brazen, but sacrificed upon the ground (Myrothec. ii. cap. 56).

Ver. 65. Solomon held a feast.] Such solemnities were usual among the heathen, when they celebrated the presence of any of their gods, as the illustrious Ezek. Spanhemius hath observed upon Callimachus's Hymn to Apollo (ver. 13), where he justly makes account that they derived this custom from this famous festival of king Solomon; which Josephus sets out admirably (see lib. viii. Archæolog. cap. 2).

From the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt.] Hamath was the utmost bounds of Judea to the north, called afterward Epiphania, and by the inhabitants at this day is called Hama. Sometimes the bounds of this kingdom this way are said to be the great river Euphrates; as by the river of Egypt, which was the south bounds, is commonly understood Nilus. So *Nahal* is translated by Jonathan, and the Jerusalem interpreter upon Numb. xxxiv. 5. And, indeed, the word *Nilus* comes from thence, for the Hebrew word was anciently pronounced not *Nahal* but *Neel*: from thence the Greek Νείλος, and the Latin *Nilus*, as Bochartus observes in his Hierozoicon par. ii. lib. v. cap. 15. But there the river of Egypt is that little stream which discharges itself into the sea, by the Lacus Sirbonides, between mount Casius and Rhinocolura, the last town of Palestine. It is called by Joshua (xiii. 1) Sichor, the same with Nile, because it was but a branch from the *alveus pelusiacus* of that great river (see Gen. xv. 18).

Seven days and seven days.] It appears by 2 Chron. vii. 9. that the feast of the dedication of the altar lasted seven days; and then the other seven days were the feast of tabernacles, which followed after the other.

Ver. 66. On the eighth day he sent the people away:] So Ezra likewise saith, 2 Chron. vii. 10, but adds, that it was the twenty-third day of the seventh month: whereas the last day of the feast of tabernacles (which was the eighth from the beginning) was the twenty-second. Therefore Solomon took his leave of them on the last day of the feast, which was the two-and-twentieth day of the month; and they went home the next day. By this also it appears, these fourteen days of feasting were not kept all together, without

66 On the eighth day he sent the people away : and they blessed the king, and went unto their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the

intermission : for the great day of expiation was on the tenth of this month ; seven days before which, I suppose, the feast of dedication was kept, and then they rested till the fifteenth, when the feast of tabernacles began.

They blessed the king,] Gave him thanks for his kindness, and prayed God to make his reign prosperous.

For all the goodness that the Lord had done for David] In the book of Chronicles it is added, "and

goodness that the LORD had done for David his servant, and for Israel his people.

unto Solomon:" but that is here included in the goodness of God to David, on whom God bestowed such a successor. With whose magnificent entertainments they were abundantly satisfied ; and rejoiced exceedingly, that God had done such great things for David and his family ; and made all Israel happy in the great peace and plenty which they enjoyed, together with God's holy religion so gloriously established among them.

CHAPTER IX.

1 *God's covenant in a vision with Solomon.* 10 *The mutual presents of Solomon and Hiram.* 15 *In Solomon's works the Gentiles were his bondmen, the Israelites honourable servants.* 24 *Pharaoh's daughter removed to her house.* 25 *Solomon's yearly solemn sacrifices.* 26 *His navy fetcheth gold from Ophir.*

1 And it came to pass, when Solomon had finished the building of the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all Solomon's desire which he was pleased to do.

2 That the LORD appeared to Solomon the second time, as he had appeared unto him at Gibeon.

3 And the LORD said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me : I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever ; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.

4 If thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments :

5 Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel.

6 *But if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them :*

7 Then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them ; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight ; and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people :

8 And at this house, *which is high*, every one that passeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss ; and they shall say, Why hath the LORD done thus unto this land, and to this house ?

CHAP. IX.

Ver. 1.] We are taught by Ezra (2 Chron. vii. 11) to understand these words in this manner: "Thus Solomon finished the house of the Lord," &c. and concluded all with the foregoing prayer, and the great festival which he kept.

Ver. 2.] When he appeared to him in a dream: and so it is said, 2 Chron. vii. 10, "the Lord appeared to Solomon by night." Which he had done once before, and no more; for that which he spake to him, vi. 11, 12, was by a prophet (see there).

Ver. 3. *The Lord said unto him,*] This shows that the first verse is to be understood as I have there observed; for otherwise, we must suppose this appearance of God to Solomon was eleven years after he had finished the house of the Lord. Which is not likely; but it is more natural to think it was the very next night after he had dismissed the people.

I have hallowed this house,] By the glorious cloud which came into it and filled it; and by the fire which, descending from heaven to consume the sacrifices, testified his acceptance of them.

To put my name there] Besides those visible tokens of his presence there, he now declares by word of mouth, that he owned this for his house; and would always dwell in it, if they kept his covenant, as the Targum here interprets it.

Mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.] By his eyes and his heart he means his gracious pro-

vidence, and his tender love and affection, should always have regard to what was done there; and it should be most acceptable to him.

Ver. 4.] In all things relating to religion and civil government, which David commonly did: though some time, and in one thing, he foully miscarried.

Ver. 5.] See 2 Sam. vii. 12, 13.

Ver. 6. *But if ye shall at all turn from following me,*] In the Hebrew the words are, "if in turning you turn from me;" which signifies more than their "at all turning from him." Rather it should be translated, "if they altogether turned from following him;" that is, fell to idolatry: for he did not intend to forsake them for every offence; but only when they forsook him, as the next words explain it.

But go and serve other gods,] There was a general corruption of their manners, when they fell to idolatry.

Ver. 7. *Then will I cut off Israel*] This shows that he speaks in the foregoing words of a general apostasy from him.

And this house,—will I cast out of my sight;] No longer continue his gracious presence there, which he had promised, ver. 3.

Israel shall be a proverb] So that when men would express how unhappy any one was, they should say, "As miserable as the Jews."

And a byword among all people:] Who mocked at their calamity.

Ver. 8. *And at this house, which is high,*] Renowned for its riches, and splendor, and great resort unto it.

9 And they shall answer, Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought forth their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have taken hold upon other gods, and have worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath the LORD brought upon them all this evil.

10 ¶ And it came to pass at the end of twenty years, when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the LORD, and the king's house,

11 (Now Hiram the king of Tyre had furnished Solomon with cedar trees and fir trees, and with gold, according to all his desire,) that then king

Every one that passeth by it shall be astonished, To see such a marvellous change; for Pliny testifies that Jerusalem was the most famous city in the east, as Grotius observes.

And shall hiss;] Out of scorn and derision shall ask what is the matter, that this famous place, which boasted so much of the favour of God, is laid in ruin.

Ver. 9.] The Jews were forced to give this account of their calamity.

Ver. 10.] The former of which was seven years in building, the latter thirteen (vi. 38. vii. 1).

Ver. 11. *Hiram the king of Tyre had furnished Solomon—with gold.*] See ch. v. 8. 10, where mention is made of these trees, but nothing said of gold: but in the fourteenth verse of this chapter we find that Hiram sent him a hundred and twenty talents of gold. Which it is not likely he gave Solomon; who rather purchased so much of him for wheat and oil, and such-like things which Hiram's country wanted; though it abounded with gold. For the Tyrians were great merchants, fetching gold from Ophir (ver. 27, 28).

Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee.] They were near or adjoining to the country of Galilee (as the particle *beth* frequently signifies), but were no part of the land of Canaan, when it was divided among the Israelites: for that could not be alienated, being God's heritage. They were therefore cities out of the territories of Israel, as appears from Josh. ix. 27, but had been conquered partly by Pharaoh, who gave them to Solomon, as part of his daughter's portion; and partly by Solomon himself, who had power to dispose of them; especially since at that time they were not inhabited by the Israelites (see 2 Chron. viii. 2, and Grotius, De Jure Belli et Pacis, lib. i. cap. 3. sect. 12. n. 3). Hotoman, indeed, a famous lawyer, thinks that Solomon did not give Hiram a propriety, and perpetual right in these cities; but only the possession and enjoyment of them till the debt was satisfied, which Solomon had contracted, by the assistance which Hiram afforded him in building the temple. But his ground is not solid: for as our Selden also hath shown (lib. vi. De Jure Nat. et Gent. cap. 16), the kings of Israel might dispose of those lands which they had conquered in a voluntary war, without the consent of the senate. Bochartus also is of the same mind, that these cities were no part of the country of Judea: but Abarbinel confirms Hotoman's opinion, that the revenues of these cities were given to him till the debt was discharged.

Ver. 12.] Were not suitable to his desire, and the genius of his people; for the soil being fat and very deep (as is generally thought), it required great labor to till it, and was not pleasant to dwell in.

Ver. 13. *What cities are these which thou hast given me.*] These are not words of contempt; for it is not likely that Solomon, who had been highly obliged to Hiram (and was in his own temper very generous), would give him that which was of little value. But

Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee.

12 And Hiram came out from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him; and they pleased him not.

13 And he said, What cities are these which thou hast given me, my brother? And he called them the land of Cabul unto this day.

14 And Hiram sent to the king sixscore talents of gold.

15 ¶ And this is the reason of the levy which king Solomon raised; for to build the house of

his meaning is, these cities were not such as would serve his purpose; which made him return them to Solomon again (2 Chron. viii. 2); who, no doubt, made him some other recompense, which gave him better satisfaction. Abarbinel thinks, that Solomon having agreed to give Hiram so many measures of wheat and oil, as are mentioned, v. 11, with which he had supplied him every year; now that this work was ended, gave him this country, out of which he might raise this provision for his household himself. Which Hiram did not like, because his people were addicted to merchandise, not to agriculture: but did not upon this account break off friendship with Solomon, as appears by the following history.

He called them the land of Cabul] It is commonly thought that Hiram called them, by way of contempt, *Cabul*; which signifies "a dirty country:" or, as Josephus will have it, *displeasing* (as we translate it in the margin of our Bibles). For *Chabulon*, he saith, in the Phœnician language, signifies as much as *οὐκ ἀρεσόν*, "that which doth not please" (lib. viii. Archæol. cap. 2). But the LXX. seem to have understood the word better; who translate it *ἔριον*, the term or bound: as if *Cabul* were the same with *Gebul*: *caph* and *gimel* being frequently changed, as Bochartus observes; who approves of this signification of the word. For *Chabulon* was that tract of ground which bounded the lower Galilee: extending from Tiberias unto this place, as Josephus himself saith, lib. iii. De Bello Judaico, cap. 2 (see Bochartus, in his Canaan, lib. ii. cap. 4).

Ver. 14. *And Hiram sent*] It may be better translated, "and Hiram had sent," &c. See ver. 11, where the reason is given why Solomon offered him so rich a country. Which, though he did not like, yet these words, Abarbinel thinks, signify, that notwithstanding Hiram continued his generous friendship with Solomon, and after that sent him all this gold; or, it was sent him as his share in their traffic to Ophir, mentioned in the conclusion of this chapter.

Ver. 15. *This is the reason of the levy which king Solomon raised;*] That the raising of a great tribute upon the people, and employing so many men in his works, might not seem strange, he here shows the cause of it; which was his great and numerous buildings; suitable to the high dignity to which God had advanced him. But Mr. Selden hath shown, by many instances, that the word *mas* is used, not only for pecuniary tribute, but for corporeal labor. And thus he interprets these words, "this is the cause of requiring the labor and work of so many men." Which when he had declared, viz. his great buildings, then he proceeds (ver. 20), to relate who they were that he employed in this service (lib. vi. De Jure Nat. et Gent. cap. 14).

For to build the house of the Lord, and his own house,] Of which an account hath been already given.

And Milla,] Which was a large and very beautiful place (as Abarbinel takes it), near to Zion; where the

the Lord, and his own house, and Millo, and the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, and Megiddo, and Gezer.

16 For Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up, and taken Gezer, and burnt it with fire, and slain the Canaanites that dwelt in the city, and given it for a present unto his daughter, Solomon's wife.

17 And Solomon built Gezer, and Beth-horon the nether,

18 And Baalath, and Tadmor in the wilderness, in the land,

Israelites were wont to meet, and take their pleasure : and because it was *full of people*, was therefore called *Millo*; which signifies *fullness*, or repletion. Now David had built round about Zion, *from Millo inward* (as we read 2 Sam. v. 9), but had left the structure of Millo itself imperfect; which Solomon now completed, with a particular respect to Pharaoh's daughter, whose house was near to it (ver. 21, of this chapter). In this place some think there was a strong fortress built, which they gather from xi. 27, and 2 Chron. xxxii. 5. But others will have it to signify that deep valley or ditch (it may be called) which was between mount Zion (the city of David) and mount Moriah, on which the temple stood. Therefore, that there might be a convenient passage from the king's palace to the house of God, Solomon joined these two mountains by a bridge or a causeway, which could not be done without filling up the valley, or making great arches; some think the one, and some the other.

The wall of Jerusalem.] Which was a great structure. For there were three walls, one within another, as Abarbanel and Joseph ben Gorion explain it: the inner wall compassing the house of God and the house of the king; the middle wall compassing the houses of the prophets and great persons (which explains 2 Kings xxii. 14), and the third compassing the houses of all the people.

Hazor.] Which had been a very eminent city, and the head of some kingdoms before the conquest of Canaan, (Josh. xi. 10), and was given to the tribe of Naphtali (Josh. xix. 36).

Megiddo.] A city in the tribe of Manasseh (Josh. xvii. 11).

Gezer.] In the tribe of Ephraim (Josh. xxi. 21).

Ver. 16. For Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up, and taken Gezer,—and slain the Canaanites.] For the Israelites could not dispossess the Canaanites, but they continued, in Joshua's time, and after, to dwell in Gezer (Josh. xvi. 10. Judg. i. 29). And it seems David and Solomon did not expel them, but continued them under tribute; until Pharaoh, upon some provocation (which is not recorded), utterly extirpated them, and burnt their city. This was done, I suppose, before the marriage of Solomon with Pharaoh's daughter; and was the very first expedition that the Egyptians made out of their own country, as Sir John Marsham thinks, in his *Can. Chron. Seculum* 14.

And given it for a present unto his daughter, Solomon's wife.] It is likely he had begun to repair the city: and now upon the marriage of his daughter restored it to Solomon, who perfectly rebuilt it.

Ver. 17.] This is, having finished the building of Gezer, he built the lower Beth-horon, which was in the tribe of Benjamin (Josh. xviii. 13, 14): and Ezra tells us also (in 2 Chron. viii. 5) Beth-horon the upper, which was in the tribe of Ephraim (Josh. xvi. 5), but not here mentioned: either because it was not of so great consequence, or did not need so much reparation as the other.

Ver. 18. *Baalath.*] There was a city of this name

19 And all the cities of store that Solomon had, and cities for his chariots, and cities for his horsemen, and that which Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, and in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion.

20 And all the people that were left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, which were not of the children of Israel,

21 Their children that were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel also were

in the tribe of Dan (Josh. xix. 41). But it is likely this was a city near Tadmor, where Baal had been formerly worshipped: for Baal was one of the gods of that people, it appears in the following observation.

Tadmor in the wilderness.] This word *Tadmor* signifies in Hebrew as much as *Palma* in Latin. From whence it was called by the Romans *Palmyra*; which was one of the most splendid cities in the eastern countries: which gave name to the *Palmyrene Solitudes*, mentioned by Pliny and Ptolemy. There have been lately, after twelve hundred years' obscurity, several noble inscriptions found in this place by some that travelled into this wilderness: but Bechartus hath one of far greater antiquity, of two Phœnician gods, Aglibelus and Melahbelus, viz. the summer and the winter sun; in his *Geogr. Sacra*, par. ii. called *Canaan*, lib. ii. cap. 8. p. 811. where he calls this Tadmor a city of Phœnicia.

In the land.] Of Hamath Zobah (a part of Syria), as Ezra seems to expound it (2 Chron. viii. 3, 4), which country Solomon had conquered.

Ver. 19. *All the cities of store.*] Where he laid up corn against a time of need; or arms and ammunition in case of war. Some will have them cities where he kept his treasure, which is not likely.

Cities for his chariots, and—horsemen.] Which he had in great number (iv. 26).

And that which Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, &c.] So that whithersoever he went, he had a house for his entertainment in every part of his country. Behold, saith Abarbanel, the reason of the tribute (ver. 15) is given from all these buildings: and after he had finished them, he laid no further tribute upon his people: who murmured at these impositions, as we find, after he was dead; but in these public buildings a great number of hands were employed, whereby idleness was expelled, manufactures were learnt, the poor were relieved, all the meaner people exercised, cities adorned, diseases driven away, and no place left for envy and sedition: while the subjects found the treasure that was raised employed for the benefit of so many of them; as Bodinus discourses, in his book *De Republica*, lib. xi. cap. 2, where he observes how Augustus, having settled the empire in peace, kept the people in their duty by this means; repairing many temples, decayed by time, or burnt by fire, laying out vast sums upon the chapel of Jupiter Capitolinus, and other public edifices; in-somuch, that he gloried, "he left Rome a marble city, which he found a brick."

Ver. 20.] But by this time were become, I suppose, proselytes to the Jewish religion, as the Gibeonites were, or at least renounced their idolatry.

Ver. 21.] He was able to have rooted them all out, as the law required; but that command did not take place after they had submitted, and made peace with the Israelites (as those words suppose, Josh. ix. 19). And they seem now to have been in so poor a condition, that Solomon did not lay any tribute of money

not able utterly to destroy, upon those did Solomon levy a tribute of bondservice unto this day.

22 But of the children of Israel did Solomon make no bondmen : but they were men of war, and his servants, and his princes, and his captains, and rulers of his chariots, and his horsemen.

23 These were the chief of the officers that were over Solomon's work, five hundred and fifty, which bare rule over the people that wrought in the work.

upon them ; but only of burdensome labor. Of these were the seventy thousand that bare burdens, and eighty thousand that were hewers in the mountains : mentioned v. 15. Thus Mr. Selden, in the place above mentioned, explains these words, " they were not able utterly to destroy : " which was not for want of power, but because they had made a covenant with them, and did not consume them (as it is in 2 Chron. viii. 8). But they would not receive them into peace with them, till they became proselytes of the gate : and when they had done so, they became tributaries : and therefore such persons, by virtue of their covenant, Solomon now commanded to this service (see lib. vi. De Jure Nat. et Gent. cap. 14).

Ver. 22. *But of the children of Israel did Solomon make no bondmen :* By this means he spared the children of Israel, whom he did not employ in any servile labor about his public works ; but put them into nobler offices, as it here follows. Yet this implies that his royal power might have laid such loads on them, if he had not designed to rule with great gentleness over them.

They were men of war,] Which was accounted an honourable employment.

His servants,] Officers in his court.

His princes,] Governors of province.

His captains, &c.] Commanders of his guards.

Ver. 23.] In 2 Chron. viii. 10, they are said to be but two hundred and fifty. For the Hebrew doctors commonly say that there were of these officers but two hundred and fifty Israelites : the other three hundred were proselytes. But the plainest account of this is given by Abarbanel, that there were only two hundred and fifty set over those that wrought in the temple : the rest were employed in looking after his public works in other places. And it must be observed, also, that there were far greater numbers employed when the temple work was carried on with great speed, as we read before (v. 16).

Ver. 24.] There was not the like necessity for building Millo that there was for building the walls of Jerusalem, and the cities before named : but he did it (as Abarbanel observes) in honour, and for the pleasure of Pharaoh's daughter ; who was to remove unto a house near to it. And the reason she did not continue in the house where David had dwelt, we are told in 2 Chron. viii. 11, which was, because it was a kind of holy place, where it was not fit for her to remain ; the ark of God having dwelt there.

Ver. 25. *Three times in a year did Solomon offer burnt offerings*] The meaning is not, that he offered sacrifices no oftener ; but that he never failed to keep the three solemn festivals which God commanded to be observed by every body, when he offered sacrifices suitable to those great mercies which were then commemorated ; and to the great blessings God had bestowed upon his family.

He burnt incense upon the altar that was before the Lord.] In the holy place, before the oracle. Where he could not burn it himself ; but he gave it to the priests at his own charge, to be offered with a par-

24 ¶ But Pharaoh's daughter came up out of the city of David unto her house which Solomon had built for her : then did he build Millo.

25 ¶ And three times in a year did Solomon offer burnt offerings and peace offerings upon the altar which he built unto the LORD, and he burnt incense upon the altar that was before the LORD. So he finished the house.

26 ¶ And king Solomon made a navy of ships in Ezion-geber, which is beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red sea, in the land of Edom.

ticular respect to him. This, it is likely he did every day, morning and evening.

So he finished the house.] This was said before, but now repeated ; because, after he had kept the three great festivals there, it was not only consecrated, but all Divine offices had been performed in it ; and there was nothing more to be added.

Ver. 26. *Ezion-geber,*] This name, *Ezion-geber* signifies *spina viri* ; it lying in a rocky, ragged shore, running out into the sea like the back bone of a man. So Arrianus (as Bochartus observes) in his *Periplus* describes the inmost part of the Sinus Arabicus (where *Ezion-geber* lay) as very dangerous, because of the rocks and shelves. Which makes it less strange, that the ships of Jehoshaphat were broken there in pieces in the very port, before they put out to sea (2 Kings xxii. 48). Inasmuch that in aftertimes this port was forsaken, and they frequented Elath. Josephus will have *Ezion-geber* to be the same with *Berenice*, a city on the African shore, over against Syene ; others have a different conjecture, when the scripture plainly teaches us that it was a port of Idumea, not far from Aela upon the Red Sea ; and not far distant from the wilderness of Zin. For the Israelites removed their camp from this place to that wilderness, as we read Numb. xxxiii. 36.

Beside Eloth,] Or *Elath*, for it is called by both names ; and by the Greeks and Romans, *Aela*, and *Ailat*, and *Elat*, and *Elana*, &c. Which was a port known in the days of Moses (Deut. ii. 8), belonging to the Edomites ; and, as St. Jerome saith, to the Egyptians : for it was *ambigui juris*, lying on the confines of both countries. Inasmuch that Sir John Marsham thinks Solomon and Hiram now built ships there, with the good leave of Pharaoh ; the Egyptians now not minding merchandise, but were set upon conquering countries ; but David having conquered Edom (2 Sam. viii. 14), I rather think became master of this port ; where Solomon built a navy of ships in his own right, and went thither himself to see it (2 Chron. viii. 17). It continued in the possession of the Israelites about a hundred and fifty years, till, in the time of Joram, the Edomites recovered it (2 Kings viii. 20). But it was again taken from them by Azariah, and left by him to his son (2 Kings xiv. 22), but lost again by his grandson Ahaz, from whom the king of Syria took it (2 Kings xvi. 6). The Syrians held it a long time, till after many changes under the Ptolemies and the Seleucidae, it came into the hands of the Romans, who quartered there the tenth legion, as St. Jerome tells us (see Bochartus, in the second part of his *Geographica Sacra*, called *Canaan*, lib. i. cap. 44).

On the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom.] What the Hebrews call the sea of Suph, other nations call the sea of Edom, from the country which it washes, viz. Idumea, as appears from this place. From whence the Greeks (not knowing the reason of the name) call it *ἰρυθρὴν θάλασσαν*, " the Red Sea : " the word *Edom* signifying *rubrum* or *rufum*, red or yellow, as Bochartus and Ludolphus have observed.

Ver. 27.] The navy was Solomon's, who had ser-

27 And Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon.

vants of his own on board the ships, to go and traffic at Ophir: but they had no skill in navigation, and therefore Hiram sent as many Tyrians as were necessary to man the ships; they having been always bred at sea.

Ver. 28. *Ophir*.] It is certain there was a place called Ophir, or as the LXX. call it Σόφιρ (which word Josephus also uses instead of Ophir), and by others called 'Οφάρ, which was in Arabia Felix. But this cannot be the place here meant, as Bochartus hath demonstrated by many arguments, in his Phaleg. lib. ii. cap. 27. This one is sufficient, that it was a three years' voyage to Ophir here mentioned: whereas the other was very near the place where the navy was prepared. And besides, they fetched ivory from Ophir, whereas there are no elephants in Arabia; therefore we must search for it somewhere else; and there is little doubt it was in India: but in what part of it is not so easy to be determined. The famous Bochartus thinks it was Taprobana; which is the same with that now called Zeilan, or Seilan. For what the ancients say of Taprobana, that the moderns say of Zeilan: as he hath shown in a very large diagram of both countries, in his Canaan, lib. i. cap. 46. And indeed, Grotius before him concluded, there was no better way to guess where this place was, than by considering what commodities were brought from thence, and inquiring of merchants (who have been in the remote parts of the world) where not only gold and silver, and precious stones, but ivory, and all the rest that were fetched from Ophir, are to be found now. And, in a letter to his brother, he desires him to make this inquiry for him (see Epistol. 483).

Fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents.] It is said in 2 Chron. viii. 18, that they brought four hundred and fifty: but we may well

28 And they came to Ophir, and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought it to king Solomon.

suppose that thirty talents might be spent in the charges of the voyage to and fro; so that only four hundred and twenty came to Solomon's coffers. Or rather, as Abarbinel thinks, Solomon gave the servants of Hiram, who managed the ships, thirty talents for a gratuity. Or, as Laniado (who delights to contradict Abarbinel), the Jerusalem talent was bigger than that of Ophir: so that four hundred and fifty Ophir talents made but four hundred and twenty Jerusalem talents. It is easy also to say, that there came of gold refined only four hundred and twenty into Solomon's treasury; though the whole mass was four hundred and fifty.

Brought it to king Solomon.] It is no improbable conjecture of Abarbinel, that Solomon at first trafficked in the ships of Hiram; which voyage brought him for his share the hundred and twenty talents mentioned ver. 11 of this chapter: which Hiram is said to have sent to him, as the profit (that is) of his adventure. Which was so great that Solomon resolved to build a navy of his own; at which Hiram was so far from being offended, that, like a true friend, he furnished him with mariners to manage the ships; and they brought him this great quantity of gold at their return from their first voyage.

The imperial laws forbid noblemen to exercise merchandise as a thing below them: and therefore it much less becomes a king, as Bodinus discourses, lib. vi. De Republ. cap. 2. But we must not measure antiquity by our own times; and that author well adds, that though he would not have kings now to be merchants, yet if he might have his choice, Mercatorum cum malo quam tyrannum, &c. "I had rather a prince should be a merchant than a tyrant;" and noblemen should rather trade than oppress and make a prey of their tenants.

CHAPTER X.

1 The queen of Sheba admireth the wisdom of Solomon. 14 Solomon's gold. 16 His targets. 18 The throne of ivory. 21 His vessels. 24 His presents. 26 His chariots and horse. 28 His tribute.

1 AND when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to prove him with hard questions.

2 And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones: and when she

CHAPTER X.

Ver. 1. *When the queen of Sheba*] Josephus thinks she was queen of Meroe, which was anciently called Saba. But a great many of his countrymen more rightly understand this matter; who say she came from Aljemin, which was the south part of Arabia Felix, near the Red Sea; and so our Saviour calls her the queen of the south, which is the signification of *Jemin* in Hebrew; and in Arabic, with the addition of *Al*, is called *Aljemin*.

Heard of the fame of Solomon] Theodoret thinks she was a religious woman, as far as the light of nature guided her; and if we may believe the Hebrew tradition, she had some tincture of revealed religion from her pious ancestors: for they think she was descended from Abraham by Keturah, one of whose sons begat Sheba (1 Chron. i. 32). Now she came to hear of Solomon's fame by the ships that went to Ophir: for they sailed by her coast, and in all likelihood spread his fame there, as they did in all other

places where they touched, proclaiming his magnificence, and especially his wisdom, and his glorious temple which he had built for the worship of his God: whose praise they set forth as far above all gods.

She came to prove him with hard questions.] To try whether he was so wise as report made him; by propounding difficult questions to him, which none but a man divinely illuminated could resolve, as Abarbinel understands it.

Ver. 2. *She came to Jerusalem*] The fable of Agatharides is confuted by this, which saith the royal dignity among the Sabaens was but a kind of captivity. For after the inauguration of their king, it was forbid, by an ancient oracle, that he should stir out of his palace upon pain of stoning: but there he enjoyed himself in all manner of pleasure.

With a very great train.] Royally attended.
Spices, and very much gold, and precious stones.] These presents which she brought to Solomon are a great argument she came from Arabia Felix, which abounded with such things, but none of them are in

was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart.

3 And Solomon told her all her questions: there was not *any* thing hid from the king, which he told her not.

4 And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built,

5 And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the Lord; there was no more spirit in her.

6 And she said to the king, It was a true re-

port that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom.

7 Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard.

8 Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom.

9 Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel, because the Lord loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice.

10 And she gave the king an hundred and

verment; and transcended in the knowledge of divine matters, as his book shows us; having all things likewise in such order both in his house and everywhere else, that it was amazing. A very great man of our own observes, that such things as these—the apparel, the sitting and attendance of his servants, were justly admired by her as an indication of Solomon's wisdom. For they are the outworks which preserve majesty itself from approaches and surprisals. And whatsoever prince departs from these forms, and trappings, and ornaments of his dignity and pre-eminence, will hardly be able, at some time, to preserve the body itself of majesty from intrusion, invasion and violation.

Ver. 6. *She said to the king,*] When she had recovered herself out of her astonishment.

It was a true report that I heard—of thy acts] They did not deceive her, who, by their reports of him, moved her to take this long journey.

Ver. 7. *I believed not the words, until I came,*] She thought they might magnify things too much, as travellers are wont to do; especially when they speak of their own country.

Thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard.] This was very extraordinary; for commonly men find things fall far short of their expectations.

Ver. 8. *Happy are thy men,*] His subjects.

Happy are these thy servants,] Especially those that were about his person, and ministered unto him; who had opportunity every day to hear his wise sayings and discourses.

Ver. 9. *Blessed be the Lord thy God,*] One would think, by this, that she became a proselyte before she returned to her own country; whither she carried better things than she presented to Solomon (which the next verses mention); the treasures of heavenly wisdom. Philostorgius, indeed, saith that in his time the Sabæans sacrificed to the sun and moon, and certain demons of their own country; and yet *ἐκ περιτοῦν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ*, &c. "the nation was circumcised after the Jewish manner on the eighth day." Which rite they received, one would think, from this queen, and retained it a long time, though they continued their old superstition. It is possible indeed, that the Jews who lived among them, might persuade them to it. For the same Philostorgius saith, *οὐκ ὀλίγον πλῆθος Ἰουδαίων αὐτοῖς ἀνατίθηρται*, "no small number of Jews was mingled with them."

Which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel:] A most excellent admonition both to the people and to the king; that they should think themselves highly obliged to God, who had given them such a king; and he should think God made him king to govern his people justly. This sense the wise heathen had, that governors were set over men by God for their good: as Aristotle told Alexander in a letter to him, wherein he exhorts him to keep in mind, that

Meroc: nor can Meroc be said to be the ends of the earth, from whence our Saviour saith this queen came, there being many large countries in Africa beyond Meroc, but none beyond the Sabæans in Arabia, whose country lay upon the sea. See Bochartus, in his Phaleg. lib. ii. cap. 26, where he shows they abounded in gold, having such plenty of it from Ophir, that they exchanged it for brass and iron, &c. giving double, or thrice the weight of them. And yet the Abyssine Christians (who say her name was Marqueda) are very confident she came from their country; where it is as constant a tradition that she had a son by Solomon, from whom their kings are derived. So Ludolphus observes, in his notes upon the confession of Claudius king of Ethiopia, where he saith, this was "the faith of his father the Israelitish king."

She communed with him] Had the liberty to propound whatsoever she desired to be resolved about; either in natural, I suppose, or divine things.

Ver. 3. *Solomon told her all her questions:*] That is, answered them to her satisfaction. There was nothing so secret, which he did not reveal to her.

Ver. 4. *Had seen all Solomon's wisdom,*] Had fully discovered the wonderful variety of wisdom where-with he was endowed.

The house that he had built,] Both for God and for himself; the magnificence of which was admirable.

Ver. 5. *The meat of his table,*] Where it is likely she was entertained while she stayed at Jerusalem.

The sitting of his servants,] At their table.

The attendance of his ministers,] Who waited on him at his table, and in his chamber, and other places.

Their apparel,] Which was different, I suppose, according to their several offices; but all very stately.

His cupbearers,] Who filled out his wine, and brought and delivered it to him; with such ceremony as made his grandeur appear in that small thing.

His ascent by which he went up unto the house of the Lord;] From his own palace; of which L'Empereur gives an account, upon Codex Middoth, p. 50. But the ancient interpreters understand by the word *olatho* not his ascent, but his burnt-offering, which he offered in the house of the Lord. And it is very likely, she saw the service of God's ministers in his house, as well as Solomon's in his own house; and was made by Solomon to understand the meaning of everything that was done there. Which must needs put her into an ecstasy of admiration, as it here follows. And thus the LXX. translate these words, *καὶ τὴν ὄψασιν αὐτοῦ ἣν ἔβλεπεν ἐν οἴκῳ κυρίου*, whom P. Martyr, Victorinus Strigelius, and others, follow in these words: Et holocausta ejus, quæ in domo Domini offerrebat; "and his burnt offerings, which he offered in the house of the Lord."

There was no more spirit in her,] She was perfectly astonished. For as he discoursed of all sorts of natural things, so he was no less skilful in political go-

twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones : there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon.

11 And the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug trees, and precious stones.

12 And the king made of the almug trees pillars for the house of the Lord, and for the king's house, harps also and psalteries for singers : there came no such almug trees, nor were seen unto this day.

13 And king Solomon gave unto the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, be-

side that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants.

14 ¶ Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold,

15 Beside that he had of the merchantmen, and of the traffic of the spice merchants, and of all the kings of Arabia, and of the governors of the country.

16 ¶ And king Solomon made two hundred targets of beaten gold : six hundred shekels of gold went to one target.

17 And he made three hundred shields of

his kingdom was given him by God, for the sake of mankind, *εις ευεργεσιαν, ου προς οβρα*, "that he might do them good, and not abuse them."

Ver. 10. *She gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold.*] Though we do not find that the ancients speak of any mines of gold in the Sabæans' country; yet they abounded with it, being near to that Ophir which I before mentioned, and is spoken of in the book of Job, xxii. 24. xxviii. 16 (in an age when they were not acquainted with the Indian Ophir, which was very remote from them). And several other places there were also near to them, which had plenty of gold, as Bochart shows in his Phalæg. lib. ii. cap. 27. p. 159, &c.

Of spices very great store, and precious stones:] This country was famous for myrrh, frankincense, and cinnamon (Josephus adds balsam also), as Bochart observes, out of many authors in the same book, cap. 26. p. 149. 153. For their very fires were made of cassia and cinnamon. Precious stones also he shows were so common in this country, that they adorned their cups, and their beds, and their stools, &c. with them (see him, p. 150).

There came no more such abundance of spices] For it seems the Jews maintained no trade with this country.

Ver. 11. *The navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir.*] This is meant of Ophir in India, mentioned ix. 28. From which Hiram's navy is said to bring gold, though the ships were Solomon's, because Hiram's servants had the management of them.

Brought—great plenty of almug trees.] It is very uncertain what these almug, or algum-trees were (as they are called by a transposition of letters in 2 Chron. ii. 8). Our famous Dr. Castell thinks it was the wood called *sanctulum*, which is proper for all the uses mentioned in the next verse, and is still in India. And R. D. Kimchi, upon that place in the Chronicles, saith it was a red wood which is now called *brazil*. By which cannot be meant the wood that comes from Brazil, for that country was not known in his days; but probably he calls it *brazil*, from the Hebrew word *barcel*, which signifies *iron*; it being of such a dark colour. And such a wood there is now in the kingdom of Java, as Gousset observes out of Thevet, and other authors, in his Comment. Linguae Hebr.

Ver. 12. *The king made of the almug trees pillars.*] Or rather rails (as we translate it in the margin of our Bibles), which were made on either side the causeway which went up from the king's house to the house of the Lord. Compare this with 1 Chron. xxvi. 16. 18, and 2 Chron. ix. 11, and see Dr. Lightfoot of the Temple, p. 125, where he only quotes Rabbag, who saith he made battlements, i. e. rails, on either side, that men by them might stay themselves as they went along the highway of that ascent.

There came no such almug trees,] This account of

almug-trees is mixed with the story of the queen of Sheba, because she is said (ver. 5), to have admired the ascent (as we translate it) which Solomon made to the house of the Lord. Which appeared the more magnificent, because the rails thereof were made of this rare wood. Which Abarbanel fancies was coral, which grows in the very sea, and they had never seen before; nor did any come after.

Ver. 13. *Solomon gave unto the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked.*] By their mutual presents, which she made to him (ver. 10), and he at her departure made to her, they testified their friendship to each other; desiring by these to be remembered. And Solomon desired to know what would be most acceptable to her, among all the rarities she had seen, which he bestowed upon her; besides, he generously added more things of value, which it is likely she had not in her own country.

So she turned and went to her own country.] Accompanied, it is probable, with many of the Israelites, who went and planted themselves there: from whom sprung those Jews, who, Philostorgius saith, were mixed with the Sabæans in no small numbers, as I observed, ver. 9. But the Jews of whom he speaks were such as settled there after the last captivity; and it was not lawful for a Jew, while the temple stood, to settle in a place, from whence he could not come three times a year to worship at Jerusalem.

Ver. 14.] The history of the queen of Sheba being ended he returns to give an account of Solomon's riches and magnificence; which he had begun to set forth before. And first he relates what a vast quantity of gold was brought into his country every year; not only from Ophir, but from other countries, unto which perhaps the queen of Sheba opened him a passage.

Ver. 15. *The merchantmen.*] Who paid custom for the goods they brought from several countries; or, as Abarbanel thinks, the *men of Hattarim* (as the words are in the Hebrew) signify a certain nation, viz. the Tartars (as they are now called), who brought commodities from the north country to the people of Israel, as others did from the south.

Spice merchants.] There is no reason thus to translate these words, as the same author thinks: but they signify in general all sorts of traders, who brought in merchandise, by sea or land.

All the kings of Arabia.] Who sent him presents. *Governors of the country.*] Which David or he had conquered, and placed governors there; who gathered his tribute, and sent it to him every year.

Ver. 16, 17.] These *targets* and *shields* seem to have been made for state and pomp; to be carried before him, upon some special occasions. Though we do read in the Roman authors of some great captains to whom golden shields were granted, as a reward of their great valour: and these perhaps might be intended for the same purpose. But then we must not

beaten gold; three pound of gold went to one shield: and the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon.

18 ¶ Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with the best gold.

19 The throne had six steps, and the top of the throne was round behind: and there were stays on either side on the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the stays.

20 And twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps: there was not the like made in any kingdom.

think that the shields weighed but six hundred shekels (which would have been so small as to be of no use), but that each cost six hundred shekels of gold; as Fortunatus Seacchus observes, Myrothec. iii. cap. 3.

The king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon.] Where, it is likely, he kept his most precious treasure. See concerning this house, vii. 2, which Josephus saith the queen of Sheba admired above all things she saw in Judea: the vast multitude of cedar pillars that were in it, making it look like the forest of Lebanon: from whence some think it had its name.

Ver. 18. Great throne of ivory.] We never read of ivory till about Solomon's time; who, perhaps, brought elephants out of India, and took care to have a great deal of ivory brought with them. Inasmuch, that we read of ivory palaces (Ps. xlv. 9), whose walls were overlaid with ivory; which was more precious than gold in ancient times, as Pliny tells in many places.

Overlaid it with the best gold.] Not entirely, so as to cover the ivory (for then it might as well have been made of wood), but here and there; as P. Martyr reasonably conjectures. Which made the throne appear more beautiful by the mixture of gold and ivory; with which, at due distances, it was studded. In this throne he sat when he administered justice, and gave audience to ambassadors, and the like.

Ver. 19. Had six steps.] Was advanced to a just height, that he might be seen and heard by all.

Round behind:] Making a half circle over his head.

There were stays on either side—of the seat,] Like one of our great chairs, which have rests to lean one's arms upon, on either side.

Two lions stood beside.] As their supporters.

Ver. 20. Twelve lions stood—upon the six steps:] Upon every step a lion stood reared up, on each side, as if he was falling upon his prey: which many interpreters think had a mystical meaning in it, as every thing else had belonging to this throne; with which I shall not trouble the reader. Grotius thinks he offended in making these figures; and having once begun to transgress the law, he grew still worse and worse.

There was not the like made in any kingdom.] That is, in those times there was none to be compared with it; but in after-ages there were perhaps more glorious. For Athenæus saith, the throne of the Parthian kings was of gold, encompassed with four golden pillars, beset with precious stones (lib. xii. Deipnos). And the Persian kings, he saith, sat in judgment under a golden vine (and other trees of gold), the bunches of whose grapes were made of several sorts of precious stones.

Ver. 21. In the days of Solomon.] Who brought in such plenty of gold, that it made silver of less value while he lived.

Ver. 22. A navy of Tharshish with the navy of Hiram:] These words are added to give a further account how Solomon came to have gold in such abundance: for he trafficked for it in another fleet, besides

21 ¶ And all king Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold; none were of silver: it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon.

22 For the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish with the navy of Hiram: once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks.

23 So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom.

24 ¶ And all the earth sought to Solomon, to

that which went to Ophir. That fleet, it is plain, was Solomon's, and sailed out of his own port Ezion-geber (ix. 26), though it was manned by Tyrians, because they understood the sea. Whereas this navy here spoken of belonged to Hiram, and went out of his port at Tyre; and Solomon had only the liberty to trade in it to Tharshish. Which was a place where-with the Tyrians had very ancient commerce; and therefore Hiram was the chief in this voyage, as Solomon was in that to Ophir.

Once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold, and silver.] It was not so far off, that they could not return in less than three years: but, as Abarinel supposes, they went thither in the end of one year, and stayed there the next to vend and buy their commodities; and then returned in the beginning of the third year. Bochartus hath made it very probable that this place was Tartessus in Spain, where gold and silver in ancient times, if we may believe Strabo and others, whom he quotes, were plentiful. But I do not find any proof that ivory, apes, and peacocks, were the commodities of that country (see his Phaleg, lib. iii. cap. 7).

Ivory.] The Hebrew word *senhabim* is of doubtful signification: but the word *sen*, or *shen*, certainly signifying a tooth, interpreters have supposed that *habim* signifies an elephant; and both together import elephant's teeth, i. e. ivory. But it is hard to give an account of this word *habim*: therefore Bochartus rather thinks that the whole word *senhabim* signifies an elephant: which best agrees with what follows, apes and peacocks, all three signifying living creatures: and, indeed, ivory itself, in this chapter, is simply called by the name of *sen*: where he speaks of Solomon's throne, ver. 18 (see his Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. i. cap. 20).

And apes,] The Hebrew word *kephim* is both by the ancients and moderns translated *apes*; which creature Pliny calls *cephos*; and saith they were seen but once at Rome in his days, and that they came out of Ethiopia. So that if Tharshish was in Spain, they that sailed thither trafficked in Afric also before they came home (see Bochartus, in his Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. iii. cap. 31).

And peacocks.] The LXX. do not venture to translate the Hebrew word *thuuccijim*: but the Chaldee, Syriac, Arabic, and Latin, translate it as we do, *peacocks*: and so do the most learned among the Jews, as Bochartus shows in a long dissertation; where he probably guesses this creature had its name by a small transposition of letters from *Cuthagim*; as much as to say a bird of Cuth, or a Persian bird. Which transpositions are so usual, that we have an instance of it in this chapter: the trees here called *almugim*, being called in the Chronicles *algunin*. See Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 23, where he shows how beautiful a creature this is: which might well be brought from foreign countries to Judea, where there were none of them.

hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart.

25 And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and armour, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year.

26 ¶ And Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen : and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he bestowed in the cities for chariots, and with the king at Jerusalem.

27 And the king made silver to be in Jerusa-

Ver 23.] The latter of which he begged of God ; who graciously promised to add the former ; which he did to admiration.

Ver. 24.] That is, the great men of the neighbouring countries came, as the queen of Sheba did, to be acquainted with his wisdom ; which they heard was a divine gift.

Ver. 25. *They brought every man his present.*] This shows that he speaks, in the former verse, of the great men of the earth ; who made these presents to him, when they came into his country.

A rate year by year.] This seems to signify that they so highly prized his wisdom, that they courted his friendship ; and voluntarily sent him a certain present every year, as a token of the continuance of it.

Ver. 26. *Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen.*] In a time of profound peace he thought it a piece of wisdom to be ready for war, as a means to preserve the peace. Though the surest way to enjoy the happiness wherein he lived, had been to observe strictly the commands of God.

He had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.] Four hundred of these chariots, Josephus saith, were presented from the kings and princes before mentioned ; and he had a thousand of his own before. But what need was there for so many stables for his horses as seem to be mentioned, iv. 26, viz. forty thousand ? The word is not *stables*, but *stalls* ; every horse having a stall, not a stable to himself : and some chariots had two, some four horses belonging to them. And yet even thus there were too many ; therefore we must suppose they did not always stand in one place ; but sometimes in one country, sometimes in another. Where it was necessary there should be stalls for them, when he removed from city to city.

Whom he bestowed in the cities for chariots, and with the king at Jerusalem.] The former part of these words relates to the chariots, which were kept in the country, in the cities Solomon built for them (ix. 19), and the latter to the horsemen, which were always with the king in Jerusalem ; as Abarbinel understands these words. Thus Solomon took care they should not be burdensome to his people, by keeping them all in one place : but they were distributed through the country, only a great body of horse in the royal city.

Ver. 27. *Made silver—as stones.*] As common as pebbles.

Cedars made he to be as the sycamore trees] Ordinary

lem as stones, and cedars made he to be as the sycamore trees that are in the vale, for abundance.

28 ¶ And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, and linen yarn : the king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price.

29 And a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred *shekels* of silver, and an horse for an hundred and fifty : and so for all the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria, did they bring them out by their means.

things, like willows, that among us grow numerous in low grounds.

Ver. 28. *Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt.*] Here he again openly transgressed the law of God (as Grotius observes), presuming he had no need of those cautions, which were given against this by Moses in the book of Deuteronomy (xvii. 16).

And linen yarn.] Most think *byssus*, fine linen, is hereby meant : which was a great commodity in Egypt.

The king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price.] It is acknowledged by all interpreters that these, and the following words in the next verse, are very obscure.

Ver. 29.] These words Bochart seems to me to have cleared with the greatest perspicuity, by taking the Hebrew word *mikveh*, not for *linen yarn*, or fine linen ; but for the *toll* or *custom* that was taken for the horses that were brought out of Egypt. And thus he translates the whole ; “ Horses were brought up to Solomon out of Egypt ; and as for the toll or custom, the merchants of king Solomon hired it at a price (that is, redeemed it of the king of Egypt for so much constantly) ; and a chariot coming out of Egypt went out for six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse for a hundred and fifty ; and so for all the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria, did they bring by their hands.” The sense of which words is plainly this, that noble horses being found in those times in few countries but Egypt, Pharaoh would not suffer them to be carried from thence without a great tribute, which he exacted from them ; which was six hundred shekels for a chariot, and a hundred and fifty for a horse. This must not be understood to be the price at which they were bought, but the custom paid for them ; otherwise every horse would have been of the same value, which is absurd. Solomon, therefore, bringing many thousand horses out of Egypt, prevailed with his father-in-law to free him from this grievous tribute, and to accept of a certain sum of money to be paid him every year instead of it. Thus being freed from the custom, which was demanded of all others, all the kings of the Hittites and Syrians bought their chariots and horses of Solomon's merchants, who could afford to sell them cheaper than they could have them in Egypt (see Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. ii. cap. 9).

By the “ kings of the Hittites ” are meant the rulers of some of that nation, who were driven out by the Israelites ; and lived in the north-east of the land of Canaan, or in some part of Arabia (see Judg. i. 26)

CHAPTER XI.

1 *Solomon's wives and concubines.* 4 *In his old age they draw him to idolatry.* 9 *God threateneth him.* 14 *Solomon's adversaries were Hadad, who was entertained in Egypt, 23 Rezon, who reigned in Damascus, 26 and Jeroboam, to whom Ahijah prophesied.* 41 *Solomon's acts, reign, and death: Rehoboam succeedeth him.*

1 BUT king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites;

2 Of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go into them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love.

3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses,

and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart.

4 For it came to pass, when Solomon was old that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father.

5 For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.

6 And Solomon did evil in the sight of the

CHAPTER XI.

Ver. 1. *Solomon loved many strange women.*] It was not a fault in him that he married Pharaoh's daughter; she being a proselyte, as is generally supposed, to the Jewish religion. But in marrying so many other women besides, he committed two sins against the law; one in multiplying wives, and another in marrying those of strange nations, who still retained their idolatrous religion; which was expressly against their law, as the next verse declares it. The Jewish doctors, indeed, are so very desirous to excuse Solomon, that they say these strange women were proselyted; but Mr. Selden well observes, that then it had been no sin to have married with some of them; and yet Nehemiah says it was a sin, xiii. 26 (lib. v. De Jure Nat. et Gent. cap. 15. p. 625, 626, and Buxtorf. De Sponsal. et Divort. p. 40, 41).

Women of the Moabites, &c.] Some think Solomon would not have taken wives out of these nations, had it not been out of some political principle; which some think was, that he might by their means gain intelligence of the state of those countries: others, that he might extinguish the old enmity which was between the Israelites and those nations; to which he might probably hope to put an end by contracting these marriages with them. But good intentions will not justify the doing unlawful things.

Ver. 2. *Ye shall not go in to them.*] This relates particularly to the Hittites and the Zidonians before mentioned; and consequently the rest of the seven nations of Canaan, with whom they were forbidden to make any marriage (Exod. xxiv. 16. Deut. vii. 3), for the weighty reason here mentioned. For though they might marry wives of other nations, if they embraced the Jewish religion; yet of the seven nations of Canaan they might not, though they were converted to their religion: lest the venom might lurk and lie hid; and at last break out and infect them. Great was the foresight of Moses (wherewith God endowed him) in giving this precept (as Grotius notes); for the not observing it undid the Israelites, and was the foundation of their utter ruin.

Solomon clave unto these] He not only married them, but had a great affection to them; whereby his heart was easily alienated from God.

Ver. 3. *He had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines.*] Of these princesses few or none had the name of queens, as Abarbinel observes; but they only who were of the highest esteem with him, or who were of royal extraction. He thinks Solomon enjoyed every one of these once, and then shut them up, that nobody might touch them

afterward (see Buxtorf. De Sponsal. et Divort. p. 48, 49, and Hackspan's Miscellanies, lib. i. cap. 6). But it seems to me more probable that he kept so many wives merely for state and pomp; after the manner of the eastern princes; but never used many of them. Just as they do now in China, where the emperor hath a great multitude of wives, chosen out of the prime beauties of the country; many of which he never saw in his life; as Father la Compe tells us in his history of China, par. i. p. 62. The same is said of the great Mogul, that he hath as many women as will make up a full thousand (which is Solomon's number), as the author of the voyage to the Indies tells us, in the end of P. le Valle's History, sect. 20, p. 469. It must be considered, also, that Solomon had not brought them to this number in the beginning of his reign, but towards the latter end; when his riches increasing, he made vast expenses, and studied to outdo all other kings, in magnificence of all kinds.

His wives turned away his heart.] He was so delighted in their company, that they turned away his thoughts from serious business; yea, from God himself.

Ver. 4. *His wives turned away his heart after other gods.*] For, indulging himself too much in pleasure, he weakened both his body and his mind: and growing old betime, began to dote upon other gods; which he suffered his wives to worship privately, and at last openly to exercise the religious rites of their own country.

His heart was not perfect with the Lord] He did not forsake the Lord, but joined other gods with him. Which a man of his sense could never have done (who had solemnly acknowledged in his prayer, that there was no god like to the Lord, yea, that there was no god else, viii. 23. 60), if his mind had not been enervated, and his understanding darkened by sensual pleasures.

Ver. 5. *Solomon went after Ashtoreth*] He worshipped Astarte, of which see in the book of Judges, ii. 13, and 1 Sam. vii. 3, 4.

After Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.] This god was the same with Moloch, whom he calls an abomination, because highly detested by God: who had given them a particular caution against worshipping the host of heaven (Deut. iv. 10). Now Moloch signifies the prince of that host, as I may call it, the sun; the king of heaven, as the moon was called the queen: in this all agree that Moloch comes from *melech*, which in the Hebrew language signifies a king, and is of the same import with Baal and Adonis (which signify lord), which were worshipped by many nations, as Moloch was: who was not the peculiar

LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as *did* David his father.

7 Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon.

8 And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.

9 ¶ And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice.

10 And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded.

11 Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon,

god of the Ammonites; but the god whom they principally worshipped.

Ver. 6.] And yet Abarinel thinks he did not commit idolatry by offering sacrifices to these false gods; but was only persuaded by his wives so far as to learn the manner after which they worshipped their gods, by being present at the rites of their religion. Which was a dangerous piece of learning; which he might have known without being present at their sacrifices.

Ver. 7. *Chemosh,*] Concerning Chemosh I have said enough elsewhere (see Numb. xxi. 29).

In the hill that is before Jerusalem,] He set up an altar upon the mount of Olives; where all the city of Jerusalem might see what they did. This contradicts Abarinel, and shows he was more than a spectator of their worship; which he encouraged by building an altar for it. And indeed that author is much to blame in abusing his excellent parts, to find excuses for such a foul crime.

For Molech,] In the same place, I suppose, Molech was worshipped: for he would not adventure to permit strange worship to be exercised in Jerusalem itself; though his posterity did. And so from little beginnings followed great mischiefs.

Ver. 8.] For what was granted to one, the rest would be apt to claim; or else complain of unkindness to them. It is an astonishing thing that a man of his wisdom should not rather have converted them all to his religion, than be seduced by them so much as to favour theirs. But he took no pains with them, having given up himself wholly to his pleasures; and growing conceited, perhaps, of his great wisdom, thought he could reconcile his religion with theirs; and find a good meaning in all their superstitions. Abarinel observes in several places, that it is never said Pharaoh's daughter turned away his heart from the Lord, or that he set up an altar for her: which is an argument she was proselyted to the true religion, and continued in it. As the rest might have been, if he had made it his business, and had not grown indifferent, and thought all religions alike. Which hath been the disease of some great wits.

Ver. 9.] First at Gibeon, in the beginning of his reign, iii. 5. and then at Jerusalem, after the building of the temple, ix. 2. There was another time when a message came to him, by the word of the Lord, vi. 12. But we do not read that God appeared to him more than twice; which was enough to establish him in his faith, fear, and love.

Ver. 10. *That he should not go after other gods:*] For in both those visions the happiness God promised him was declared to depend upon his observation of God's statutes, as David his father did (see iii. 14. ix. 4, 5). And when he had begun to build the tem-

ple, he admonished him, that he had better desist than go on in that work, unless he intended to keep all his commandments, vii. 12, 13.

12 Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son.

13 Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen.

14 ¶ And the Lord stirred up an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite: he was of the king's seed in Edom.

15 For it came to pass, when David was in

ple, he admonished him, that he had better desist than go on in that work, unless he intended to keep all his commandments, vii. 12, 13.

He kept not that which the Lord commanded.] Which was the greater crime, because he had so oft admonished him of his duty, and done such great things for him.

Ver. 11. *The Lord said unto Solomon,*] Either by some prophet, or by a vision: wherein he appeared to him as terribly as before he had done kindly, and pronounced this doom upon him. The former I think is most probable, that God would not vouchsafe to appear to him any more; but sent this message by Ahijah, or some other prophet.

I will surely rend the kingdom from thee,] Tear it in pieces, and give the greater part of it to one of his own subjects, viz. Jeroboam. This was enough to astonish any man, to hear that all his splendour should be so soon eclipsed, if he were not perfectly stupified: and it is likely it did make him reflect upon his folly; and, as many think, moved him to write the book of Ecclesiastes.

Ver. 12.] Though this was some mitigation of the punishment, that in his days the kingdom should continue entire; yet he humbled him by letting him know this favour was not granted for his sake, but for his father's, who had served him faithfully.

Ver. 13. *I will not rend away all the kingdom;*] In memory also of David's faithful service he adds another mitigation of the punishment: that the whole kingdom should not be torn from his son, but he would leave him one tribe, over which he should reign: which was that of Judah, unto which Benjamin was an appendix, being much mixed with it.

For Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen.] To be the place of his habitation, in the temple built there by Solomon, which he would suffer to remain to his posterity.

Ver. 14.] Though God did not execute the forementioned threatening till after his death, yet he began to afflict Solomon by raising up three adversaries against him; who disturbed his repose in his old age, when he most desired to be quiet. The first of them is here mentioned, who had a mortal hatred to Solomon, ever since the death of David, who had endeavoured to destroy him with every male in the country. But God restrained his wrath from attempting any thing against Solomon, as long as he observed God's commands.

Ver. 15. *When David was in Edom,*] To conquer the country: which he did entirely, and put garrisons into it (2 Sam. viii. 14. 1 Chron. xviii. 12, 13).

Joab—was gone up to bury the slain,] It is not to be supposed that the Edomites slew none of the Isra-

Edom, and Joab the captain of the host was gone up to bury the slain, after he had smitten every male in Edom;

16 (For six months did Joab remain there with all Israel, until he had cut off every male in Edom.)

17 That Hadad fled, he and certain Edomites of his father's servants with him, to go into Egypt; Hadad *being* yet a little child.

18 And they arose out of Midian, and came to Paran: and they took men with them out of Paran, and they came to Egypt, unto Pharaoh king of Egypt; which gave him an house, and appointed him victuals, and gave him land.

19 And Hadad found great favour in the sight of Pharaoh, so that he gave him to wife the sister of his own wife, the sister of Tahpenes the queen.

20 And the sister of Tahpenes bare him Genubath his son, whom Tahpenes weaned in Pharaoh's house: and Genubath was in Pharaoh's household among the sons of Pharaoh.

elites in the defence of their country: and those are they, it is probable, unto whom Joab, after he had done his business, went up to give an honourable interment.

After he had smitten every male] That is, all he could find; for some fled, as Hadad did.

Ver. 16. *For six months did Joab remain there with all Israel,*] That is, with all his army. Intending to extirpate the nation.

Ver. 17.] He being very young, some of his father's servants took him and hid him, and themselves with him, in some secret place; and when Joab was busy in giving a solemn burial to the Israelites, they took that opportunity to carry Hadad into Egypt.

Ver. 18. *They arose out of Midian,*] But first they went into Midian, that they might send from thence to know if Pharaoh would give them entertainment and protection.

Came to Paran,] Which was in the way to Egypt. For the wilderness of Paran lay between Edom and Egypt.

Took men with them] To attend Hadad; that he might appear like a young prince.

They came to Egypt, unto Pharaoh] He invited him not only to come into his country, but to his own palace.

Which gave him an house,] According to the manner of generous princes, who pity noble persons that are in distress; Pharaoh not only assigned him a house, and kept a table for him, that he might want nothing; but moreover gave him land, that out of its revenues he might provide himself an equipage suitable to his quality.

Ver. 19.] This argues a high esteem of him, for the princely qualities which it is likely appeared in him. Though sometimes the affections of kings are unaccountable, and they prefer those who do not deserve it.

Ver. 20.] The queen had as great a fondness for the child, as the king had for his father; and would have him nursed and weaned in Pharaoh's palace. He was educated among the king's children, as if he had been of them; which gave Hadad, no doubt, great reputation.

Ver. 21. *That Joab—was dead,*] Whom he dreaded more than David; having done that terrible execution upon his country, of destroying their males for six months together.

Let me depart, that I may go to mine own country.]

21 And when Hadad heard in Egypt that David slept with his fathers, and that Joab the captain of the host was dead, Hadad said to Pharaoh, Let me depart, that I may go to mine own country.

22 Then Pharaoh said unto him, But what hast thou lacked with me, that, behold, thou seekest to go to thine own country? And he answered, Nothing: howbeit, let me go in any wise.

23 ¶ And God stirred him up another adversary, Rezon the son of Eliadah, which fled from his lord Hadadezer king of Zobah:

24 And he gathered men unto him, and became captain over a band, when David slew them of Zobah: and they went to Damascus, and dwelt therein, and reigned in Damascus.

25 And he was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon, beside the mischief that Hadad did: and he abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria.

26 ¶ And Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an

Which he hoped to recover, now that the great enemies of it were dead, and Solomon young.

Ver. 22.] Nothing would satisfy him but to go and attempt the regaining the dominion of Edom. Which some fancy he did, by the intercession of Pharaoh, who persuaded Solomon to let him reign in Edom, paying him a tribute; which now in the end of Solomon's reign he denied to pay, and rebelled against him. But this proceeds upon a supposition, that when David died Solomon was married, which is not true. Nor is it certain that he was the same Pharaoh whose daughter Solomon married, that had been so kind as to educate Hadad. It seems to me more likely, that though Hadad ventured to his own country, he durst not attempt any thing till Solomon began to decline in the favour of God, and of his people too. For if Hadad had moved any change of government, Solomon had forces enough to suppress him; and in his vigorous age, no doubt would have done it; he being so great a prince, and having so many chariots and horsemen always ready, that I am apt to think Hadad did not so much as enter into his own country, but lived somewhere near it; watching an opportunity to get possession of it; which he found in the conclusion of Solomon's reign.

Ver. 23.] When he saw his army beaten by king David, 2 Sam. viii. 3.

Ver. 24. *He gathered men unto him,*] Some of those that fled, when David defeated Hadadezer, enlisted themselves under Rezon; who became their commander. And it is probable, he lived after the manner of the Arabians, by plunder and robbery, all the days of David, and the best part of Solomon's reign.

And reigned in Damascus,] Not in the days of David, who had put a garrison into Damascus and brought the people under tribute (2 Sam. viii. 5, 6), And so they continued subject unto Solomon; till he, doting upon strange women, minded not the defence of his conquests. Which Rezon took the advantage of, and invaded and got possession of Damascus, and reigned there, as Hadad did in Edom.

Ver. 25. *He was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon,*] This is not to be understood of the whole reign of Solomon, which for the most part was peaceable (as was observed before, iv. 20. 25), but of all the days which remained of his life, from the time that his wives publicly exercised their idolatry, unto the day of his death.

Beside the mischief that Hadad did:] This signifies,

Ephrathite of Zereda, Solomon's servant, whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow woman, even he lifted up his hand against the king.

27 And this was the cause that he lifted up his hand against the king: Solomon built Millo, and repaired the breaches of the city of David his father.

28 And the man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valour: and Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious, he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph.

29 And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; and he had clad himself with a new garment; and they two were alone in the field:

30 And Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces:

as Abarbinel thinks, that Rezon durst not have rebelled against Solomon, if Hadad had not led him the way; but seeing what success he had in Edom, he and his men seized on Damascus.

He abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria.] In combination with Hadad he defied Israel, and made himself king, not only of Damascus, but over all the country thereabout.

Ver. 26. *Jeroboam—Solomon's servant,*] In a public employment.

Lifted up his hand against the king:] Not against king Solomon, that we read of, but against his son; to whom he gave great disturbance, as soon as Solomon was dead.

Ver. 27.] This was the occasion of Jeroboam's advancement, as it follows in the next verse. For Solomon being engaged in many buildings, chose fitting persons to oversee his works; among which Jeroboam was one. Who took this opportunity to work in the people a disaffection to Solomon and his government, as Abarbinel and other of the Jews imagine. For he represented, say they, the building of Millo as a work of vanity, only to gratify Pharaoh's daughter: and the breaches of the city of David, they take to have been only open places, at which people might enter and come easily many ways to the king's palace: whereas, being stopped up by Solomon, access was not so easy, but they were forced to go about. This was represented as a grievance, especially since such heavy burdens were laid upon the people to maintain these expenses. But the text suggests nothing of this.

Ver. 28. *Jeroboam was a mighty man of valour:*] Of great courage and strength of body.

Solomon seeing—that he was industrious,] Very diligent in the business wherein he had employed him, of looking over his works.

He made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph.] Gave him greater preferment, which was to look after the revenue of a whole province—the tribe of Ephraim, and, as some think, Manasseh also. This was a high obligation upon him; but it made him, the Hebrew doctors think, only more presumptuous to instil discontent into the people, who were unnecessarily burdened to support Solomon's vanity in such vast buildings as he undertook. If Jeroboam was guilty of joining with the people in their murmurings, and increasing them, this cannot properly be called lifting up the hand, that is, rebelling against Solomon: it was a preparation for it, and disposed the people to the revolt which afterward followed.

Ver. 29. *When Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem,*] Where he had been, it is likely, to give up his accounts, and was returning to his charge.

31 And he said to Jeroboam, take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee:

32 (But he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel:)

33 Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father.

34 Howbeit I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand: but I will make him prince

Ahijah—found him in the way;] Met with him as he was going along. Some of the Jewish doctors will have this prophet to be one of those who came out of Egypt with Moses, and therefore must be five hundred years old (see Selden, lib. ii. De Syndr. p. 668). Which, if it could be believed, made him the fitter person to reprove Jeroboam afterward for the sin of the golden calves, and also for the rebellion which he had seen punished in Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.

He had clad himself with a new garment;] That he might make the better appearance at court, when he waited on the king.

They two were alone in the field:] The prophet, I suppose, took Jeroboam aside to speak with him privately: for it cannot be thought that Jeroboam had no servants to attend him; but they were bid to stay where they were, until the prophet and he went to confer about some private business.

Ver. 30.] An emblem of what followed, or rather a prediction of it: for there were two ways in those ancient days of foretelling things; one in express words, the other in signs and resemblances; according to the manner of the eastern people in the eldest times. Many instances we have of it, after this of Ahijah. As Zedekiah made himself a pair of iron horns, and said to Ahab, "With these shalt thou push the Syrians," &c. (xxii. 11), Elisha also foretold the victories of Joash, by shooting arrows and stamping on the ground so many times (2 Kings xiii. 18, &c.). Jeremiah foretold the pulling down of Jerusalem's pride, by the rotting of his girdle, where it was buried by Euphrates; and a great many more in the Old Testament, which continued in the New; Agabus foretelling the bonds of St. Paul, by binding his own hands and feet with St. Paul's girdle.

Ver. 31. *Give ten tribes to thee:*] Whence it is called frequently "the kingdom of the ten tribes."

Ver. 32. *But he shall have one tribe*] Besides his own. Or Benjamin and Judah may be looked upon but as one tribe; both of them having a share in the city of Jerusalem, and lying near one to the other.

For my servant David's sake,] See above, ver. 12.

Ver. 33. *Because that they have forsaken me,*] It seems by this, that some of the people, at least of Solomon's court, followed his bad example.

And have not walked in my ways,—as did David his father.] This was a great aggravation of his sin, that he had so good a father; who had given him an excellent education under Nathan the prophet (as I observed, 2 Sam. xii. 25), and a most pious example; having never gone after other gods, but celebrated the praises of the Lord with the highest strains of love and devotion.

all the days of his life for David my servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes :

35 But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it unto thee, *even* ten tribes.

36 And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light *always* before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there.

37 And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel.

38 And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my

Ver. 34. *Howbeit I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand:*] No, not the kingdom of the ten tribes; which Solomon held as long as he lived. These and the following words explain the threatening (ver. 32), of "rending the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon," not to be meant of taking any part of it from him during his life.

But I will make him prince all the days of his life for David my servant's sake,] This was an admonition to Jeroboam not to molest Solomon in his lifetime, by raising rebellion against him; and also to walk in God's ways as David did, and not to fall into idolatry: for which sin God resolved to punish Solomon so severely, as to rend the greatest part of his kingdom from his posterity.

Ver. 35.] He bids him not doubt of what he promised: but he must stay for it till Solomon was dead.

Ver. 36. *Unto his son will I give one tribe,*] He saith *one* tribe, though there were two; because (as Abarinel observes) they had their portion and possession together in Jerusalem; and, though two tribes, were both called by the name of Judah; because of the eminence and glory of that tribe; which was so great, that, before the division of the kingdom, Judah is often mentioned as distinct from the rest of Israel (see 1 Sam. xi. 8. 2 Sam. v. 5).

That David my servant may have a light always before me in Jerusalem.] By a *light* is meant a succession of kings, who are called the light of the people (as David is, 2 Sam. xxi. 17), because they cheer them by their comfortable influence, when they govern well. And these are said to be *before God* in Jerusalem; because there he dwelt where they reigned.

Ver. 37. *I will take thee,*] From that condition wherein he was, and place him on a throne, as here follows.

Reign according to all that thy soul desireth,] Have a *very* flourishing kingdom.

King over Israel.] But not reign in Jerusalem.

Ver. 38.] The same promise that he made to David, 2 Sam. vii. 16, only he doth not say he would establish his kingdom *for ever*.

Give Israel unto thee.] Make them his obedient subjects.

Ver. 39. *I will for this*] For their sin mentioned ver. 33.

Afflict the seed of David,] By this rending the greatest part of the kingdom from them.

But not for ever.] For in the days of the Messiah, saith Rasi, the kingdom shall be restored to the house of David. And he might have added, that few returned out of their captivity but the house of Judah, who were delivered in a wonderful manner from Babylon.

Ver. 40. *Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam.*]

ways, and do *that is* right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee.

39 And I will for this afflict the seed of David, but not for ever.

40 Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam. And Jeroboam arose, and fled into Egypt, unto Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon.

41 ¶ And the rest of the acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, *are* they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon?

A sign of his dotage; that he could entertain a thought of endeavouring to defeat the purpose of God! But how he came to know what was secretly transacted between Ahijah and Jeroboam alone, is a great question. Perhaps the prophet made no scruple to report what he had delivered in the name of the Lord. Or, Jeroboam himself, being puffed up with this assurance, could not contain, but told it to some of his confidants, who spread it abroad. Or, his servants, though they heard not a word spoken, yet seeing the rending of his garment into twelve parts, and the giving ten to him, might speak of it: the meaning of which Solomon easily understood; being told (by the same prophet, perhaps) that the kingdom should be rent from him, and given to his servant, ver. 11.

Fled into Egypt.] This was a common refuge for discontented people. And it may seem strange that the king of Egypt, being nearly allied to Solomon, either his father-in-law or brother-in-law (for many think the father of Solomon's wife was dead), should give such persons entertainment. But it is to be considered that "kingdoms are never married;" and princes commonly regard only their own interest.

Unto Shishak king of Egypt.] All the kings of Egypt had the title of Pharaoh, even from the time of Abraham; but we never find any of them, till now, called by his proper name, to distinguish him from other Pharaohs, unless Remesis (Gen. xlvii. 11) be the name of a king, not of a country. Now all agree that this is the great king who is called by the Greek Sesostris: who having subdued Ethiopia, extended his conquests into Asia, as far as the Assyrians and Medes, as Josephus tells us, who calls him Sethosis, lib. i. contra Apion.

Was in Egypt until the death of Solomon.] Being protected by Shishak: who, it is likely, was now projecting the great conquest he made afterward.

Ver. 41.] All the kings of Israel, as Abarinel thinks, maintained some wise men, who wrote all that passed in their reign. Perhaps this was begun by Solomon (for we read not of any book of the acts of David), and out these annals, the sacred writer of this book took what he thought most useful, and omitted the rest which he did not judge so necessary and instructive.

Ver. 42. *The time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel*] There seems to have been no need to say he reigned in Jerusalem, since he reigned over all Israel; if it had not been to show the great tranquillity of his reign. Which was such, that he did not go out to war as other kings, but lived quietly in his royal city.

Was forty years.] He lost the great privilege of long life, which God promised if he performed such sincere obedience as David did; unto whose age he did not attain.

Ver. 43.] Thus concludes the history of this great

42 And the time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was forty years.

43 And Solomon slept with his fathers, and

man; without any the least mention of his repentance; though he saw terrible punishments coming upon his family. Which should have moved him (one would think) to pull down the high places he had built for idolatrous worship, and abandon all his strange wives; and do some remarkable honour to

was buried in the city of David his father: and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.

the Lord God of Israel. Which if he did, the divine writer did not think fit to record it, but to leave all in uncertainty, and leave a blot upon his memory; that all posterity might have a frightful example of human weakness, and learn thereby to watch and pray, lest they enter into temptation.

CHAPTER XII.

1 *The Israelites, assembled at Shechem to crown Rehoboam, by Jeroboam make a suit of relaxation unto him.*
6 *Rehoboam, refusing the old men's counsel, by the advice of young men, answereth them roughly.*
16 *Ten tribes revolting, kill Adoram, and make Rehoboam to flee.* 21 *Rehoboam raising an army, is forbidden by Shemaiah.* 25 *Jeroboam strengtheneth himself by cities,* 26 *and by the idolatry of the two calves.*

1 AND Rehoboam went to Shechem: for all Israel were come to Shechem to make him king.

2 And it came to pass, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who was yet in Egypt, heard of it, (for he was fled from the presence of king Solomon, and Jeroboam dwelt in Egypt;)

3 That they sent and called him. And Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel came, and spake unto Rehoboam, saying,

4 Thy father made our yoke grievous: now

therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee.

5 And he said unto them, Depart yet for three days, then come again to me. And the people departed.

6 ¶ And king Rehoboam consulted with the old men, that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people?

CHAP. XII.

Ver. 1. *Rehoboam went to Shechem:*] A multitude of children was accounted a great blessing among the Israelites: but if Solomon had any more besides this son and two daughters, mentioned iv. 11. 15, this holy writer would not do him the honour to mention them, but passes them by in silence: nor doth he vouchsafe to acquaint us (as is usual) in the beginning of his story, from whom Rehoboam was descended by the mother's side; but in the conclusion mentions it twice (xiv. 21. 31) that she was an Ammonitess, one of an infamous nation. Howsoever, though he was not entirely an Israelite, he pretended to the kingdom; being the eldest, if not the only son of Solomon, to whom it belonged by the law then established; which ever after continued in Judah. That which follows shews this was the opinion of all the people.

All Israel were come to Shechem to make him king.] To acknowledge him for their sovereign, as rightful successor to Solomon. They met for this purpose at Shechem, because it was the most convenient place, being in the middle of the kingdom: or, as others think, because it was in the tribe of Ephraim; where they could speak their minds more freely than they durst at Jerusalem, which was in the tribe of Judah. And this hath some colour in it, from what follows; that they sent for Jeroboam to meet them there, who would not venture to come to Jerusalem.

Ver. 2. *Heard of it.*] The words of it are not in the original, but only that he *heard*: either of this meeting, or of the death of Solomon, or both: for he could not hear of this meeting without hearing of his death.

Jeroboam dwelt in Egypt;] As hath been related in the foregoing chapter.

Ver. 3. *That they sent and called him.*] At the same time that he heard of this meeting, and the occasion of it, a message came to him from the assembly, to desire his assistance.

All the congregation] By all the congregation is

meant all their elders, and heads of their tribes; who chose Jeroboam to be their speaker.

Ver. 4.] They begin with a complaint against the former government; but promise to submit to Rehoboam as their king, and be his faithful subjects, if he would promise to ease them of those burdens which his father had imposed on them. Which were not so heavy as they represented them; considering the peace and plenty they enjoyed (iv. 25) and the vast riches he brought into the kingdom: so that silver was nothing accounted of in his days (x. 21). But people are more sensible of the smallest pressures, than of all their enjoyments: and most sensible of the least burden, when they are at perfect ease. Such were the tributes he exacted for his buildings, the expenses of his family, and maintenance of chariots and horsemen, which were all for the honour of the nation, and employed great numbers of them. Abarbanel thinks it is possible, when war was raised by Hadad and by Rezon against him, in his latter days, the tribute might be increased, and occasion their grumbling. But howsoever that he, it is observable that they make no complaints at all of Solomon's idolatry, and the strange worship he introduced; about which they were not concerned, but rather complied with him (see xi. 33).

Ver. 5.] He desired time to consider, in so weighty a business; pretending, I suppose, he would examine the truth of their allegations: otherwise it had been dangerous to send them away without any answer, when it was evident they were disgusted.

Ver. 6. *King Rehoboam*] By this it is plain he had a title to the kingdom; though they had not yet made a recognition, as we speak, of his authority.

Consulted with the old men, that stood before Solomon] Solomon was so wise, as in his best days not to depend solely on his own wisdom; but had other wise men, with whom he advised, as his counsellors, in all matters of moment.

How do ye advise that I may answer this people?] Being men of great experience, who had learned, no

7 And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever.

8 But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him :

9 And he said unto them, What counsel give ye that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter ?

10 And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us ; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little *finger* shall be thicker than my father's loins.

doubt, much wisdom under so wise a king as Solomon, he had reason both to consult such sages, and to depend upon their advice, as likely to be most prudent and safe.

Ver. 7.] This was most solid advice, to get possession of the kingdom, and then he might govern as his father had done. And he might easily be possessed of it, by condescending to them for once, and giving them such an answer as they desired ; which would oblige them to him for ever. For to be *their servant one day*, signified no more than to court them with good words, and kind promises, to be an easy governor of them : which would win their hearts, and make them submit cheerfully to him ; and give him the same power which his father had.

Ver. 8. *But he forsook the counsel of the old men.*] He was proud and vain, I suppose, and scorned to court his people ; expecting obedience unto him, as an absolute monarch.

And consulted with the young men] He had made some of his familiars, who had been bred up with him and attended him, to be now of his privy-council : men inexperienced, and who understood not the humour of the people ; which is a frequent fault of new kings, who, to show their power, presently change their counsellors, and put in new officers ; to gratify all their dependants ; not considering who are wisest, but who have been their companions.

Ver. 9.] It is likely he told them what the old counsellors had said ; who, they thought, were too timorous, and therefore give more bold and fierce advice.

Ver. 10. *The young men that were grown up with him*] They were not so young that they might have had more wit (if they had not been men of pleasure) ; for Rehoboam being one-and-forty years old when he began to reign (xiv. 21) and these men growing up with him, were about the same age.

Thus shalt thou speak, &c.] They advise him to threaten to lay burdens upon them as much heavier than his father's as the loins are thicker than the little finger : words of infamy, madness, stupidity, and full of lies, as Abarbinel here glosses : for he magnifies himself, as if his power excelled his father's unto whom he was nothing comparable. And if it had been true, it did not become him to boast on this fashion ; but he ought rather to have highly magnified the glory and majesty of his father.

Ver. 11. *Whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke,*] What a senseless stupidity was this (as

11 And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke : my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

12 ¶ So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day as the king had appointed, saying, Come again to me the third day.

13 And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him ;

14 And spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke : my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

15 Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people ; for the cause was from the LORD, that he might perform his saying, which the LORD spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

the same author proceeds) to grant the accusation to be true which they brought against his father, and not rather to have excused and defended so excellent a prince, from whom they could not but acknowledge they had received exceeding great benefits ?

My father hath chastised you with whips,] This is still worse, to accuse his father of such severity (which the people did not), that he treated the Israelites like beasts : for a "whip is for a horse" as Solomon observes, Prov. xxvi. 3. And who could endure to hear him say, that he would treat them far more severely, and tear their very flesh in pieces ? For that is meant by *scorpions*, whips with rowels in them (as we speak), which Abarbinel calls *iron thorns* (see Bochartus, in his Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. iv. cap. 32). Rabalg simply calls them thorns tied to a whip, which grievously pricked and tore the flesh (see Carpovius upon Schickard's Jus Regium, cap. 2. Theor. 7. p. 143). What people could bear this with patience, or endure to come under the yoke of such a furious prince ?

Ver. 12.] In which time wiser thoughts, one would have expected, should have taken place : but Solomon had observed, that "there is no counsel, nor understanding, nor wisdom, against the Lord" (Prov. xxi. 30) whose doing this was, as it follows, ver. 15.

Ver. 13.] He answered them like a tyrant, not like a king.

Ver. 14. *Spake to them after the counsel of the young men.*] Which was most suitable to a prince of a high and violent spirit.

My father made your yoke heavy, &c.] He thought, it is likely, to have frightened them into obedience by this blustering language, which justly made him odious.

Ver. 15. *The king hearkened not unto the people :*] Who desired to be eased of their burdens.

For the cause was from the Lord,] God infatuated his counsels to bring about his own design. Otherwise, he could not have been so blinded, as not to see how basely he reflected upon his father ; and how unlikely it was that the people would submit to such a power as he intended to exercise over them. But, as Livy excellently speaks, "*fatis urgentibus rempublicam, omnia salutaria monita spernuntur.*" And here one cannot but observe the vast difference there is between the sacred and profane historians. The intention of the former is to possess men's minds with a sense of divine providence, which secretly rules in all public, as well as private affairs. Machiavel himself, though far from being religious, was sensible of an

16 ¶ So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents.

17 But as for the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.

18 Then king Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was over the tribute; and all Israel stoned him with stones, that he died. Therefore king Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem.

19 So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day.

20 And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel: there was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only.

21 ¶ And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah, with the tribe of Benjamin, an hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, which were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, to bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam the son of Solomon.

Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot to flee to Jerusalem.] This seems to be a further imprudence; for he should have maintained his ground and kept footing (as we speak) in the country of Israel; from whence it might not have been easy for them to expel him: "but fear is as bad an adviser as fury." This is the first time that we read of a king riding in a chariot; for we never read that either Saul, or David, or Solomon, rode in them: but after the division of the kingdom, there is frequent mention of the use of them both by the kings of Judah and Israel.

Ver. 19. *So Israel rebelled against the house of David]* Would no longer be governed by any of David's race; who had been their deliverer from their powerful enemies. The remembrance of which might have made them more patient; and not so forward to revolt from a family to which they had been so much obliged. But old kindnesses are laid asleep, and people are strangely forgetful of benefits, as Pindar speaks, in Isthmia, ode 7.

Ἄλλα παλαιὰ γὰρ εὖδει
Χάρης, ἀνάμνησις δὲ βροτοί.

This defection from the family of David is justly called a rebellion, as Salianus notes in his Annals; for though God willed this defection as a punishment of sin, yet they did wickedly who were the authors of it. And though the family of Solomon deserved such a punishment, yet the people had no just reason to forsake their legal prince. For they had no order from God for it: and Rehoboam's answer to them did not deserve such a resentment; much less so sudden and inconsiderate. Nor did the prophetic prediction warrant it: which might have been fulfilled some other way, than by such a violent throwing off his government.

Ver. 20. *When all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again.]* The great men had seen him, and needed not to be informed of his return (ver. 3); but now the news was spread over all the country.

Called him unto the congregation.] From his tent, unto which he was gone, as other people were (ver. 16).

Made him king over all Israel:] Without any condition, that we can find, though it is likely he promised to ease them of all their burdens.

There was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah] Which comprehends Benjamin also, being one with it, as was observed before (xi. 31, 32). And it was by the singular providence of God, that they were not also tempted to desert such a haughty prince as Rehoboam was.

Ver. 21.] This was a very potent tribe, especially assisted by Benjamin, and wanted not affection to the house of David, which they had expressed upon all occasions; and were ready now, with a very nume-

overruling power interposing in all things, which few historians acknowledge so as they ought: but rather write, as if they would not have their reader think of any thing but the wisdom, strength, and policy, of those that manage affairs, without any consideration of the care God takes of them. Of this Hermannus Conringius thinks Polybius himself to have been guilty, whatsoever excuses Casaubon makes for him (*De Civili Prudentia*, cap. 14).

Ver. 16. *What portion have we in David?* They renounce all interest in him, and in his family.

Neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse:] So they call David in a contemptuous and scornful manner. Wherein they have left us an exact picture of an ungrateful world, as Victorinus Strigelius here speaks. For no eloquence is able to express the great merits of David to the children of Israel.

To your tents, O Israel:] They left Rehoboam, and bade him look to his own affairs; for they would have nothing to do with him. Thus other kingdoms have been overturned by the folly of heady young men: as an old poet observes in Tully's book *De Senectute*, cap. 6, where he quotes these verses out of Nævius in a play of his, in which one asks,

"Cedo, qui vestram rempublicam tantam amisistis tam cito."

"Tell me, I beseech thee, how you came to lose such a famous commonwealth so quickly!"

Unto which he brings in another returning this answer,

"Proventabant oratores novi, stulti adolescentuli."

"There arose up new orators, a company of foolish youths."

Upon which Cato makes this remark; viz.

"Temeritas est florentis ætatis, prudentia senescentis."

"Rashness is the property of youth, prudence belongs to old age."

Ver. 17.] As several of the Simeonites also did; who were very nearly situated to Judah.

Ver. 18. *Rehoboam sent Adoram,]* This was a new piece of imprudence, to send one to treat with them, when they were so highly exasperated; and to send him (with promises, perhaps, of easing them, when it was too late) who had the principal care of those tributes, of which they complained. For people hate those that are the instruments of their oppression, or any way employed in it.

All Israel stoned him with stones, that he died.] There was a general uproar against him; in which they committed this barbarity against the law of all nations; which prohibits any violence to be done to a king's ambassador. But in their rage, the king feared (it appears by the next words) they would have no respect to himself.

22 But the word of God came unto Shemaiah the man of God, saying,

23 Speak unto Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and unto all the house of Judah, and Benjamin, and to the remnant of the people, saying,

24 Thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: return every man to his house; for this thing is from me. They hearkened therefore to the word of the LORD, and returned to depart, according to the word of the LORD.

25 ¶ Then Jeroboam built Shechem in mount

rous army, to fall upon the Israelites, before their new king was settled in his throne, and bring them back to their rightful king.

Ver. 22.] A person, known to be a prophet, was sent to them from God with a message, before they marched to the country of Israel.

Ver. 23. *Speak unto Rehoboam,—king of Judah,*] God himself owns him for no more than king of Judah.

To the remnant] Unto those mentioned, ver. 17.

Ver. 24. *Thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: return every man to his house; for this thing is from me.*] Who was resolved to maintain what he had done. It was the intention and design of God to make Jeroboam king; but he did not stay for his appointment, but usurped the kingdom by the help of certain vain fellows, who raised a sedition against Rehoboam (see 2 Chron. xiii. 5—7). And besides, God did not promise to set his posterity upon his throne (as he did to David and Solomon), unless he kept his commandments, which he did not: and therefore, though he saith “the thing was from him,” yet the setting his son upon the throne after him, and the succeeding kings, was not from him; but in Hosea he saith (viii. 4), “They have set up kings, but not by me: they have set up princes, and I knew it not;” i. e. did not approve it.

They hearkened therefore to the word of the Lord,] Now Rehoboam was cool, and began to be wise, in not resisting the counsel of God, who had taken the kingdom from him; but submitting to his decree, and bearing it patiently. The people, at least, were of this mind, and persuaded him not to engage in a war, wherein God would not appear against him. According to the counsel of Menander mentioned by Strigelius, *Μη θεομάχει, μηδὲ προσάγων τῷ πράγματι χειμῶνας ἔριδος, τοῖς δὲ ἀναγκάσιους φέρε.* “Fight not against God; neither do any thing to bring upon thyself new storms and tempests: but bear those that are necessary, and cannot be avoided.”

Ver. 25. *Then Jeroboam built Shechem*] For there it is likely they chose him king; and therefore he enlarged and beautified it (which is meant by *built*), to be his royal seat.

And built Penuel.] But this did not satisfy him, he removed from thence to another city, which he also built; and so became a builder as well as Solomon, with whose buildings he is thought to have found fault.

Ver. 26.] Though God had told him he would build him a sure house (xi. 37, 38), if he kept his commandments, yet he did not trust to his promise; but after he had been some time possessed of the kingdom, began to fear a revolt of the people, if he permitted them to worship God according to the law; and so contrived to make an alteration in religion.

Ver. 27.] All the people of Israel being bound at

Ephraim, and dwelt therein; and went out from thence, and built Penuel.

26 And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David:

27 If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah.

28 Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: be-

the three great feasts to go up to Jerusalem to worship; as also, upon other solemn occasions, devout persons going thither to offer gifts and sacrifices; he was afraid they would be so taken with the splendour and magnificence of the temple, and of the royal city, and recall to memory the famous acts of David and Solomon, who were buried there; and the king would find such means to oblige them, and the priests and Levites to solicit them to unite themselves again to Judah (who appeared to have the better cause, having the temple in possession where God dwelt), that they would be drawn not only to forsake him, but to kill him. For besides all this, their belief of one only God was the principal cause of union among them: and next to that was their worshipping God at one only place. Therefore, instead of consulting God, and committing himself to him, who could and would have preserved him in the kingdom he had given him, notwithstanding all these dangers; he took counsel, as it here follows, of such as were governed only by reasons of state, and devised how to establish himself by wicked inventions.

The Talmudists, after their manner, add another reason why he took the following resolution. For, saith R. Nachman (in the Gemara of the Sanhedrin, cap. 11. n. 46), the custom being that none should sit in the court of the temple, but only the king of the house of David, he thought with himself, that if the people saw Rehoboam sit, and him stand, they would conclude the former to be king, and Jeroboam but his servant. Another reason is alleged by Kimchi: when the year of release came, Jeroboam said within himself, it is written (Deut. xxxi. 10, 11), “At the end of every seventh year thou shalt read this law in the ears of all Israel, &c. Now if I attempt to read it, the people will say, The king who is in “the place which God hath chosen” (i. e. Jerusalem) must read first, and so I must read it after him, which will be a disgrace to me: and if I read it not at all it will be worse, for I shall be thought profane. But these, and such-like, are frivolous reasons, for his resolution to draw the people from the worship of God according to the law, at his own house at Jerusalem.

Ver. 28. *Whereupon the king took counsel,*] Of some secular politicians, who, if they could but preserve the civil government, cared not what became of religion. The Jews in the place above mentioned, in the Sanhedrin, tell the story in this manner; That he summoned a council, consisting partly of pious, partly of wicked men; whom he asked whether they would subscribe to all that he ordered. They answered, Yes. Then he said, he would be constituted their king: to which they consenting, he asked if they would obey him. To which there being a ready compliance, he added, Even though I command you to serve idols? at which the pious men startled, and were full of indignation; but their wicked neighbours whispered to them, saying, Do you think that Jeroboam

hold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

29 And he set the one in Beth-el, and the other put he in Dan.

30 And this thing became a sin: for the people went to *worship* before the one, *even* unto Dan.

31 And he made an house of high places, and

boam will honour idols? he saith this only to try your obedience. And so even Abihaj himself was drawn in, by this fraud, to subscribe to what he proposed, that they would be obedient in all things without exception.

Made two calves of gold.] One egg, as Bochartus speaks, is not more like to another, than these calves were to that which Aaron made. Only, as the Jews say in Sanhedrin, "till Jeroboam's time the Israelites sucked but one calf; but from that time they sucked two." They were of the same matter with Aaron's, and made for the same reason: his, because Moses was absent; and these, because the holy city (where the temple, the altar, the priests of God were) they could not come to with safety. And as Aaron, so Jeroboam learnt this calf-worship in Egypt, where he lived for some years. The LXX. translate these words, δύο δαμάειδες χρυσῆς, "two she-calves;" and so doth Josephus: and the prophet Hosea also speaks of them in the feminine gender (x. 5), by way of contempt and despal, as Bochartus thinks. It is not improbable (as some learned men have conjectured), that he made two calves, in imitation of the Egyptians, with whom he had conversed, who had a couple of oxen which they worshipped; Apis at Memphis, the metropolis of the upper Egypt; and Mnevis at Hierapolis, which was the chief city of the lower.

It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem:] Or, as some expound the Hebrew words, "You have gone long enough to Jerusalem."

Behold, thy gods, O Israel.] The very same words that Aaron had spoken, Exod. xxxii. 4, and they had the same meaning. For he would have them think, that there was no need of going up to Jerusalem, three times a year, with labour and charge; when the true God, who brought their fathers out of Egypt, dwelt among them there no less than at Jerusalem. For God is everywhere in his essence (it is likely he told them), and cannot be included in any place; and if they required any special symbols of his presence, behold, here they were in those calves which he set up. As if every man had power to devise out of his own head, a symbol of God's presence (see Vossius, De Orig. et Progr. Idolol. lib. i. cap. 3).

Ver. 29.] The former of which was in the south, the latter in the north of the country of Israel; and as Beth-el was in every body's opinion a sacred place (having been consecrated by Jacob, when God appeared to him there more than once), so Dan had been famous for the teraphim of Micah: unto which there had been great resort, a long time (Judg. xviii. 30). For such reasons as these, it is likely, he waded his royal city, which was Shechem; and chose these two places for the residence of the Divine Majesty: for so he pretended that these calves represented God; whom he did not forsake, but worshipped him in these symbols of his presence.

Ver. 30. *This thing became a sin:*] Led them into foul idolatry; for that was the sin which Jeroboam is so often accused of: and the setting a calf in Dan was a high aggravation of their sin: there being no pretence for two calves; nor for placing one there, where God had never been extraordinarily present.

made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi.

32 And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Beth-el, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and

For the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan.] Which place being in the extreme part of the country, yet the people were so zealous in their idolatry, that they travelled to offer sacrifice there; so that they who thought it grievous to go to worship God at Jerusalem, did not think much to go a great deal farther to worship an idol. This seems to me the simplest meaning; which others take to be, that they who dwell in Beth-el were so zealous, that they would go as far as Dan to worship the other calf.

Ver. 31. *He made an house of high places.*] That is, saith Abarbanel, he made a house or temple at Dan; wherein there was not one altar only, as there was at Jerusalem, but a great many high places.

And made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi.] The Hebrew words *miketsoth haam* should not be interpreted "the lowest of the people;" but, as the same Abarbanel expounds it, "out of all the people;" he made any body a priest, though he was not of the sons of Levi. And Bochartus hath justified this exposition, by a great many examples of the use of these words in other places. To this Jeroboam was forced, because the Levites would not serve his impiety (2 Chron. xi. 14), and therefore he expelled them all, and seized on their cities and lands. Whereby, as he eased the people of paying their tithes, there being none to demand them; so he gratified them by making priests out of every tribe and family; even "in the extremest part of the country," as the Hebrew words signify. Thus, as he transferred the kingdom from the house of David, so he transferred the priesthood from the family of Aaron, and let it loose, that any body might be admitted to that honourable employment. Which was a very popular thing, and ingratiated him, no doubt, with the Israelites. And Cornel. Bertram thinks that as he had priests, so he had Levites also of the same stamp; that is, some to officiate under the priests, as they did. The former he called *cohenim*, as they were called in Judah; the other he called *cemarim*, who ministered as the Levites did; but in black, not in white garments, and thence had their name (De Republ. Judaica, cap. 16).

Ver. 32. *Jeroboam ordained a feast*] That is, the feast of tabernacles; which by the law was to be celebrated on the fifteenth day of the seventh month. This he altered, and, as Abarbanel thinks, might possibly give this reason for his impious presumption; that this feast being instituted by God after the gathering of their fruits, which were sooner ripe about Jerusalem than in the northern parts of the country; he pretended the eighth month would be a better time for it than the seventh; because then they would be everywhere gathered. But his chief intention in this change, was to alienate the people from the rites observed at Jerusalem.

He offered upon the altar.] This was a high presumption, to invade the priesthood himself, and offer sacrifices to his gods. A crime which none of the kings of Judah were guilty of, but only Uzziah; who was smitten with a leprosy, for meddling with the priests' office, 2 Chron. xxvi. 19.

So did he in Beth-el.] What he had done in Dan,

he placed in Beth-el the priests of the high places which he had made.

33 So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Beth-el the fifteenth day of the eighth

he did also in Beth-el; for hitherto hath been related only what he did in the remotest place.

He placed in Beth-el the priests of the high places] There he also built a house, or temple; and set up many altars in it, where these priests officiated as they did in other high places.

Ver. 33. So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Beth-el] There he began this new festival, and consecrated it himself.

In the month which he had devised of his own heart;] Out of his own will and pleasure (as the Targum translates it), against the express ordinance of God.

Ordained a feast.] To be observed, I suppose, every year in Beth-el, as the feast of tabernacles was at Jerusalem. And it is likely it lasted as many days; unless he affected to make alterations in every thing, and ordained more, or fewer days, as he thought good.

He offered upon the altar and burnt incense.] He

month, *even* in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel: and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense.

presumed to perform the highest part of the priests' office, which was to burn incense. Which he had not done in Dan, as Abarbanel thinks, but only in Beth-el; which was in some regard the metropolis of his kingdom, and head of the tribe of Ephraim; to which place the prophet, mentioned in the next chapter, came, and not to Dan. He observes also that the scripture saith thrice he offered upon the altar, speaking of different times and places. First it is said, ver. 30, that he offered upon the altar; that is, at Dan, where all Israel went to worship. Secondly, he offered again in Beth-el, in the beginning of this verse. And then it is said here in conclusion, that he ascended the altar in Beth-el, not to offer sacrifice, but to burn incense, which he had not done in Dan. And when he burned incense on the feast-day he had instituted, the man of God came from Judah, and prophesied against the altar, as it follows in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XIII.

1 *Jeroboam's hand, that offered violence to him that prophesied against his altar at Beth-el, withereth, 6 and at the prayer of the prophet is restored. 7 The prophet, refusing the king's entertainment, departeth from Beth-el. 11 An old prophet, seducing him, bringeth him back. 20 He is reproved by God, 23 slain by a lion, 26 buried by the old prophet, 31 who confirmeth his prophecy. 33 Jeroboam's obstinacy.*

1 AND, behold, there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the LORD unto Beth-el: and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense.

2 And he cried against the altar in the word of the LORD, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the LORD; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places

that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee.

3 And he gave a sign the same day, saying, This is the sign which the LORD hath spoken; Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out.

4 And it came to pass, when king Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Beth-el, that he put

CHAPTER XIII.

Ver. 1. There came a man of God out of Judah] That is, a prophet; for none are called men of God, but prophets. And so this man is called below (ver. 18); whence Kimchi concludes David was a prophet, because he is called a man of God. And this prophet is thought by the Jews to be Iddo; whose vision against Jeroboam is mentioned 2 Chron. ix. 29. But this is an evident mistake; for Iddo was alive in the days of Ahijah the son of Rehoboam (2 Chron. xiii. 22), whereas this prophet here spoken of, was killed immediately after this prophecy. Therefore they were not the same; unless we suppose that what is here related fell out in the latter end of Jeroboam's reign. Tertullian in his book De Jejunio, cap. 16, calls him Sameas; where Rigaltius observes, that Josephus calls him Jadon, and Epiphanius Joam.

By the word of the Lord unto Beth-el:] By a particular command of God.

Jeroboam stood by the altar] Upon that feast-day which he had instituted. See the last verse of the foregoing chapter.

Ver. 2. He cried against the altar] Declared it and the worship there performed, to be idolatrous; which he spake by authority from God.

O altar, altar,] Some think he mentioned the altar

twice, to signify that he prophesied against that in Dan, as well as against this in Beth-el.

A child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name;] The prophets saw things future, as if they were present. And though this was not to come to pass till above three hundred and sixty years after this time, yet this man of God foretells it, as if it were to be done ere long. And the prediction is the more wonderful, because he tells out of what family he should spring, and what should be his name.

Upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places] The meaning is not that he should burn the priests alive; but the execution of this prophecy explains it: that he should slay the priests of the high places, and then burn their bones, as he did the bones of those that had been buried, and thereby defile this altar (2 Kings xxiii. 15, 16, 20).

Ver. 3. He gave a sign] To confirm this prophecy.

This is the sign] A proof that he spake from God, and not from himself.

The altar shall be rent, and the ashes—poured out.] This could not be done, but by the power of God; who hereby demonstrated he had sent this prophet to speak these words; which were presently fulfilled.

Ver. 4. Which had cried against the altar in Beth-el,]

forth his hand from the altar, saying, Lay hold on him. And his hand, which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him.

5 The altar also was rent, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the Lord.

6 And the king answered and said unto the man of God, Entreat now the face of the Lord thy God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored me again. And the man of God besought the Lord, and the king's hand was restored him again, and became as it was before.

7 And the king said unto the man of God, Come home with me, and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward.

8 And the man of God said unto the king, If thou wilt give me half thy house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place :

9 For so was it charged me by the word of the

Lord, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest.

10 So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Beth-el.

11 ¶ Now there dwelt an old prophet in Beth-el ; and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Beth-el : the words which he had spoken unto the king, them they told also to their father.

12 And their father said unto them, What way went he ? For his sons had seen what way the man of God went, which came from Judah.

13 And he said unto his sons, Saddle me the ass. So they saddled him the ass : and he rode thereon,

14 And went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak : and he said unto him, Art thou the man of God that camest from Judah ? And he said, I am.

15 Then he said unto him, Come home with me, and eat bread.

16 And he said, I may not return with thee,

In the presence of the king himself, when he was about the solemn service of his gods.

He put forth his hand from the altar,] Where he stood (ver. 1).

Lay hold on him,] As he himself would have done, had he been near him.

His hand—dried up,] The muscles and sinews shrunk, so that it was stiff and rigid, and he perfectly lost the use of it. Which prodigy was a new token, that the prophet's words would be fulfilled.

Ver. 5.] Which so amazed all the people, that we do not find any body went about to lay hold on him ; but Jeroboam himself was, for the present, astonished at the miraculous power of God.

Ver. 6. *Entreat now the face of the Lord]* A marvellous change ! He that just now threatened, humbly supplicates him that smote him.

That my hand may be restored] He was convinced that healing must come from the same hand that gave the wound ; and that it was in vain to seek to his gods.

The king's hand was restored] He did not intend his destruction, but his reformation ; and therefore granted his request. Whereby a new miracle was wrought for his conversion.

Ver. 7.] A strange insensibility of God's great mercy to him, which did not lead him to repentance, when it moved him to so much gratitude as to desire to reward him that was the instrument of his cure. His hand was restored, but not a good mind.

Ver. 8.] For he had a charge from God (as it follows) not to communicate with them, who were apostates from their religion.

Ver. 9. *For so was it charged me by—the Lord,]* The same Divine authority, which sent him thither to do what they had heard and seen, gave him this following charge.

Eat no bread, &c.] The reason is plain, why he should not eat or drink with them ; because that was to have familiar society with idolaters. But why he should not return the same way that he came, is not so evident. Some think it was to represent, that even the way to Beth-el was abominable ; and therefore not to be frequented : or, to show how much we ought to abhor that which leads to evil. But it seems to be

a proverbial speech ; signifying that he should be constant and steadfast in executing the charge committed to him. For he that doth any thing without success is said to return by the way that he went (Isa. xxxvii. 29. 34). And therefore, not to return by the way that he went, is to do his business effectually.

Ver. 10.] To show (as many think) how God detests the way to idolatry ; and would have it to be forgotten.

Ver. 11. *There dwelt an old prophet]* One who had many years been a prophet before this apostacy ; whose name the Jews say was Micah : who was a worshipper of the true God, though he dwelt among this idolatrous people. A great many take him to have been a false prophet ; but Theodoret proves that he was a true, though guilty of telling a lie to the man of God (see Hermannus Witsius's Miscellanea, tom. i. p. 142, &c.).

In Beth-el ;] He was originally of Samaria, as we learn from 2 Kings xxiii. 18. But removed hither, it is likely, since this revolution, that he might see what Jeroboam designed.

His sons came and told him] In the Hebrew it is, "his son came and told him," &c. that is, one of his sons came first, and told all the foregoing passages ; and afterward came all the rest of them, and confirmed what he had related.

The words which he had spoken unto the king,] By this it appears they were present when Jeroboam stood at the altar, and therefore joined in that idolatrous worship ; though their father did not, and yet was so timorous that he durst not reprove it.

Ver. 12.] They had the curiosity to observe what way such a remarkable person went to his own country, imagining, perhaps, their father would have a mind to discourse with him.

Ver. 13. *He rode thereon,]* In the way they directed him.

Ver. 14. *Found him sitting under an oak ;]* Weary, I suppose, with a long journey ; and faint for want of victuals.

Ver. 15.] He had a mind to have a further trial of the truth of what the man of God had said ; and so, in a crafty deceitful manner, enticed him back ; contrary to his commission.

Ver. 16.] It seems he was forbidden so much as to

nor go in with thee: neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place:

17 For it was said to me by the word of the LORD, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest.

18 He said unto him, *I am a prophet also as thou art*; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with thee into thy house, that he may eat bread and drink water. *But he lied unto him.*

19 So he went back with him, and did eat bread in his house, and drank water.

20 ¶ And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, that the word of the LORD came unto the prophet that brought him back:

21 And he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the LORD, and hast not kept the commandment which the LORD thy God commanded thee,

go into any of their houses; lest he should be tempted to eat with them.

Ver. 17.] For which reason he refused to accept of the king's invitation.

Ver. 18. *I am a prophet also as thou art*;} He pretended, as Abarinel thinks, that God had revealed the very same to him concerning the altar in Beth-el, that he had threatened.

An angel spake unto me—saying, Bring him back] And he further pretended that he found him here by the direction of an angel. For he did not tell him that he learned from his sons what had passed; but pretended he had it by prophecy; and that an angel, in the name of God, commanded him to bring him back to his house, and refresh himself there.

Into thy house, that he may eat bread and drink water.] He persuaded him, I suppose, that the meaning of God's charge, "thou shalt not eat bread, nor drink water in this place," was to be understood of sinners and idolaters, with whom he might not communicate: but he being a prophet, was not to be comprehended in that command. And therefore the angel said, Bring him back to thy house: not to the habitation of any idolater, but to his dwelling-house, which was undefiled. Thus Abarinel.

But he lied unto him.] All this was a fiction, which God suffered for the trial of a good man; whether he would believe him, or a man he did not know.

Ver. 19.] He thought it possible that God might, in pity to him, revoke his prohibition; because he was hungry and weary. But he ought to have believed the revelation he had himself, of which he was certain; and not trusted to what another pretended was revealed to him; which he could not be sure was true. And it is said emphatically, ver. 22, "The Lord did say to thee, Eat no bread," &c. If God had, in compassion to him, thought fit to recall that word, he would have done it to himself; and as plainly allowed him to refresh himself, as before he had forbidden it. So Abarinel well observes, "Nothing that a prophet receives from God is to be altered, unless that prophet hath another word from God revoking the former." As Abraham had; to whom God saith (Gen. xxii. 2), "Take thy son, &c. and offer him for a burnt-offering," &c. But when he was going to do it, he heard that command repealed (ver. 12), "Lay not thy hand upon the lad," &c. He would not receive a contrary command from the mouth of any prophet, but from the mouth of God alone; from whom he received the first command.

22 But camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place, of the which *the LORD* did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water; thy carcass shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers.

23 ¶ And it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and after he had drunk, that he saddled for him the ass, to *wit*, for the prophet whom he had brought back.

24 And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his carcass was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcass.

25 And, behold, men passed by, and saw the carcass cast in the way, and the lion standing by the carcass: and they came and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt.

26 And when the prophet that brought him back from the way heard thereof, he said, It is the man of God, who was disobedient unto the word of the LORD: therefore the LORD hath de-

Ver. 20.] God would not vouchsafe to speak to him, who had disobeyed his voice: but rather to the other though in his name he had feigned an untruth.

Ver. 21. *He cried unto the man of God*] He seems to be in a great agony; from the consideration of what he had done, and of what the prophet from Judah was to suffer.

As thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the Lord.] To disobey God's mouth, was to disobey the word spoken by his mouth.

Ver. 22.] This was all his punishment; that he should shortly die, and not be buried among the Jews.

Ver. 23.] It is remarkable, that no punishment is here threatened to the old prophet for telling him a lie. Because, as Abarinel thinks, he meant no harm to the other prophet; but fancied that his saying, he might not eat or drink with them, was only to excuse himself from going with Jeroboam to his house. And besides, it might have turned to the great advantage of the prophet who came from Judah, if he had steadfastly persisted in his resolution, and not given credit to what the old prophet said against it.

Ver. 24. *A lion met him by the way, and slew him*:] Not far from Beth-el there was a wood; out of which the two she-bears came that tare two-and-forty children in pieces (2 Kings ii. 24). Out of which wood, it is probable, this lion came, and slew this prophet.

The ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcass.] This was to admonish all the prophets to observe God's commands strictly; and to show Jeroboam what he might expect, since God spared not a lesser offender. But, as God showed his severity, in taking away this prophet's life, which was his punishment; so he remarkably showed his approbation of the prophet; in that the lion stood quietly by his carcass, and did not devour it; nor do any hurt to the ass on which he rode. As if he was merely sent by a divine appointment, to execute what God had threatened; but could not move one step beyond that commission. For when the prophet had suffered what God intended, he takes even his dead body into his protection; and would not let it be violated, as is observed below, ver. 28.

Ver. 25.] As a wonderful thing; that the lion should neither fall upon his prey, nor hurt them who passed by; but suffered them to go on quietly.

Ver. 26. *Who was disobedient unto the word of the Lord*:] Disobedience in great cases hath been thus

livered him unto the lion, which hath torn him, and slain him, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake unto him.

27 And he spake to his sons, saying, Saddle me the ass. And they saddled him.

28 And he went and found his carcass cast in the way, and the ass and the lion standing by the carcass: the lion had not eaten the carcass, nor torn the ass.

29 And the prophet took up the carcass of the man of God, and laid it upon the ass, and brought it back: and the old prophet came to the city, to mourn and to bury him.

30 And he laid his carcass in his own grave; and they mourned over him, saying, Alas, my brother!

31 And it came to pass, after he had buried

punished by men in authority. For the Athenians put their ambassadors to death whom they had sent into Arcadia, though they had performed their business very well, to their content, *ἐπεὶ ἐρίσαν ἰδὼν ἔλθον, καὶ οὐ τὴν προσηταγμένην*, "because they came another way, and not that which they were prescribed." Which is the very case before us (Elian. lib. vi. Var. Hist. cap. 5).

Delivered him unto the lion, which hath torn him.] The lion did not rend his body in pieces, but only gave him one wound, which killed him. In the Hebrew the word is, *he broke him*, that is, his bones, and so slew him speedily.

Ver. 27.] Hearing the lion stood as quiet as a lamb, and neither meddled with the carcass, nor hurt any that passed by, he did not fear to take up the body of the prophet that came from Judah; believing the lion had order to do no other mischief, but kill him.

Ver. 28.] Here is a cluster of miracles; that the lion, contrary to his nature, did not eat the carcass, nor kill the ass, nor meddle with the travellers that passed by, nor with the old prophet and his ass: and that the ass stood so quietly, and was not frightened at the sight of a lion, and betook itself to flight: and more than this, the lion stood by the carcass a long time, until this strange news was carried into the city, as a faithful keeper of the prophet's body, that no other wild beasts should meddle with it. Which made the miracle more illustrious, and plainly showed all this did not happen by chance.

him, that he spake to his sons, saying, When I am dead, then bury me in the sepulchre wherein the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones:

32 For the saying which he cried by the word of the Lord against the altar in Beth-el, and against all the houses of the high places which are in the cities of Samaria, shall surely come to pass.

33 ¶ After this thing Jeroboam returned not from his evil way, but made again of the lowest of the people priests of the high places: whosoever would, he consecrated him, and he became one of the priests of the high places.

34 And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even to cut it off, and to destroy it from off the face of the earth.

Ver. 29. *To bury him.*] To make a solemn funeral for him.

Ver. 30. *He laid his carcass in his own grave;*] Which was the greatest honour he could do him.

They mourned over him, saying, Alas, my brother!] He and his sons made the usual lamentation over him, of which this was the form, we find, in aftertimes (Jer. xxii. 18).

Ver. 31.] This he ordered, not merely out of affection to the prophet, but to secure himself from the judgment that he had threatened, ver. 2.

Ver. 32.] This Abarinel looks upon as an argument that this man was a prophet of the Lord; that he foretold the same thing that the man of God who came from Judah did. And, as he thinks, something more, viz. the destruction of all the high places by Josiah, which is not before mentioned.

Ver. 33. *After this thing Jeroboam returned not from his evil way.*] By all these wonderful works (for the singular number is put for the plural) Jeroboam was not at all changed, but continued in his idolatry.

But made again of the lowest of the people priests] He did not reform in any one thing; but still went on in making anybody priests (see xii. 31).

Whosoever would, he consecrated him.] Without any respect to his tribe, or family; or, indeed, to his condition.

Ver. 34.] Brought dreadful punishments upon his family (for so *sin* sometimes signifies the *punishment* of sin), and these not vulgar punishments, but utter extirpation.

CHAPTER XIV.

1 Abijah being sick, Jeroboam sendeth his wife disguised with presents to the prophet Ahijah at Shiloh. 5 Ahijah, forewarned by God, denounceth God's judgment. 17 Abijah dieth, and is buried. 19 Nadab succeedeth Jeroboam. 21 Rehoboam's wicked reign. 25 Shishak spoileth Jerusalem. 29 Abijam succeedeth Rehoboam.

1 At that time Abijah the son of Jeroboam fell sick.

2 And Jeroboam said to his wife, Arise, I pray

CHAP. XIV.

Ver. 1. *At that time*] Some time after those woes were denounced against him; but the phrase doth not denote any precise time.

Abijah—fell sick.] Being stricken by the hand of God with some disease.

Ver. 2. *Disguise thyself,*] Put on such apparel as the common people wear.

thee, and disguise thyself, that thou be not known to be the wife of Jeroboam; and get thee to Shiloh: behold, there is Ahijah the prophet,

That thou be not known to be the wife of Jeroboam;] He would have her go on this errand, because he was sure she would report things truly to him: but yet would not have her known to be his wife, because he would have the prophet speak more freely and indifferently; or, perhaps, he was afraid he should threaten too heavily, if he knew who she was.

Get thee to Shiloh: behold, there is Ahijah the prophet,] This looks like great stupidity, that he should

which told me that *I should be king over his people.*

3 And take with thee ten loaves, and cracknels, and a cruse of honey, and go to him : he shall tell thee what shall become of the child.

4 And Jeroboam's wife did so, and arose, and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahijah. But Ahijah could not see ; for his eyes were set by reason of his age.

5 ¶ And the LORD said unto Ahijah, Behold, the wife of Jeroboam cometh to ask a thing of thee for her son ; for he *is* sick : thus and thus shalt thou say unto her : for it shall be, when she cometh in, that she shall feign herself to be another woman.

6 And it was so, when Ahijah heard the sound of her feet, as she came in at the door, that he said, Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam ; why feignest thou thyself to be another ? for I am sent to thee with heavy tidings.

7 Go, tell Jeroboam, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Forasmuch as I exalted thee from among the people, and made thee prince over my people Israel,

8 And rent the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it thee : and yet thou hast not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his

heart, to do that only which was right in mine eyes ;

9 But hast done evil above all that were before thee : for thou hast gone and made thee other gods, and molten images, to provoke me to anger, and hast east me behind thy back :

10 Therefore, behold, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel, and will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as a man taketh away dung, till it be all gone.

11 Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat : and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat : for the LORD hath spoken it.

12 Arise thou therefore, get thee to thine own house : and when thy feet enter into the city, the child shall die.

13 And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him : for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found some good thing toward the LORD God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam.

14 Moreover the LORD shall raise him up a king over Israel, who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam that day ; but what ? even now.

think to deceive a prophet, who could tell him future events ; and therefore much more discover things present.

Ver. 3.] They that went to inquire of a prophet used to make him some present, as a token of their respect to him (see 1 Sam. ix. 7). And by such oblations the prophets supported themselves. This present which she made him was of such things as might make him think her to be a countrywoman, rather than a courtier.

Ver. 4.] In the Hebrew, his eyes " stood for his hoariness." He seems to have had a film, or a cataract, grown over his eyes.

Ver. 5.] He was as fully instructed how to treat her, as if he had seen and known her.

Ver. 6.] He discovered her before she appeared, that she might give the greater credit to his words.

Ver. 7.] Raised him from a private person to be the king of the ten tribes.

Ver. 8.] Though David committed some great sins, yet he was upright in his religion, and never started aside in the least unto other gods. In which piety God expected Jeroboam should have continued, as he admonished him when he first sent Ahijah to him (xi. 38).

Ver. 9. *But hast done evil above all that were before thee :*] King Saul was not so bad, nor Solomon ; who though he was drawn aside himself, yet did not study to make his people idolaters.

And molten images,] Or, " even molten images ;" that is, the golden calves. Which he did not think to be gods, but only representations of God : and yet God looked upon this worship which was paid to him before these images as the worship of other gods, which are called devils in 2 Chron. xi. 1.

To provoke me to anger,] That was the effect of this idolatrous worship.

Hast east me behind thy back :] Neglected me and my service. For those things we east behind our backs which are nothing worth, and for which we have no regard or concern what becomes of them.

Ver. 10. *I will bring evil*] Severely punish it.

Will cut off from Jeroboam him that pisseth against the wall,] That is, not leave a man of his family alive, as Rablag interprets it (see 1 Sam. xxv. 22).

And him that is shut up and left in Israel,] That is, married or unmarried, as De Dieu expounds these words upon Deut. xxxii. 36. all sorts of men, of whatsoever state or condition they be. Others refer this to treasures shut up in secret places, and to flocks left in the field ; or to men taken captive, or that have escaped. As much as to say, there shall be an universal destruction. And thus Bochartus glosses (comprehending all these), " I will cut off every male, whether he be a captive or a free man ; whether he live in the city or in the country, be married or single." (see his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 66).

Will take away the remnant] All his posterity. *As a man taketh away dung,*] Which servants remove so carefully, that they suffer not the least speck to remain.

Ver. 11. *Him that dieth in the city shall the dogs eat :*] That is, none of them shall be buried.

For the Lord hath spoken it.] This is God's irrevocable decree.

Ver. 12.] This was a sign that all the rest of his threatenings should be fulfilled.

Ver. 13. *For he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave,*] All the rest were to be buried in the bowels of dogs, and of fowls of the air (ver. 11).

Because in him there is found some good thing] He was the only person of that family that disliked the worship of the calves, and perhaps intended to remove them when he had power ; and suffer the people to go up to Jerusalem to worship, trusting God would preserve him in his kingdom. Some of the Jews say that he broke down a hedge, which his father had made, to keep people from going to Jerusalem at the three great feasts.

Ver. 14. *Raise him up a king*] This king was Baasha (xv. 27, 28).

That day :] As soon as he was made king (ver. 29).

But what ? even now.] What did I say (that day) ?

15 For the LORD shall smite Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water, and he shall root up Israel out of this good land, which he gave to their fathers, and shall scatter them beyond the river, because they have made their groves, provoking the LORD to anger.

16 And he shall give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin.

17 ¶ And Jeroboam's wife arose, and departed, and came to Tirzah: and when she came to the threshold of the door, the child died;

18 And they buried him; and all Israel mourned for him, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by the hand of his servant Ahijah the prophet.

19 And the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how

he warred, and how he reigned, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

20 And the days which Jeroboam reigned were two and twenty years: and he slept with his fathers, and Nadab his son reigned in his stead.

21 ¶ And Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam was forty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD did choose out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there. And his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess.

22 And Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins which they had committed, above all that their fathers had done.

even just now. It is as sure as if it were now done. The Chaldee takes it otherwise; he shall destroy the house of Jeroboam, both that which liveth now at this day, and that which shall be born in time to come. But Kimchi puts no stop at this word *vemah* (and what), but continues it with what follows, in this manner, "What is this which shall now happen, to that which shall come hereafter?" that is, the present calamities shall be nothing to the future. Which agrees well enough with what follows, concerning the continual troubles that should be in Israel; and at last their captivity.

Ver. 15. *The Lord shall smite Israel.*] For their consenting to that idolatrous worship which Jeroboam set up.

As a reed is shaken in the water.] That is, they shall be in perpetual commotions by civil wars: having no quiet, but frequently changing their kings. Thus Bochartus excellently expounds it, in an epistle to our bishop Morley, p. 106, &c. The reason of this expression was, that several of their kings were afterward killed, and new families started up; and between so many kings of so many families and tribes, their minds fluctuated and wavered; and they knew not where to fix themselves and rest in quiet: therefore their condition is thus described in 2 Chron. xv. 5, "there was no peace to him that went in, or to him that came out," &c.

He shall root up Israel] Which he began to do first by Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria (2 Kings xv. 29), and then finished it by Salmanser (2 Kings xvii. 5, 6, &c.).

Scatter them beyond the river.] That is, Euphrates: they being carried (as the forenamed places tell us) into the country of the Medes.

Because they have made their groves.] In which they placed the images of their gods. For they were not contented with the calves, but fell to grosser idolatry, which was commonly practised in groves (see Judg. iii. 7).

Provoking the Lord to anger.] For nothing was so detestable to him as this sin.

Ver. 16. *He shall give Israel up*] Into the hands of the heathen.

Because of the sins of Jeroboam—who made Israel to sin.] Perverted the whole nation: who by his authority and example were led into idolatry.

Ver. 17. *Tirzah.*] A city in the tribe of Manasseh, which had been famous in ancient times (Josh. xii. 21), and became the royal seat, and continued so for some time (xv. 33), being found more convenient, I suppose, than Shechem, where Jeroboam first settled.

When she came to the threshold of the door, the child died;] It seems the king's house was near the gate of the city; for it is said, ver. 12, that as soon as she entered into the city, the child should die. And so it did, when she came to the threshold of the door of the palace.

Ver. 18.] Whereby he confirmed all the rest of his threatenings against the house of Jeroboam and the people of Israel.

Ver. 19. *How he warred, and how he reigned,*] How he behaved himself in war and in peace.

They are written in the book of the chronicles] Not in that book in the Bible called Chronicles; but in such a book as that wherein the acts of Solomon were recorded, day by day, xi. 41 (see there).

Ver. 20.] His sleeping with his fathers seems to be a phrase signifying only that he died, as all before him did: not that he was buried with them (as it is said of Rehoboam, ver. 31), for they were private men, and he a king; who, no doubt, was magnificently interred by his son.

Ver. 21. *Rehoboam was forty and one years old when he began to reign.*] And therefore was born a year before Solomon came to the crown: for he reigned but forty years, xi. 42.

He reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem.] A great honour to him, of which he was not worthy; and therefore God shortened his days, and did not let him reign so long as Jeroboam.

His mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess.] It is much that David should suffer Solomon to marry one of this country, unless she was proselyted, as the daughter of Pharaoh is supposed to have been. He himself, indeed, had married the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur; but the son he had by her proved so wicked, that it might have been a caution to him not to marry his son, especially him he intended for the heir of his crown, to a stranger; who, if she was proselyted, yet many think she did not so change her religion, but that she instilled ill principles into her son, and corrupted him. Nay, was one of those women that enticed Solomon to idolatry; for women of Ammon are reckoned among his strange wives.

Ver. 22. *They provoked him to jealousy with their sins*] By joining other gods together with him. Which is an amazing thing, that, at the beginning of his reign, Rehoboam should do well for three years (2 Chron. xi. 17), and then forsake the law of God (2 Chron. xii. 1), and fall off from his worship into such gross idolatry, as exceeded that of Jeroboam.

Above all that their fathers had done.] Above all that had been practised in the time of the judges.

23 For they also built them high places, and images, and groves, on every high hill, and under every green tree.

24 And there were also sodomites in the land: and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord cast out before the children of Israel.

25 ¶ And it came to pass in the fifth year of king Rehoboam, that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem:

26 And he took away the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house; he even took away all: and he took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made.

27 And king Rehoboam made in their stead

Ver. 23.] They multiplied altars on every high hill; and set up images; and built temples for them; which I take to be meant by *groves*. For they could not be under every green tree; nor could they be said to be *built*, but to be planted; therefore it is reasonable to interpret them temples, or places of divine worship. As among the heathens, Strabo testifies (Geograph. lib. ix.) that the poets called their temples by the name of *groves* (*ἄσκη καλοῦσιν τὰ ἱερά πάντα*), though they had no trees about them; because the custom was to have trees planted about their sacred places. In which the Israelites set up altars; directly contrary to the law; which intended to preserve unity in religion, by allowing one altar only.

Ver. 24.] This kind of wickedness often attended idolatry (xv. 12. 2 Kings xxiii. 7. Rom. i. 21. 28). For among the heathens the most filthy things were practised in these shady dark places (their *groves*) by the worshippers of Venus, Bacchus, and Priapus. And such they were, it appears by the place now quoted (2 Kings xxiii. 7), among the Israelites: who, out of devotion to some false god or other, prostituted their bodies, contrary to nature, to be abused in honour of those gods, directly against the law (Dent. xxiii. 17). For when Josiah purged the temple, he is said to cast out the *sodomites*; where, by *kedeshim* our Selden understands the priests of Astarte (Syntag. ii. De Diis Syris, cap. 2).

Ver. 25.] Ῥοβοῶμος δ' αὐτῷ παρέδωκε ἀμαχητὶ τὴν πόλιν. "And Rehoboam (as Josephus writes delivered up the city to him, without striking a stroke." For he had a vast army (as we read, 2 Chron. xii. 2), wherewith he conquered Asia, as Herodotus tells us, who calls him Sesostris. For Josephus acknowledgeth he relates the same expedition that the Scripture doth, but under a different name. It may seem something strange, that Shishak being so nearly allied to Rehoboam should come up against him, and take his royal city; but as kingdoms are never married, so Jeroboam, it is likely, who lived long in Egypt, stirred him up to invade him, and thereby established himself in his new kingdom: for we read not a word of any cities in Israel that he took, but only the fenced cities of Judah (2 Chron. xii. 4); Jeroboam and his country remaining undisturbed. Besides, it must be remembered he was not the son of Pharaoh's daughter, but of an Ammonitess; and therefore there was no kindred between Rehoboam and Shishak.

Ver. 26. He took away the treasures of the house of

brazen shields, and committed them unto the hands of the chief of the guard, which kept the door of the king's house.

25 And it was so, when the king went into the house of the Lord, that the guard bare them, and brought them back into the guard chamber.

29 ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Rehoboam, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

30 And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days.

31 And Rehoboam slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David. And his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess. And Abijam his son reigned in his stead.

the Lord.] These riches which David and Solomon had treasured up, tempted Shishak, it is probable, to this expedition against Jerusalem; for he did not intend to keep this city, but only to spoil it.

He took away all the shields of gold.] Which were in the house of the forest of Lebanon (see x. 16, 17), which it seems he also plundered. This was a speedy vengeance for their sins; that so soon after Solomon's death, the splendour wherein he left Jerusalem should be extinguished. For Rehoboam served God three years; was corrupted in the fourth; and in the fifth was punished.

Ver. 27.] In the Hebrew the word for *guard* is *runner*: so called because they went before the king and behind him. These shields were not of much value; and so were committed to men in a mean office: whereas the golden ones were kept, as I said, in the house of the forest of Lebanon.

Ver. 28.] He did not quite forsake God, but still continued to worship in the temple: and, perhaps, he now left the high places (after he had been thus chastised by the king of Egypt), and frequented the house of God better. Shields were carried before him for pomp's sake, that he might not be contemned by his people; and that there might be no occasion for sedition, if they were disposed to it, when they saw him so well guarded.

Ver. 29.] He refers those that desired a larger account of him to the public annals; as he had done when he concludes the history of Jeroboam, ver. 19 (see there).

Ver. 30.] This doth not seem to agree with what we read xii. 22, where God commanded Rehoboam and his people not to go to fight with Israel; and they obeyed his voice. But this is easily satisfied, by observing that the Jews were commanded not to make war upon the Israelites; but they are not commanded not to defend themselves, if the Israelites made war upon them. And this was their case; the Israelites vexed them with continual incursions and depredations; though the house of David did not assault them, but only repelled their violence; or, perhaps, upon the borders, they were continually endeavouring to get ground one of another; though they never came to a set battle.

Ver. 31.] The repetition of this about his mother hath something remarkable in it (see ver. 21) though it is hard to know what it is. Abarbinel thinks, it is as much as to say, He did not repent at last; but as he lived, so he died, in the idolatry of his mother.

CHAPTER XV.

1 *Abijam's wicked reign.* 7 *Asa succeedeth him.* 9 *Asa's good reign.* 16 *The war between Baasha and him causeth him to make a league with Ben-hadad.* 23 *Jehoshaphat succeedeth Asa.* 25 *Nadab's wicked reign.* 27 *Baasha conspiring against him executeth Ahijah's prophecy.* 31 *Nadab's acts and death.* 33 *Baasha's wicked reign.*

1 Now in the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam the son of Nebat reigned Abijam over Judah.

2 Three years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom.

3 And he walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father.

4 Nevertheless for David's sake did the LORD his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him, and to establish Jerusalem:

5 Because David did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, and turned not aside from

any thing that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.

6 And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of his life.

7 Now the rest of the acts of Abijam, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And there was war between Abijam and Jeroboam.

8 And Abijam slept with his fathers; and they buried him in the city of David: and Asa his son reigned in his stead.

9 ¶ And in the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel reigned Asa over Judah.

10 And forty and one years reigned he in Je-

CHAP. XV.

Ver. 1.] This seems to disagree with what is said below (ver. 9) concerning Asa, that he began to reign the twentieth year of Jeroboam, and Abijam reigned three years. But it is usual, both in scripture and in other authors, to reckon part of a year for a whole year. So Abijam began to reign in some part of Jeroboam's eighteenth year, and continued his reign the whole nineteenth, and died in the twentieth: and so was reckoned to have reigned three years, as it here follows.

Ver. 2. *Three years reigned he in Jerusalem.*] This was a very short time, as Abarinel observes; but it was because he walked in the way of his father; which provoked God to cut him off.

His mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom.] The same author fancies she was the daughter of Absalom (as he is called 2 Chron. xi. 21), who rebelled against his father David; and so was a bad daughter of a bad father. She is called by another name, 2 Chron. xiii. 2, viz. *Michaiah the daughter of Uriel*. But he thinks that is the name of the family, and this her proper name. Others think this is a mere fancy, and with great reason; for Abishalom is a different name from Absalom, as David's son is always called. And they think he had two names, as his daughter also had. But Pellicanus seems to me to have given the plainest account of this, that Maachah was his grandmother, and Michaiah his mother.

Ver. 3.] See xiv. 22—24. They ought all to have remembered David, and trod in his steps; who was the founder of the royal family; and never turned aside to the worship of other gods, as this man did; though together with them he worshipped the Lord God of Israel, who is therefore called *the Lord his God*.

Ver. 4. *God give him a lamp in Jerusalem.*] He continued the kingdom in the posterity of David; which is the meaning of giving him a lamp (see xi. 36).

And to establish Jerusalem:] Whereby Jerusalem was established as the place of God's worship.

Ver. 5.] He was not without other sins; but none so enormous as this: and therefore not remembered, as this about Uriah is very often, to his dishonour.

Ver. 6.] This was said before (xiv. 30), and therefore may seem to come in here impertinently: because he is not speaking of Rehoboam, but of his son Abijam: who was a valiant young man in the days of his father, and always fought his battles with Jeroboam. Which being related before in the history of Rehoboam, is here repeated, as Abarinel thinks, to show that Abijam was the cause of these wars. And these words, "all his days," he thinks, relate to Abijam, who continued the war between his father and Jeroboam with great success: as we read 2 Chron. xiii. 17. Bochartus thinks a plainer account may be given of this; by supposing that Rehoboam signifies this son of his; children and fathers being one and the same in a moral account. Thus Abraham is said to have purchased the sepulchre of the sons of Emor; which was indeed purchased by Jacob: and the Israelites say to Rehoboam (xii. 16), "What portion have we in David?" That is, in Rehoboam the grandchild of David? In like manner, he thinks, it may be said, "there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam;" that is, between Abijam the son of Rehoboam and Jeroboam: whom Abijam grievously afflicted (Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 43). But this doth not seem to be the true account; because the war between Abijam and Jeroboam is distinctly mentioned in the next verse. Therefore the meaning of these words is, that though God was pleased for David's sake, who walked uprightly before him, to continue a lamp, that is, a successor to him in Jerusalem; yet these successors were vexed with continual wars (as appeared both in the reign of Rehoboam and Abijam), and did not enjoy their kingdom peaceably.

Ver. 7. *Are they not written in the book of the chronicles?*] See xi. 41. Ezra saith they were recorded in the book of the prophet Iddo, 2 Chron. xiii. 22, from whence he took what he thought fit.

There was war] He continued the war, which had been between his father and Jeroboam, and managed it very gloriously, as Ezra shows in the book of the Chronicles.

Ver. 10. *Maachah.*] This was the name of his grandmother, who is called his mother, as Reuel is called the father of Jethro's daughters, Exod. ii. 18, when he was their grandfather. Which example Kimchi here alleges to explain this. And thus Abarinel: The sense is not, that Maachah brought forth

rusalem. And his mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom.

11 And Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, as did David his father.

12 And he took away the sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made.

13 And also Maachah his mother, even her he removed from being queen, because she had made an idol in a grove; and Asa destroyed her idol, and burnt it by the brook Kidron.

14 But the high places were not removed: nevertheless Asa's heart was perfect with the LORD all his days.

15 And he brought in the things which his father had dedicated, and the things which himself had dedicated, into the house of the LORD, silver, and gold, and vessels.

Asa (for she was his father's mother), but she brought him up and gave him his education: which made his piety the more remarkable, that he was not tainted with her principles of religion as his father was. But why his mother should not be mentioned, but his grandmother, which was not at all needful (because it was evident, by what was said before, that Maachah was the mother of Abijam his father), is unaccountable. And therefore others think that this was the name of his mother; which was the same: as her father's also was, with that of Abijam's mother's father.

Ver. 11.] He made him his pattern: worshipping the Lord alone, and taking away all idols, as it here follows.

Ver. 12.] Of which see xiv. 23, 24. But still some secretly remained; and therefore when it is said he removed all idols, the meaning is, all that he could discover, for some lurked privately (xxii. 46).

Ver. 13. Also Maachah his mother, even her he removed from being queen.] He took away her guards, all the ensigns of royal dignity, and reduced her to the condition of a private person. But the word being is not in the Hebrew; which others translate, "he removed her from the queen:" that is, from his wife; that she might not be infected with her idolatry. He put her therefore out of the court, where she gave a bad example.

Because she had made an idol in a grove;] The word we translate idol, is *miphlezeth*, which imports something of terror and horror; either because it was of a frightful aspect, or brought dreadful judgments upon its worshippers. St. Jerome understands by it Priapus, or Baal-peor, to whom the women were much devoted. Theodoret takes it for Astarte, or Venus; and indeed, in the northern countries, Priapus and Venus were painted together; as Johan. Gensius observes in his book De Victimis Humanis, par. i. cap. 9. Whatsoever it was, it was placed in a grove; in which shady places all the works of darkness, even sodomy itself, were practised.

Asa destroyed her idol,] He cut it down, and having burnt it, stamped it to a powder, and then threw it into the brook Kidron; as Moses did with the golden calf, Exod. xxxii. 20 (see 2 Chron. xv. 16).

Ver. 14.] He did take away all the high places wherein they sacrificed to strange gods (2 Chron. xiv. 3), but not those wherein God alone was worshipped; for his authority was not great enough to do this; the people having so universally and so long taken this license, that none durst attempt to abolish this inveterate custom, till the days of Hezekiah: who, seeing the calamities that were coming upon his country,

16 ¶ And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.

17 And Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah, and built Ramah, that he might not suffer any to go out or come in to Asa king of Judah.

18 Then Asa took all the silver and the gold that were left in the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and delivered them into the hand of his servants: and king Asa sent them to Ben-hadad, the son of Tabrimon, the son of Hezion, king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying,

19 There is a league between me and thee, and between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent unto thee a present of silver and gold; come and break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me.

20 So Ben-hadad hearkened unto king Asa,

endeavoured to prevent them by a thorough reformation. But though Asa did not venture to do this, yet his heart was sincerely affected to the right worship of God; and he suffered sacrifices to be offered to none else.

Ver. 15.] According to the piety of ancient times, his father had vowed some part of the spoils he took in the war with Jeroboam unto the Lord; but had not time to make good his vow, or upon some account or other neglected it. Asa, his son, therefore made his vow good; and also himself brought in what he had devoted unto holy uses (for so the words are in the Hebrew, he brought in the holy things of his father, &c.), having gotten great spoil in his war with the Ethiopians (2 Chron. xiv. 13, 14).

Ver. 16.] There having been no mention hitherto made of Baasha, this may seem not to stand in its proper place. But Abarbinel thinks it is here inserted, that as this divine writer had shown what his virtues were, so he might mention his faults. The chief of which was occasioned by this war, which moved him to send to Ben-hadad for help, when he should have relied upon God; as it is related largely, 2 Chron. xvi. 7, &c.

Ver. 17. Baasha—went up against Judah,] After Asa's great victory over the Ethiopians, a great many of the Israelites fell off to him from Baasha: who thereupon resolved to make war upon Judah, and thereby prevent a further defection of his subjects.

Built Ramah,] A city in the tribe of Benjamin: which either belonged to the kingdom of Israel, or he had taken from Judah and fortified it; for that is meant by building it, as appears by what follows.

That he might not suffer any to go out or come in to Asa] That he might hinder all communication between his people and the people of Judah. For this place lay in the confines of both kingdoms; and in such a strait, that, a fortification being made there, none could pass to and fro without a license from Baasha.

Ver. 18.] This was held lawful, in case of extreme danger, to employ sacred things for the defence of one's country. But here was no such necessity in this case; for God had appeared so wonderfully for Asa, against a more powerful enemy than Baasha, that he ought to have confided in him for help; as the prophet Hanani told him, 2 Chron. xvi. 7, &c.

Ver. 19. There is a league between me and thee,] In the latter end of Solomon's reign the Syrians were enemies to him (xi. 24, 25). But when he was dead, and the kingdom was divided, both Judah and Israel made peace with the Syrians: having enough to do, to settle themselves in their own dominions.

and sent the captains of the hosts which he had against the cities of Israel, and smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abel-beth-maachab, and all Cinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali.

21 And it came to pass, when Baasha heard thereof, that he left off building Ramah, and dwelt in Tirzah.

22 Then king Asa made a proclamation throughout all Judah; none was exempted: and they took away the stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof, wherewith Baasha had builded; and king Asa built with them Geba of Benjamin, and Mizpah.

23 The rest of all the acts of Asa, and all his might, and all that he did, and the cities which he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? Nevertheless in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet.

24 And Asa slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: and Jehosaphat his son reigned in his stead.

25 ¶ And Nadab the son of Jeroboam began to reign over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned over Israel two years.

[*I have sent unto thee a present of silver and gold;*] This was a wicked piece of policy, to tempt him with money to break his word, which perhaps he had sworn to observe.

Ver. 20. *Sent the captains of the hosts which he had*] Always in a readiness, for some expedition, or for the defence of his country.

Against the cities of Israel—Cinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali.] By this it appears, that he fell upon the northern part of the kingdom of Israel, which was nearest to Damascus; whilst Baasha was busy at Ramah, which was in the more southern part of his dominion.

Ver. 21. *When Baasha heard thereof, he left off building Ramah.*] By this means Asa compassed his ends; it not being safe for Baasha to continue the work he was about, for fear Ben-hadad should make larger conquests than he had already done.

Dwelt in Tirzah.] Which was become the royal city (see xiv. 17), where Baasha settled himself; though he intended, I suppose, when he had finished Ramah, to have dwelt there some part of the year; that by his presence the passages might have been the better secured.

Ver. 22. *Made a proclamation*] He summoned all the people of the country; who were not disabled by age, or sickness, or some other way.

Asa built with them Geba of Benjamin, and Mizpah.] They were inhabited before, but he enlarged, and perhaps fortified them. Which he judged better than to perfect the fortification of Ramah; which would have been a perpetual bone of contention (as we speak) between Judah and Israel.

Ver. 23. *Book of the chronicles*] See xi. 41. *He was diseased in his feet.*] He had the gout, as the Gemara of the Sanhedrin explains it (cap. 6. n. 7), which made him less active than he had been before this disease seized him.

Ver. 25. *Nadab—reigned over Israel two years.*] Part of two years, as appears from ver. 28. 33.

Ver. 26. *He made Israel to sin.*] By the worship of the golden calves.

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26 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin.

27 ¶ And Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him; and Baasha smote him at Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines; for Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon.

28 Even in the third year of Asa king of Judah did Baasha slay him, and reigned in his stead.

29 And it came to pass, when he reigned, that he smote all the house of Jeroboam; he left not to Jeroboam any that breathed, until he had destroyed him, according unto the saying of the LORD, which he spake by his servant Ahijah the Shilonite:

30 Because of the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel sin, by his provocation wherewith he provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger.

31 ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

32 And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.

Ver. 27. *The house of Issachar.*] That is, of a family in the tribe of Issachar.

Baasha smote him at Gibbethon.] It was a city in the tribe of Dan (Josh. xix. 44), and given to the Levites (xxi. 23), who quitted it, as they did the rest of their cities, when Jeroboam would not suffer them to execute their office (2 Chron. xi. 14), and the Philistines it is likely seized upon it, being adjoining to their country. But Nadab now endeavoured to recover it out of their hands, as of right belonging to him.

Ver. 28.] What was the pretence for this conspiracy we are not told; but it is likely he had many joined with him in it; otherwise it had not been easy to slay him, when he was in the midst of his army before Gibbethon.

Ver. 29.] His intention was not to fulfil this prophecy (mentioned xiv. 10), but to secure himself in his usurped throne, by cutting off all that had any title to it. But by this means God fulfilled his own intentions; and that as speedily as Ahijah the prophet had foretold (xiv. 14).

Ver. 30.] Which caused great miseries in Israel; especially in the beginning of that kingdom, when they reigned by force, not by succession. Whereas in Judah the son succeeded the father, by right of blood, according to the promise made to David.

Ver. 31.] His acts could not be many; yet more were recorded in the public annals than are here mentioned (xi. 41).

Ver. 32.] We read the very same words before (ver. 16) in the history of Asa; which are now repeated in the history of Baasha, to show the reason why Asa was his enemy, which he would not have been (but his friend) had he feared God after his cutting off the whole house of Jeroboam. But he would make no covenant with him, notwithstanding he had fulfilled the word of God, because he walked in the sins of Jeroboam. Thus Abarbanel.

Ver. 34.] Which makes it evident, that he did not cut off Jeroboam's family because they were idolaters, but because he aspired to the throne; which, when

33 In the third year of Asa king of Judah, began Baasha the son of Ahijah to reign over all Israel in Tirzah, twenty and four years.

he possessed, he endeavoured to establish himself in it by the same wicked policy which Jeroboam used. For he reformed nothing in religion; but continued to

34 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin.

worship the calves which Jeroboam had set up, to keep the people from going to worship at Jerusalem.

CHAPTER XVI.

1, 7 *Jehu's prophecy against Baasha.* 6 *Elah succeedeth him.* 8 *Zimri conspiring against Elah succeedeth him.* 11 *Zimri executeth Jehu's prophecy.* 15 *Omri, made king by the soldiers, forceth Zimri desperately to burn himself.* 21 *The kingdom being divided, Omri prevaileth against Tibni.* 23 *Omri buildeth Samaria.* 25 *His wicked reign.* 27 *Ahab succeedeth him.* 29 *Ahab's most wicked reign.* 34 *Joshua's curse upon Hiel the builder of Jericho.*

1 THEN the word of the LORD came to Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha, saying,

2 Forasmuch as I exalted thee out of the dust, and made thee prince over my people Israel; and thou hast walked in the way of Jeroboam, and hast made my people Israel to sin, to provoke me to anger with their sins;

3 Behold, I will take away the posterity of Baasha, and the posterity of his house; and will make thy house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

4 Him that dieth of Baasha in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth of his in the fields shall the fowls of the air eat.

5 Now the rest of the acts of Baasha, and what he did, and his might, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

6 So Baasha slept with his fathers, and was buried in Tirzah: and Elah his son reigned in his stead.

7 And also by the hand of the prophet Jehu the son of Hanani came the word of the LORD against Baasha, and against his house, even for all the evil that he did in the sight of the LORD, in provoking him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam; and because he killed him.

8 ¶ In the twenty and sixth year of Asa king of Judah began Elah the son of Baasha to reign over Israel in Tirzah, two years.

9 And his servant Zimri, captain of half his chariots, conspired against him, as he was in Tirzah, drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza steward of his house in Tirzah.

CHAPTER XVI.

Ver. 1.] This is a prophet that lived till the end of Jehoshaphat's reign (see 2 Chron. xix. 1. xx. 34). And his father Hanani was a prophet before him (2 Chron. xvi. 7). Nor was there wanting a succession of prophets during the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, as Abarinel hath observed, through every reign, their names being set down in holy scripture: which he hath shown in a catalogue he hath made of the kings, and the prophets in their time; too long to be here transcribed.

Ver. 2. *Forasmuch as I exalted thee out of the dust.*] It seems he was of a mean family in the tribe of Issachar. Perhaps, but a common soldier, or some small officer in the army which laid siege to Gibbethon; but being bold and daring, formed a conspiracy against Nadab.

Made thee prince over my people] God's providence interposed, that nothing should hinder the success of his design against Nadab; because he intended to make use of him to punish the house of Jeroboam.

Hast made my people Israel to sin.] Continued them in their idolatry, against which he ought to have shown the greatest zeal, because it provoked God's anger against the family of Jeroboam.

Ver. 3.] So that neither any of his own children, nor the children of any of his relations should remain; but his name be quite put out.

Ver. 4.] The very same threatening that was pronounced against Jeroboam and his posterity by Ahijah (xiv. 11).

Ver. 6.] He was not slain, as Nadab was; but died, as Jeroboam did; and his son suffered like his (ver. 9, 10).

Ver. 7. *By the hand of the prophet Jehu the son of Hanani came the word of the Lord against Baasha.*] This command of God being given to Jehu (ver. 1), he executed it, and delivered this message to Baasha some time before he died. Which is said to be done *by the hand of Jehu*, because he was the minister of God in this business.

Because he killed him.] That is, killed Nadab, who was Jeroboam's son: or rather (as Abarinel judiciously observes) this relates to the whole house of Jeroboam before mentioned; which Baasha destroyed, not because they were idolaters, and that he might fulfil the word of the Lord (as perhaps he pretended), but to satisfy his own ambition, being guilty of the very same crime that Jeroboam was; and therefore was no better than a murderer in the slaughter he made of his family; and accordingly is threatened to be punished for that very act, which was committed not in obedience to God, but to serve himself.

Ver. 8. *In the twenty and sixth year of Asa king of Judah began Elah—to reign*] This seems to contradict what Ezra saith in 2 Chron. xvi. 1, that Baasha built Ramah in the thirty-sixth year of Asa. Of which I shall give an account in my notes on that place. For the present it may suffice to say, that Ezra doth not speak of the thirty-sixth year of Asa's reign, but of the thirty-sixth year after the division of the kingdom. For it could be, at the most, but the twenty-sixth year of Asa's reign when Baasha died.

Two years.] Not complete; but one entire year, and part of another; as appears from ver. 10. 15.

Ver. 9. *His servant Zimri.*] A considerable commander in his army, who had a great interest in the soldiery.

10 And Zimri went in and smote him, and killed him, in the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his stead.

11 ¶ And it came to pass, when he began to reign, as soon as he sat on his throne, that he slew all the house of Baasha: he left him not one that pisseth against a wall, neither of his kinsfolks, nor of his friends.

12 Thus did Zimri destroy all the house of Baasha, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake against Baasha by Jehu the prophet,

13 For all the sins of Baasha, and the sins of Elah his son, by which they sinned, and by which they made Israel to sin, in provoking the LORD God of Israel to anger with their vanities.

14 Now the rest of the acts of Elah, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

15 ¶ In the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah did Zimri reign seven days in Tirzah. And the people were encamped against Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines.

Conspired against him, as he was in Tirzah, drinking himself drunk] He seems to have been a debauched young man, who stayed at home following his pleasures, whilst his army was besieging Gibbethon (ver. 15). Which gave Zimri, who it is likely was captain of his guard, the better opportunity to kill him.

Ver. 10.] Here was a speedy execution of the vengeance threatened against him by Jehu, that God would make his house like the house of Jeroboam (ver. 3). For as Nadab the son of Jeroboam reigned but two years (xv. 25), so Elah the son of Baasha reigned no more: and then, as Nadab was killed with the sword, so was Elah. Thus, as Abarbinel notes, there was a wonderful likeness between Jeroboam and Baasha, in their lives, and in their deaths; in their sons, and in their family.

Ver. 11. *He left him not one*] That is, not a man (see xiv. 10).

Neither of his kinsfolks, nor of his friends.] He not only destroyed all that were descended from Baasha, as Baasha had done the family of Jeroboam; but he extended the destruction, and increased it, as Abarbinel speaks; for he killed all that were of kin to Baasha, with all his friends, which Baasha did not: this seems to be contained in the threatening of Jehu (ver. 3).

Ver. 12.] See ver. 1, 2, 7.

Ver. 13. *For all the sins of—Elah*] This shows that Elah walked in his father's ways; though it be not before mentioned.

With their vanities.] So the golden calves are called, being (as Forsterus well translates the word) commentitia numina, "gods of their own devising" (see I Sam. xii. 21).

Ver. 14.] Here is no mention of *his might* (as there is of his father's, ver. 5), for he was, as I said, a man of pleasure.

Ver. 15.] Which had been besieged many years ago, when Baasha slew Nadab (xv. 27). But was then relieved, or afterward retaken by the Philistines, while the Israelites were in a distracted condition; but now again invested.

Ver. 16. *Zimri hath conspired.*] Had success in his conspiracy, and made himself king.

Israel made Omri,—king over Israel that day in the

16 And the people that were encamped heard say, Zimri hath conspired, and hath also slain the king: wherefore all Israel made Omri, the captain of the host, king over Israel that day in the camp.

17 And Omri went up from Gibbethon, and all Israel with him, and they besieged Tirzah.

18 And it came to pass, when Zimri saw that the city was taken, that he went into the palace of the king's house, and burnt the king's house over him with fire, and died.

19 For his sins which he sinned in doing evil in the sight of the LORD, in walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he did, to make Israel to sin.

20 Now the rest of the acts of Zimri, and his treason that he wrought, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

21 ¶ Then were the people of Israel divided into two parts: half of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath, to make him king; and half followed Omri.

22 But the people that followed Omri pre-

camp.] Just as the Roman army, in aftertimes, made their chief commander emperor.

Ver. 17. *Omri went up from Gibbethon, and all Israel with him.*] All the army that were at the siege. *Tirzah.*] Where Zimri, a more dangerous enemy, was.

Ver. 18. *When Zimri saw that the city was taken,*] Which he was not able to defend against a powerful army; from whom he suspected no opposition: but hoped they would have let him reign as quietly as they did Baasha.

He went into the palace of the king's house,] Into the strongest part of the house.

Burnt the king's house—and died.] He was afraid, I suppose, of suffering some shameful punishment, if he had been taken alive; and therefore chose to die desperately in this manner. So Sardanapalus ended his life.

Ver. 19.] Though he lived but a very short time after he usurped the crown, yet he gave sufficient demonstration of his resolution to continue the idolatry of Jeroboam; and therefore was abandoned by God.

Ver. 20.] It is likely, other acts that he did before he conspired against Elah were recorded in that book; together with the manner how he wrought his treason.

Ver. 21. *Then were the people of Israel divided*] For when it is said (ver. 16), *all Israel* made Omri king in the camp; the meaning is, only the whole army, and they that attended them.

Half of the people followed Tibni] For they did not like to have a king imposed upon them by the soldiery; and Tibni had as good a title as the other, being also a valiant man; who succeeded Zimri, perhaps, in his command, as captain of half his chariots.

Half followed Omri.] As already advanced to the royal dignity; and a greater man than Tibni: being captain of the whole host.

Ver. 22. *The people that followed Omri prevailed*] For Omri had the advantage of having the army on his side.

So Tibni died,] In this civil war (into which they fell by God's just judgment upon them) many of the people, in all likelihood, died together with him.

Omri reigned.] Without competitor. The Jews in Seder Olam Rabba, whom Rasi and others follow, say it contributed much to his advancement, that Asa

vailed against the people that followed Tibni the son of Ginath: so Tibni died, and Omri reigned.

23 ¶ In the thirty and first year of Asa king of Judah began Omri to reign over Israel, twelve years: six years reigned he in Tirzah.

24 And he bought the hill Samaria of Shemer for two talents of silver, and built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill, Samaria.

25 ¶ But Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the LORD, and did worse than all that were before him.

26 For he walked in all the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin, to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger with their vanities.

king of Judah married his son Jehoshaphat to Omri's daughter. For which they have no other ground, but that it is said, 2 Chron. xviii. 1, he joined in affinity with Ahab.

Ver. 23. *Twelve years.*] These twelve years of his reign are to be computed not from the thirty-first of Asa's reign; for it is evident he began to reign in the twenty-seventh year of Asa (ver. 15), and his son began to reign in the thirty-eighth year of Asa (ver. 29). Therefore the twelve years are to be computed from the beginning of Omri's reign; which was, as I said, the twenty-seventh of Asa's. From which time (as Abarbanel observes) the contest continued between Omri and Tibni, unto the thirty-first year of king Asa. In the end of which Tibni died; and then Omri reigned over all Israel, whereas he reigned but over half the people before. And Tibni being extinct, all the foregoing years are accounted to Omri; viz. from the beginning of Asa's seven-and-twentieth year, when Zimri died, to the end of this eight-and-thirtieth year, which make twelve years.

Six years reigned he in Tirzah.] Half of his time he made this his royal seat; which was, as some think, all the time his contention with Tibni lasted, and some time after.

Ver. 24.] The king's house in Tirzah being burnt, as we read ver. 18, he built a royal palace in this city, which he also built upon this hill; and called it after the name of him who was the owner of it before he bought it, viz. Shemer, from whom it had the Hebrew name of Shomeron. Which was ever after made the royal seat of the kings of Israel.

Ver. 25.] For he not only walked in the way of Jeroboam, but, it is likely, began to introduce other idolatries, which his son Ahab established among them. Or, he compelled the people to worship the calves; and by severe laws restrained the people from going up to Jerusalem; which, as some think, are meant by the *statutes of Omri* (Mic. vi. 16).

Ver. 26.] Though he had seen Elah, and all the whole house of Baasha destroyed by his predecessor for their idolatry, and Zimri himself perished in the same sin (ver. 13. 19), yet he persisted in their iniquity, and brought down the wrath of God upon him, and upon his family, as the foregoing kings had done.

Ver. 27.] It seems he was a valiant man, which Elah was not; concerning whose *might* there is no mention, as I noted upon ver. 14.

Ver. 28. *Samaria.*] Which now began, as I said, to be the royal city of the kingdom of Israel, as Jerusalem was of Judah.

Ahab his son reigned] Who was so eminent upon

27 Now the rest of the acts of Omri which he did, and his might that he shewed, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

28 So Omri slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria: and Ahab his son reigned in his stead.

29 ¶ And in the thirty and eighth year of Asa king of Judah began Ahab the son of Omri to reign over Israel: and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty and two years.

30 And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him.

31 And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zido-

several accounts, that we have a long account of him in the following part of this book.

Ver. 29.] In this space of time Asa saw six kings of Israel buried; whilst Judah flourished under one and the same king: which no doubt was a great advantage to them.

Ver. 30.] Was more idolatrous than his father Omri: for he brought in the worship of Baal (as it follows in the next verse), that is, of the sun, and of all the host of heaven.

Ver. 31. *As if it had been a light thing to him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam*] He was not satisfied with the worship which Jeroboam had invented, though highly displeasing to God. For so the words are in the Hebrew, *was it a light thing?* As much as to say, It was a most heinous crime; and yet Ahab resolved to be more wicked. For Jeroboam did not quite forsake the Lord God of Israel, but worshipped him by a representation of his own invention; and this more out of policy than any love to this kind of worship. But Ahab, out of pure love to strange gods, forsook the Lord, without any such reason for it as Jeroboam had; and the people being now sufficiently estranged from Jerusalem.

Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal] Called in profane writers Ithobalus.

King of the Zidonians,] Who had been old idolaters. *And served Baal,*] That god, whom the Chaldeans and Babylonians called Bel, the Phœnicians (of whom the Zidonians were a part) called Baal: which in Hebrew signifies *lord*. Which anciently was the name of the true God, as Mr. Selden observes; but when the world grew wicked, was given to the sun by the Phœnicians; who, as Philo-byblius tells us, reputed the sun to be *μύνον οὐρανῶν θεόν*, "the only god of heaven." And at last this name was given to other stars, and to their dead kings, whose memory was dear to them. And various rites, ceremonies, and sacrifices were devised in their honour, as that great man observes (Syntag. De Diis Syris, ii. cap. 1), who understands these words of the Phœnician Belus or Baal, who was the very same with the European Jupiter: and Zidon being situated on the sea, their Baal was called by the Greeks the sea Jupiter. So Hesychius, *Θαλάσσιος Ζεὺς ἐν Σιδῶνι τεύχερα*, "the sea Jupiter is worshipped at Sidon." But our Mr. Mede is very confident, that the Baal whose worship Jezebel brought with her from Zidon was a deified king of the Phœnicians; as Baal was the first king of Baal who was deified after his death. Whence all the souls of men who were canonized after death were called Baalim (see book i. discourse xlii. and his

nians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him.

32 And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal which he had built in Samaria.

33 And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger

Apostacy of the later Times, par. i. ch. 3). Whence it came that there were not more Jupiters among the Europeans, than there were Baals among the Syrians. And hence so many mountains, and springs, and woods, and cities were called by the name of Baal, when Joshua conquered Canaan; as Baal-moon, Bamoth-baal, Baal-gad, Baal-thamar, Baal-zephon, and many more. In which places, no doubt, Baalim were worshipped, and from thence they had their names.

Ver. 32.] He built a temple for this god in the royal city, and set up an altar, where he sacrificed to him. Which was more directly to worship other gods than Jeroboam did: who pretended the worship he performed to the calves was to the true God, whom he honoured in them.

Ver. 33.] *Ahab made a grove*;] Which was another piece of idolatry; which God commanded to be abolished (Deut. vii. 5). In this grove, it is likely, all manner of impurities were practised: for Jezebel was a filthy woman.

Ver. 34. *Hiel the Beth-elite*] A man that lived in the very seat of idolatry; and, it is likely, was deeply infected with it.

Build Jericho:] A place which being under a *che-*

than all the kings of Israel that were before him.

34 ¶ In his days did Hiel the Beth-elite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun.

rem, was never to be rebuilt; because it was devoted to God, as the first-fruits of the conquests of Canaan. Which this man either did not know (because ignorant of the law, which now was little read), or was so inapient as not to regard the words of Joshua, believing no other god but Baal.

He laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his first born, &c.] But he found to his cost, that the sentence which Joshua pronounced against the rebuilders of this city proved true; for his eldest son died when he laid the first stone of it: and so all the rest of his children one after another, as the building advanced; till at last his youngest son died when it was finished. A most remarkable instance of the certainty of Divine threatenings; and that God never forgets what he hath said, but continues always the same. This sentence being pronounced more than four hundred and forty years ago, and now fulfilled exactly in all its circumstances: which might have been a warning to the whole nation, not to despise the long-suffering and patience of God, who, though he had not yet carried them out of their good land according to the word of Ahijah (xiv. 15), would certainly do it, if they continued in their impinence.

CHAPTER XVII.

1 *Elijah, having prophesied against Ahab, is sent to Cherith, where the ravens feed him. 8 He is sent to the widow of Zarephath. 17 He raiseth the widow's son. 24 The woman believeth him.*

I AND Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand,

there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

CHAP. XVII.

Ver. 1. *Elijah the Tishbite,*] The care of God over this people (as I noted before) was so great that in every king's reign, from the first to the last, there was one or more prophets to instruct, admonish, and correct them. And now in the reign of Ahab (when there was the greatest need of it), God raised up an extraordinary prophet far exceeding all others, whom Abarbanel calls the "prince of the prophets," next unto Moses. Whose original being not known (for here is no mention of his father or mother), some of the Jews have fancied him to have been an angel sent from heaven to reduce them to the true religion. So Abarbanel relates, upon the book of Judges, as Joh. Frischmuthus observes, in a dissertation about Elijah. Whose name, which in the Hebrew is *Elijahu*, carries something divine in it: being compounded, as Ægid. Camarthus imagines, of three of the names of God, viz. Eli, and Jah, and Hu. There is no doubt the first two are the names of God, but there is reason to question the last, though a great man of our own, Edm. Castellus, in his Polyglot Lexicon, doth put Hu among the divine names; and so do the cabalists. He was indeed a very eminent messenger of God, sent to call the Israelites to repentance; from whence our learned Dr. Lightfoot thinks he had the name of Tishbite; from the Hebrew word *shub*, which signifies to return; for he was sent to be the converter of

the nation (see him upon St. Luke, i. 17). Other conjectures there are about this name, which Frischmuth hath collected; and Dionysius Petavius hath delivered his opinion about it upon Epiphanius (Hæres. lv. n. 3), who saith Elijah was *εἰς ἱερέων* of the priests, and grandson to Zadok. But Kimchi seems to have given the plainest account of this name of Tishbite from Thesbe, a town or region where he was born; just as Ahijah is called Shilonite, from Shiloh, where he was born, or dwelt.

Who was of the inhabitants of Gilead,] It is not certain that he was a native of this country; but only that he came and settled among the Gileadites, being born, as some think, in the tribe of Benjamin, though most are rather of opinion in the tribe of Gad.

Said unto Ahab, As the Lord—liveth, before whom I stand,] To make his words the more regarded, he swore solemnly by the eternal God, whose minister he was (for that is meant by *standing before him*), and to whom he had prayed, that there should be no moisture from the clouds for three years and a half ensuing, unless it were by his prayers. Thus St. James teaches us to expound these words, *these years* (James v. 17). And Abarbanel makes out the connexion of this chapter with the foregoing in this manner:—Elijah admonished Ahab to lay to heart the punishment of Hiel the Beth-elite, saying, Fear the Lord lest he be angry with thee, as he was with Hiel, for breaking his command. But Ahab despised his admonition, and said

2 And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,

3 Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.

4 And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.

5 So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.

6 And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.

7 And it came to pass after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.

8 ¶ And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,

9 Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.

10 So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks; and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.

11 And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand.

12 And she said, As the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a

That was a chance; for you say we are all idolaters, and yet the threatening in the law of Moses (Dent. xi. 16, 17), is not come upon us. Whereupon Elijah in a great anger, said, "As the Lord liveth, there shall be no dew," &c. Which story is told with more circumstances in the Talmud.

Ver. 2.] The king being incensed at this threatening, God took care to secure Elijah from his fury, by the following direction.

Ver. 3. *Get thee hence,*] For he saw that Ahab intended to lay hold of him.

Hide thyself by the brook Cherith,] This brook Bochartus takes to be the same with Kana, mentioned by Joshua, xvi. 5. xvii. 9. So called from the plenty of reeds (for *kana* signifies a *reed*), in which the prophet lay hid while he stayed in this place.

Ver. 4. *Ravens*] This seems so strange that some will have the word *orebim* not to signify *ravens*, but *merchants*: because they find the word *orebe* in Ezek. xxvii. 17, signifying merchants that traded in the market of Tyre. But, as Bochartus hath observed, they are never called simply *orebim*. Nor is their opinion better, who think Arabians to be here meant: for there were none thereabout; and Elias's lurking-place would soon have been discovered to Ahab, if merchants, or any other people that travelled that way, had been acquainted with it. We must therefore acknowledge a miraculous care which God took of Elijah, as all the ancients do, none excepted (see Bochartus, in his Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. ii. cap. 13). Nor did such things seem incredible to the heathen, who tell us as strange stories. For example, that Jupiter was fed in his cradle by bees: and Janus, the son of Apollo and Evadne, with honey by dragons: and Midas, when an infant, had corn put into his mouth, as he lay asleep, by ants: Æsculapius nourished by a goat; and a great many more mentioned by that excellent person Huetius, in his *Questiones Alnetane*, lib. ii. cap. 12. n. 17.

Ver. 6.] God amply provided for his servant; sending him not only bread, but flesh also that he might make a good meal: and this twice a day, at dinner and supper. This provision some of the Jews fancy (in Gemara Sanhedrin, cap. 11. n. 76), the ravens brought from Ahab's house; others fancy, from Jehoshaphat's, as if he was fed with royal dainties. But Bochartus thinks it is better to say that they had this provision from some of the seven thousand persons who had never bowed to Baal. But it is best of all to confess we cannot tell whence they had it; God, perhaps, making meat ready prepared on purpose for him. They who object that these were unclean creatures, who polluted the meat which they touched,

should consider that all this was done by an extraordinary dispensation. And St. Chrysostom fancies, there was this moral instruction in it; that Elijah should learn to be more mild and gentle towards the deluded Israelites, by these birds, who were cruel to their young, but kind to him. And indeed it is very wonderful, as Victorinus Strigelius here glosses, that the ravens, who do not feed their own young ones, should constantly feed the prophet. For such is the *astropia* of these creatures, as naturalists report, that they forsake their young before they be fledged: whom God feeds by worms, which are produced by the dung and out of the carcasses that have been brought into their nests, until they be able to fly, and provide for themselves. I think he hath this out of St. Ambrose lib. x. epist. 82. The psalmist is thought to allude to it, Ps. cxlvii. 9. And God himself in Job xxxviii. 41.

Ver. 7. *After a while,*] In the Hebrew it is, *at the end of days*, that is, of a year; as that phrase, I have shown, is often used.

Ver. 9. *Zarephath,*] It was a place between Tyre and Zidon, but belonged to the territory of the latter, and so was not in the land of Israel, but inhabited by gentiles.

I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.] He had appointed and disposed her, just as he did the ravens, ver. 4. For she had no command from God for it (it appears from ver. 12), and this was an extraordinary providence, that a poor widow and a gentile should support him: though in all likelihood, she was not a stranger to the true religion, but a pious woman of another nation.

Ver. 10. *The widow woman was there gathering of sticks.*] Which shows she was but in a poor condition.

Fetch me,—a little water] For he knew by a divine inspiration, this was the woman who was to sustain him.

Ver. 11. *As she was going to fetch it,*] This shows she was a good woman; being ready to succour a stranger.

Bring me,—a morsel of bread] Which was very natural to desire, having asked for water; but he said it to move her to acquaint him with what follows.

Ver. 12. *As the Lord thy God liveth,*] By this it appears she knew the Lord God of Israel; and that Elijah was a prophet; or at least one of his worshippers.

Two sticks,] By *two sticks* is meant a few: as *two* frequently signifies (Isa. xvii. 6. Jer. iii. 14).

That I may go in and dress it] The famine, it seems, was sore in that country, as well as in Israel. For they of Zidon had their provision from the Israelites;

barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.

13 And Elijah said unto her, fear not; go and do as thou hast said; but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son.

14 For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth.

15 And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days.

16 And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah.

17 ¶ And it came to pass after these things, that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, full sick; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him.

18 And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come

unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?

19 And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed.

20 And he cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son?

21 And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again.

22 And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.

23 And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth.

24 ¶ And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in thy mouth is truth.

and besides, it is likely, had no rain; but were punished as their neighbours were; being all alike idolaters.

Ver. 13. *Fear not;*] Be not afraid of being famished.

Make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me,] A very hard command: whereby he tried her faith and obedience.

Ver. 14.] This was a miracle, which they that were not Christians did not think incredible: as Huetius shows in the same book, and the chapter above-mentioned, ver. 4.

Ver. 15. *Did according to the saying of Elijah:*] By which it is evident that she trusted in the Lord God of Israel.

Her house, did eat many days.] Some by many days understand a full year: as it is in the margin. But it rather signifies two years: for one year was past before he came from the brook Cherith (see ver. 7). And therefore they lived upon this meal and oil two years more, till the end of the famine.

Ver. 16.] But what they took out for their daily use was immediately supplied by the power of God.

Ver. 17. *After these things,*] After this demonstration of the power and goodness of God.

No breath left in him.] He expired and died.

Ver. 18. *What have I to do with thee,*] Some take the meaning to be "wherein have I offended thee?" but the following words seem to imply, that in a great agony of spirit she asked him, wherefore he came to her house, if this were his intention?

Art thou come—to call my sin to remembrance,] This she thought was hard, to requite his entertainment at her house with such a punishment for her sins. For then sins are said to be "called to remembrance" before God, when he punishes them.

Ver. 19. *Give me thy son.*] He reached out his hands, and bade her put him into his arms.

He took him out of her bosom,] It seems he was but

a little child; who the Jews think afterward proved a prophet; viz. Jonah.

Carried him up into a loft where he abode,] The LXX. translate it *ἑστρωτόν*, "an upper room:" which he had to himself for his study, meditation, and prayer; as Elisha afterward had in another place (2 Kings iv. 10).

Laid him upon his own bed.] By this it appears it was a private room, where he lodged.

Ver. 20. *He cried*] Prayed most earnestly. He humbly expostulated with God; representing what an addition it was to his other afflictions, that this widow should suffer, who had been so kind to him; and suffer in her son, the great comfort of her life; and that while he was in her house.

Ver. 21.] He lay prostrate in prayer before God, and stretched out himself upon the child, as if he would inspire him with a new life. And this he did three times; believing God would be moved by his importunity, to do what he desired.

Ver. 22.] Hereby it appeared not only that this was done by God, to whom Elijah prayed; but that he did it for Elijah's sake.

Ver. 23.] There was no need, one would think, to bid her observe and lay to heart the great power and mercy of God, in restoring her son to life. But the best of us must be awakened to our duty.

Ver. 24. *Now by this I know that thou art a man of God,*] She believed it before (ver. 18) but when she saw he did not cure her child when he lay sick, but suffered him to die, she began to doubt of it. But her faith revived, together with her son, and was mightily confirmed.

That the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth.] She believed all that he delivered as the mind of God; and gave up herself entirely to his instructions. The benefit of which she enjoyed, till God sent Elijah to meet Abab; resolving to send rain upon the earth, as it follows in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1 *In the extremity of famine Elijah, sent to Ahab, meeteth good Obadiah.* 9 *Obadiah bringeth Ahab to Elijah.* 17 *Elijah, reproving Ahab, by fire from heaven convinceth Baal's prophets.* 41 *Elijah, by prayer, obtaining rain, followeth Ahab to Jezreel.*

1 AND it came to pass *after* many days, that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth.

2 And Elijah went to shew himself unto Ahab. And *there was* a sore famine in Samaria.

3 And Ahab called Obadiah, *which was* the governor of his house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly :

4 For it was *so*, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.)

5 And Ahab said unto Obadiah, Go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks : peradventure we may find grass to save

the horses and mules alive, that we lose not all the beasts.

6 So they divided the land between them to pass throughout it : Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself.

7 ¶ And as Obadiah was in the way, behold, Elijah met him : and he knew him, and fell on his face, and said, *Art thou that my lord Elijah?*

8 And he answered him, *I am : go tell my lord, Behold, Elijah is here.*

9 And he said, What have I sinned, that thou wouldst deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab, to slay me?

10 *As the LORD thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent*

CHAPTER XVIII.

Ver. 1. *After many days,*] See upon ver. 15. of the foregoing chapter. Grotius expounds it, "after six months," upon St. Luke iv. 25.

In the third year,] Our Saviour saith, and so doth St. James, that the drought continued three years and six months (Luke iv. 25. James v. 17), which doth not disagree with these words which are thus to be explained. At the beginning of the drought, it is likely, Ahab imputed the want of rain to natural causes, and so did not seek to slay Elijah : but after six months neither the former nor the latter rain falling in their season, he began to be enraged at him as the cause of the drought : which forced Elijah at God's command, to save his life by flight. And from that time the three years here mentioned are to be computed, before the word of the Lord came to him ; he being one year at the brook Cherith, and two years at Sarepta ; in the end of which year God took pity upon the country, having fulfilled the words of Elijah (xvii. 1). I see no ground for Abarinel's observation, that the famine continued three years, to show that it was a punishment inflicted for the sins of three families : Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and his son Nadab ; Baasha, and his son Elah ; Omri, and his son Ahab. The observation of Grotius is far better upon St. Luke iv. 25 (see there).

I will send rain upon the earth.] He would not destroy the earth because it was inhabited by wicked men (as Abarinel speaks), and yet would have them know that Elijah's prayers procured mercy for them.

Ver. 2.] Which made it the more dangerous for him to appear in Ahab's presence ; lest being so sorely afflicted, he should, in his rage, cause him to be killed before he could deliver his message to him.

Ver. 3. *Obadiah,*] Some, both Jews and Christians, think this was Obadiah the prophet ; for which I can find no ground but what is said in 2 Chron. xvii. 7. that Obadiah was one of the princes whom Jehoshaphat sent to instruct the people. And Ezra, from the next words, infers he was not a prophet.

Feared the Lord greatly :] Was a truly religious man, and worshipped the Lord alone with great affection to his service ; which one would have expected should have made Ahab discard him, if not persecute him But I suppose, he was so very use-

ful a servant to him, in the management of the affairs of his family (which he ordered with singular prudence and fidelity), that he connived at his not worshipping Baal, nor the calves ; especially since he did not (we may well think) go up to Jerusalem to worship ; with which defect God was pleased to dispense, as Ahab did with his religion.

Ver. 4. *When Jezebel cut off the prophets of the Lord,*] There were schools of the prophets, it is likely, still remaining in Israel unto her time ; but she endeavoured to destroy them, and those who were bred up in them ; that there might be none to instruct the people in the true religion, for such, I suppose, are here meant ; not those that were endued with the extraordinary gift of prophecy : for Elijah saith, ver. 22, that he only was left a prophet of the Lord ; though that may signify no more, but that he knew of nobody beside.

Obadiah took an hundred prophets and hid them,] Which was an act of great piety and zeal, whereby he hazarded his own life.

Fed them] Sent them meat and drink privately every day.

Ver. 5.] Many were dead for want of grass, which he hoped they might find growing in such moist places enough to preserve the rest.

Ver. 6.] Ahab would make this search himself, lest it should not be done faithfully by others, who might be persuaded by prayers and entreaties, or the presents of those who had any grass, not to discover it. Only he trusted Obadiah.

Ver. 7.] He showed by the profound reverence he made to him, how much he honoured him.

Ver. 8.] The prophet also approved the honour Obadiah did his master, whom he owned for his lord though he was a very wicked man (see ver. 10). For kings, by their office, are sacred persons : and therefore are to be had in great veneration (though bad men) even by the high-priest and by the prophets, who did not approach them, as the Jews observe, without due reverence. And it is a famous saying of R. Jedaiah, "Do not dwell in a city, where no reverence or fear is paid to the king."

Ver. 9.] For that he concluded would be the effect of such a message delivered by him to Ahab, as he shows in the following discourse.

Ver. 10. *There is no nation or kingdom, whither my*

to seek thee: and when they said, *He is not there*; he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not.

11 And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here.

12 And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the Lord shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: but I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth.

13 Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the Lord, how I hid an hundred men of the Lord's prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water?

14 And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here: and he shall slay me.

15 And Elijah said, As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely shew myself unto him to day.

lord hath not sent to seek thee:] That is, to all the countries thereabout with whom he was in league. For it is a very foolish conceit of some of the Jews (which the best of them disown), that Ahab was as great an emperor as Nebuchadnezzar, or Ahasuerus, who ruled over all nations.

He is not there; he took an oath of the kingdom and nation,] These words incline me to think, that he sought him only throughout all his dominions; through every tribe, which is called a nation; and every government, which is called a kingdom. For how could he take an oath of any but his own subjects? It may be said, indeed, that there might be such compacts between him and the Moabites, Edomites, Ammonites, and other neighbouring nations, that they should harbour none of his rebellious subjects: and if they required it, they should swear they knew of none in their country. But such a treaty is so unusual, that I see no reason to suppose it.

Ver. 12. *The spirit of the Lord shall carry thee whither I know not;]* Snatch thee away from hence, as sometimes the prophets were suddenly transported by an invisible power to places far distant from that where they were at present (2 Kings ii. 16. Ezek. iii. 12. 14. Acts. viii. 39. 40). And, in all likelihood, there had been instances of it before this time: which made Obadiah fear it might fall out so in this case.

He shall slay me:] Because he did not seize and secure Elijah when he was in his power: but let him escape.

But I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth.] Therefore he hoped the prophet would take care to preserve him, because he was not like the rest of the court.

Ver. 13.] Sometimes a virtuous man may speak the truth of himself; though it be in his own praise.

Ver. 14.] When it would expose him to manifest danger of losing his life.

Ver. 15. *As the Lord of hosts liveth]* He who commands all creatures in heaven and earth.

Before whom I stand,] Whom I serve as one of his ministers.

I will surely show myself unto him to day.] He feared not to show himself to Ahab; for a greater king than he, the Lord of all things, he knew would preserve him.

Ver. 16.] The solemn oath of Elijah made Obadiah readily obey him; and assured him Ahab should not be disappointed, but certainly find him.

16 So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him: and Ahab went to meet Elijah.

17 ¶ And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel?

18 And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim.

19 Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table.

20 So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel.

21 And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

Ver. 17.] He troubles a country, who confounds all things in it, and puts them out of order. In such a condition Israel now was, by a grievous famine; which made them not know which way to turn themselves. And this he ascribed to Elijah.

Ver. 18. *I have not troubled Israel;]* They troubled a nation who break the laws of God; not they that defend them.

Thou hast followed Baalim.] There were more Baals than one worshipped by the heathen, as I observed before; and it is very probable that Ahab worshipped all the host of heaven, as well as the sun (see xvi. 30, 31).

Ver. 19. *Gather—all Israel unto mount Carmel,]* That he might prove, in the face of all the people, that it was not he who troubled them.

The prophets of the groves] By the *prophets of the groves* (as we translate it), Mr. Selden understands the prophets of Astarte, the great goddess of the Zidonians; which he proves by comparing many places of scripture together (L. De Diis Syris, Syntag. ii. cap. 3). Manonides hath a peculiar notion, that the prophets of Baal, and of the groves, were such as had drunk in the opinion of the ancient Zabii; who made images to receive the influences of the stars; golden ones for the sun, and silver ones for the moon, &c. which gave to men the gift of prophecy, and showed what was good for them. The same they said of trees; which were some under the influence of one star, some under the influence of another; and were planted in their names, and worshipped after several manners, and infused special virtues into the trees, and made men prophets. This he avers he found expressly in their books (More Nevochim, par. iii. cap. 29).

Which eat at Jezebel's table.] So high an esteem they had of these prophets, that she kept a table on purpose for them, to do them honour with the people.

Ver. 20.] I suppose the Israelites sent the great men of their several tribes to represent them; and the prophets readily assembled at the king's command: who did not distrust their power, and was promised rain, I suppose, by Elijah, if he did as he desired.

Ver. 21. *How long halt ye between two opinions?]* Like lame men, who tread not firmly, but dubiously; not knowing which to choose, the Lord or Baal; and therefore joining both together.

If the Lord be God, follow him;] As much as to say, There cannot be more gods than one. That is

22 Then Elijah said unto the people, *I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men.*

23 Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under; and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under:

24 And call ye on the name of your gods, and and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken.

25 And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress

the first article of your faith; "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord" (Deut. vi. 4). If the Lord be he, then stick to him: if Baal, then reject the other. This is most rational: for both of them cannot be God.

The people answered him not a word.] Either not knowing what to resolve, or being ashamed.

Ver. 22.] He was the only prophet that appeared in behalf of the Lord, and yet feared not to contest with a great multitude who came to defend Baal.

Ver. 23.] He propounded a plain way to decide this controversy, and settle the people's minds in their belief. To whom he first propounded it, that they might approve of it, if they thought it a sure way to discover the truth.

Ver. 24. *The God that answereth by fire.*] That is, he that sendeth fire to consume the sacrifice, which is presented to him.

It is well spoken.] They looked upon this as a reasonable proposition; because they knew that sacrifices had been approved by God in this manner: and they were very desirous to make the experiment, and be satisfied, by this means, who was the true God. Thus Moses's sacrifice was approved (Lev. ix. 24), and Gideon's (Judg. vi. 21), and David's (1 Chron. xxi. 26), and Solomon's, when he consecrated the temple (2 Chron. vii. 1. 3). By this means, in all these cases, God had shewn that he accepted the sacrifices, and that the persons who offered them were his servants.

Ver. 25. *Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal,*] Having the people's approbation, he turned to Baal's prophets, and desired them to agree to this trial.

Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first;] No doubt they produced both the bullocks, as he propounded at the first (ver. 22); and if there was any advantage in choosing one, and dressing it before the other, he desired they might have it.

For ye are many;] And he being a single person, was willing to give them the precedence.

Call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under.] It may be translated, call on the name "of your god," viz. Baal. Or else, it may relate to their Baalim, which were many, as they themselves were: and desire them all to try their power, by putting no fire under the sacrifice; but expecting it to come down from heaven.

Ver. 26. *They took the bullock that was given them,*] The choice of which was left to them.

Dressed it,] Flayed it, and cut it in pieces, and laid it upon the wood. Which they durst not refuse to do, because the people thought it a reasonable motion which Elijah made; and they had utterly lost their credit with the people, if they had not accepted it. And perhaps they did not mistrust the power of Baal; which Rabag thinks was Mars, a fiery planet; but rather the sun, which far exceeds all the other

it first; for ye are many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under.

26 And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made.

27 And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.

28 And they cried aloud, and cut themselves

heavenly bodies in heat. Which they thought might possibly exert its power, upon this great occasion, and burn up their sacrifice. At least they might hope that Elijah might not be able to bring fire down from heaven, because he sacrificed in a high place, not at the temple, which was contrary to the law of God, who therefore would not hear him; and then they should stand upon equal ground with him, though they obtained no fire to consume their sacrifice.

Even until noon,] When the sun was in its greatest strength.

Nor any that answered.] Not the least flash of fire.

They leaped upon the altar] Or, they danced about it, after the manner of the ancient Sali. Or, as Borchartus interprets it, Quasi furore prophético extra se rapti, incompositis motibus huc illuc ferebantur; "They ran about hither and thither, as men in an ecstasy with a prophetic fury, which put them into uncouth and disorderly motions." For it appears they acted like prophets from ver. 29, who sometimes acted as men beside themselves (Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 50). Abarbanel thinks this leaping or dancing was a rite used in the worship of the sun: which puts all things in motion.

Ver. 27. *It came to pass at noon,*] When the morning sacrifice was ended.

Elijah mocked them,] He did not think it unlawful, or unseemly to jeer them, and their god; that he might awaken them out of their stupidity, and expose them to all the by-standers as corrupters of religion, and deceivers of the people.

Cry aloud: for he is a god;] He bade them raise their voices; for they believed he was a god, but might be something deaf, or a great way off from them, and so could not hear what they said, unless they cried louder.

Either he is talking,] Busy about despatches; either in sending ambassadors, or giving audience.

He is pursuing,] Some notion (as the Hebrews understand it); being in a deep study, or deliberating about some weighty business. It is commonly understood, he is hunting, or pursuing enemies.

In a journey,] Not at home; but travelling to some other place; whither they must send after him.

Peradventure he sleepeth,] As they used to do in those hot countries after dinner.

Must be awaked,] With loud noises.

Ver. 28.] They did more than Elijah bade them: hoping to move him with their own blood, in which, perhaps, they thought he more delighted, than in the blood of beasts, or in their cries. For many nations offered human sacrifices to their gods: and their priests, when they were possessed with a sacred fury, were wont to slash themselves till the blood gushed out. Thus among the Romans the priests did in the worship of Bellona: in which sacerdotēs non alieno, sed suo cruore sacrificant, &c. "The priests sacrificed

after their manner with knives and lances, till the blood gushed out upon them.

29 And it came to pass when midday was past, and they prophesied until the *time* of the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, that *there* was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.

30 And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down.

31 And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the LORD came, saying, Israel shall be thy name:

32 And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed.

not with another's blood, but with their own" (see Lactantius, in his *Divin. Institut.* lib. i. cap. 21). For cutting their shoulders, and running their drawn swords through both hands, they ran about like mad men. And so Apuleius saith, they that carried about the Syrian goddess, after many other things, took out their knives or swords and cut themselves (see lib. viii. *Metamorph.* p. 172, 173, and Pricans and Rigaltius upon that place). But our Mr. Mede hath a peculiar notion, which is, that Baalim being the deified souls of dead men, therefore the prophets of Baal cut themselves in his worship; because this was a funeral rite or ceremony (*Lev. xix. 28. xxi. 5. Deut. xiv. 1*), and therefore retained in the service of such gods, in token that they were but deified men (see upon *xvi. 31*).

Ver. 29. *They prophesied*] When all was done, they fell into a fury, and raved, as if they were possessed of an invisible power; singing hymns and praises to Baal. For that is sometimes meant by *prophesying* (*1 Chron. xxv. 2, 3*); or, it may be simply meant, they still continued praying to Baal (ver. 26); for that was part of a prophet's office.

There was neither voice, nor any to answer,] No more tokens of regard to their praises than to their prayers; nor any, the least intimation, that Baal was a god, that minded what they said or did.

Ver. 30. *Come near unto me,*] They had stood hitherto by the prophets of Baal, to attend them in their sacrifice. Now Elijah calls them to him, that they might be witnesses of what he could do.

He repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down,] I suppose Carmel had been one of the most eminent high places in the whole kingdom; where the people, as they had been long accustomed, offered sacrifices to God in ancient times. But the worshippers of Baal had broken down the altar, and set up one of their own. For there were two sorts of high places, I have before noted, some for the worship of the true God, which continued in Judah, even under religious princes: others for the worship of idols; which good kings took away when they let the other remain. On the contrary, Ahab broke down the altars of God in the high places, and allowed none but those for Baal.

Ver. 31. *Elijah took twelve stones,*] That he might show he worshipped the God of the patriarchs, and no other: and that all the people, though divided in civil government, ought to be united in the same religion, and have but one altar for them; being the sons of one man, who was very dear to God, as it here follows.

33 And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid *him* on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour *it* on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood.

34 And he said, Do *it* the second time. And they did *it* the second time. And he said, Do *it* the third time. And they did *it* the third time.

35 And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water.

36 And it came to pass at the *time* of the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou *art* God in Israel, and that *I am* thy servant, and that *I* have done all these things at thy word.

37 Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou *art* the LORD

Israel shall be thy name:] He purged his family from all idolatry; and then God appeared to him, and talked with him, and called him by a new name; importing the power he had with God (*Gen. xxxv. 2—1. 10. 13. 15*).

Ver. 32. *With the stones he built an altar*] Which he might do, being a prophet; for such persons were free from the lesser laws, that they might preserve the greater.

He made a trench] That is, a large trench; for "two measures" are thought to be the third part of an ephah.

Ver. 33. *Laid him on the wood,*] To be a whole burnt-offering.

Fill four barrels with water,] Which they might have out of the brook at the foot of the mount (ver. 40), or out of the sea, which was not far off.

Pour it on the burnt sacrifice,] From hence some gather the altar was hollow, into which this water ran.

Ver. 34.] That is, they did it till all was full of water, as it follows in the next verse.

Ver. 35.] This seems to prove the altar was hollow, and that there was a trench also round about it: both which were as full of water as they could hold, to make the miracle more conspicuous and convincing. For what more contrary than fire and water?

Ver. 36. *At the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice,*] When the people of God were offering their solemn prayers to God at the temple in Jerusalem. This is a noted time for great things that were then done (see upon *Lev. ix. 24*).

Elijah the prophet came near,] To the altar.

Let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel,] He desires him to demonstrate at once by this miracle, that he was the only true God, and that Elijah was his prophet, and that he had done nothing (in bringing, for instance, a long famine upon them) but by his command. Such miracles were proper, either where a new religion was to be set up, or the old one restored, after a general depravation.

Ver. 37. *Hear me, O Lord,*] He was the more earnest and fervent in his prayer, as Abarbanel thinks, because he had undertaken to make this experiment of God's power without any particular command from God, of his own accord; nothing doubting but he would appear to vindicate his own honour, though he offered sacrifice in a high place, which was against the law.

That thou hast turned their heart back again,] God turns men's hearts, though they be not turned; because he not only doth that which evidently tends to

God, and *that* thou hast turned their heart back again.

38 Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

39 And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, the LORD, he is the God; the LORD he is the God.

40 And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.

41 ¶ And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for *there is* a sound of abundance of rain.

42 So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast

convert them, and is sufficient to do it, but for the present also so affects them that they are converted; though they will not take care to continue in that pious bent, but start back again from him.

Ver. 38.] It is called the fire of the Lord, because it was sent from him out of heaven to testify that he was the only God (as the people could not but acknowledge), and it was of such unusual force, that it consumed not only the flesh of the bullock, and the wood, but the very stones, and the dust, and all the water that had been poured out there in great quantity.

Ver. 39. *They fell on their faces:*] Worshipping the Lord of heaven and earth.

The Lord, he is the God;] This repeated acknowledgment shows how deeply they were affected at present with the demonstration God had given, that he only was to be worshipped; which extorted this public confession from them; but they soon forgot their own convictions, and continued in their idolatry.

Ver. 40. *Take the prophets of Baal;*] The prophets of the groves, I suppose, were not there: Jezebel, on whom they attended (ver. 19), not suffering them to appear. It is likely they were Zidonians, which she brought along with her from her own country, when Ahab married her, and were peculiarly under her command.

Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them] As perverters of the law, and teachers of idolatry; upon whom the people, in that fit of zeal wherein they now were, readily executed the sentence Elijah pronounced against them. And Ahab could make no opposition; being himself also, it is likely, astonished at the stupendous miracle.

Ver. 41. *Get thee up, eat and drink;*] They had fasted and prayed all the day till the even sacrifice was over, that they might have rain; or that God would decide the controversy in question.

There is a sound of abundance of rain.] He bade him be solicitous no longer; for plenty of rain was coming.

Ver. 42. *Ahab went up to eat and to drink.*] From the river that was at the bottom of the mount, he went up to a place on the side of it, where a tent was pitched for him, that he might refresh himself, now that the sacrifice was finished; and by Elijah's prayer he obtained rain, which he assured him he heard coming. By these two verses it is apparent, that Ahab himself was present to see how this contest between his prophets and Elijah, that is, between Baal and God would end; and in all probability was as much convinced as the people, that the Lord was the only God.

himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees,

43 And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, *There is* nothing. And he said, Go again *seven times*.

44 And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, prepare *thy chariot*, and and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not.

45 And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel.

46 And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

Elijah went up to the top of Carmel;] The prophet went a great deal higher, where he could see the Mediterranean sea; and would neither eat nor drink, till he actually saw the rain gathering.

Put his face between his knees,] He fell upon his knees, and bowed his head to the very ground; so that it touched his knees; in token of great humility, and earnest desire that God would remember his people, and send them rain.

Ver. 43. *And said to his servant,*] Who, some of the Jews say, was the widow of Sarepta's son. But he was too young to wait upon him.

He went up,] It is not easy to give an account of these phrases, so often here used, *he went up*. First Ahab went up, and then Elijah, and now he sends his servant, and at last he bade his servant (ver. 44) go up to Ahab. It is most likely there were several risings in this mountain, some higher than other. Elijah went to the top of them; but there was another higher, to which he bade his servant go up. Or Elijah, perhaps, was near to the top; and he sent his servant to the very top of all: and then bade him go down from thence, and go up to that part of the mount where Ahab was eating and drinking.

Ver. 44.] For he saw such abundance of rain coming as would cause floods, and render the way, for the present, unpassable, if he did not make haste home.

Ver. 45. *In the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds*] While the servant went to Ahab, and his chariot was making ready, that little cloud spread itself, and in a great thickness covered the face of the sky.

Went to Jezreel.] He did not go to Samaria, for Jezreel, I suppose, was nearer: and there he had a palace (xxi. 1).

Ver. 46. *He girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab*] They wore loose and long garments in this country, and therefore girded them up when they had occasion to run, that they might not hinder them. And God now gave Elijah more than human strength, so that (though he was an old man, xix. 4) he was made able to run as fast as Ahab's chariot drove, like one of his footmen. In which he showed his readiness to do the king all the honour imaginable, and that he was far from being his enemy, but only desired, he would become a worshipper of the true God, which was, he could not but see, the Lord God of Israel.

To the entrance of Jezreel.] He thought it not prudent, it is likely, to venture into the city, lest Jezebel should seize him, but stopped at the gate of the city, or of the palace, and retired to some private place.

CHAPTER XIX.

1 *Elijah, threatened by Jezebel, fleeth to Beer-sheba.* 4 *In the wilderness, being weary of his life, he is comforted by an angel.* 9 *At Horeb God appeareth unto him, sending him to anoint Hazael, Jehu, and Elisha.* 19 *Elisha, taking leave of his friends, followeth Elijah.*

1 AND Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword.

2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to morrow about this time.

3 And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life; and came to Beer-sheba, which becometh to Judah, and left his servant there.

4 ¶ But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.

5 And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat.

6 And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baked on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again.

7 And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee.

8 And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.

9 ¶ And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?

10 And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword;

CHAPTER XIX.

Ver. 1. *Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done.*] How he had called for fire from heaven, and had made rain to fall upon the earth.

How he had slain all the prophets] That is, all the prophets of Baal, for they only are mentioned, xviii. 22, 25, and the prophets of the groves (who are said to be four hundred, xviii. 19) were still in being, as appears from xxii. 6.

Ver. 2.] This shows the great folly of rage, which gave him notice of his danger, and admonished him to avoid it; or perhaps she thought him as courageous as she was furious, and that he would not flee; and then she knew her power would be greater than his.

Ver. 3. *Came to Beer-sheba.*] Whether her power did not reach, being in another kingdom.

Left his servant there.] Because he intended to go into the wilderness, where he resolved to spend the rest of his days, and die; and he would not have the youth put to the same straits in which he was like to be. We read of no command from God to fly, nor doth he forbid it; but left him to his own prudence. Which made him think it in vain to hope for Ahab's protection; who he saw would continue an idolater, and by his example make the people revolt to the worship of Baal. Though some are of opinion it was a fault in Elijah to run away, and not to depend upon God to preserve him in his pious endeavours to keep the people in the true religion, who had so solemnly acknowledged the Lord to be God.

Ver. 4. *He himself went a day's journey into the wilderness.*] This wilderness was that wherein the Israelites wandered forty years; and he now travelled as many days.

Sat down under a juniper tree.] Which some look upon as a sign he did not value life; because the shade of this tree (under which he not only sat, but lay down and slept) is thought to be very noxious, as Virgil observes.

It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life.] He thought he could do God no further service, and therefore desired to be discharged from his office by

death; for all that he could say or do proved ineffectual.

For I am not better than my fathers.] Unto whose age, it is likely, he had lived.

Ver. 5.] Perhaps he was faint with his day's journey, for want of food at the end of it.

Ver. 6. *On the coals.*] It should be translated, "upon hot stones," as Bochartus shows in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 33.

Laid him down.] Being weary, and wanting rest.

Ver. 7. *The journey is too great for thee.*] Without extraordinary strength; he being an old man, and much tired with one day's journey.

Ver. 8.] It was a journey of not above four or five days, if so much; but he went about by private ways, that he might not be discovered; and perhaps rested sometimes, and lay hid, if there was any danger of his being seen. The Jews have made a comparison between him and Moses in twenty-four particulars. But Abarbinel shows they were very different, and Moses had the superiority, especially in this thing here mentioned. For he is of opinion that Elijah ate and drank every day, when he could meet with food, as he might in several places of the wilderness. But ordinary food would not have enabled him to travel so long as he did; but it was by the power of that celestial food which the angel brought him that he held out, it giving him vigour beyond all that he could receive from any other nourishment. But in this Moses went beyond him, that he had no food at all; being supported by a miraculous power forty days and forty nights without any sustenance of meat and drink.

Ver. 9.] As much as to say, I have no business for thee here; this is not a place wherein to do me service. Which was a secret reproof for flying so far away; Judea, Samaria, or Damascus being fitter places for him to be employed in.

Ver. 10. *I have been very jealous for the Lord.*] He professed that he had not wanted zeal for the Lord's service, but been moved with great indignation against idolatry.

Thrown down thine altars.] He calls the altars that had been erected in high places by the ancient patri-

and I, *even I* only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

11 And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; *but the LORD was not in the wind*: and after the wind an earthquake; *but the LORD was not in the earthquake*:

12 And after the earthquake a fire; *but the LORD was not in the fire*: and after the fire a still small voice.

13 And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And,

archs, or other pious people in following times, God's altars; because they sacrificed upon them to him alone, and not to idols.

Slain thy prophets] So Jezebel had done, xviii. 4. [*I only, am left*]; There were many prophets besides him, but none of them appeared publicly in defence of religion but he alone.

They seek my life.] These words answer the question, "What dost thou here?" He fled thither to save his life.

Ver. 11. *Stand upon the mount before the Lord.*] Where the Shechinah, I suppose, appeared unto him, after some preparations for it.

The Lord passed by.] He heard a sign of the divine presence coming before he went out of the cave. For his angelical ministers, which attended his majesty, passed by the mouth of the cave in a mighty terrible wind, which had those dreadful effects here mentioned.

Before the Lord;} These words show that, in exact speaking, it was not the Lord that passed by when this wind blew, but his ushers, as I may call them, who went "before the Lord:" so it here follows.

The Lord was not in the wind.] The Shechinah did not yet appear.

The Lord was not in the earthquake.] The divine presence still did not manifest itself.

Ver. 12. *A fire*;} Lightning and thunder, just as there was at the giving of the law, which Elijah endeavoured to restore.

The Lord was not in the fire;} Still he heard nothing from God; who by these things prepared him to receive his majesty with the greatest humility and composure of spirit.

A still small voice.] At the last the Lord himself came, as he perceived by the whispering of a voice: which bade him listen and attend to what the Lord should say unto him. There are many pious meditations, which this appearance of the divine majesty hath suggested to interpreters. Particularly Strigelius looks upon it as representing the divine nature to be inclined not to terrify and destroy, but placidly to invite and preserve. God easily lays aside his anger (as Nazianzen speaks in his oration upon his father), and delights to exercise mercy. For he is compelled to anger by us, *προς δε τουτο την ομην εχει*, "but to mercy he is very prone," as we may speak, and by his own nature bent unto it, &c. To the same purpose Rabbag discourses among the Jews. Others look upon all this as a figure of the gospel dispensation, which came not in such a terrible manner as the law did, with storms, thunders, lightnings, and earthquakes (Exod. xix. 16. Heb. xii. 18, &c.), but with great lenity and sweetness, God speaking to us by his Son, in the most mild and gentle manner. And herein also some think he intended to show Eli-

behold, *there came* a voice unto him, and said, What dost thou here, Elijah?

14 And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, *even I* only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

15 And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria:

16 And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room.

jah that he had all the elements ready armed at his command, if he pleased to make use of them, to destroy idolaters: but by that *still voice* he declared the divine patience and tenderness, which he would have him to imitate, by bridling his anger, to which he was by nature very prone.

Ver. 13. *He wrapped his face in his mantle.*] He first covered his face, in token of great reverence to God, not being able to look upon the divine glory which now appeared; and then went out of the cave (as God had commanded him, ver. 11), and stood in the entrance of it, to listen to what God would say to him.

There came a voice unto him.] From the Shechinah, or divine glory.

What dost thou here Elijah?] The same words are repeated which he had heard before, ver. 9. Only there they were spoken by the angel, but here by the Lord himself.

Ver. 14.] He makes the same answer that he had done before, ver. 10. He was so full of anger (as Rabbag thinks) that he did not apply his mind as he ought to understand the vision, and therefore only repeats his former words. But God informs him in the following verse, that he would take care to chastise the Israelites in due time for their apostasy from him; and for that end bade him go and anoint Hazael, &c.

Ver. 15. *Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus.*] He bids him return the way he came to Horeb; till he came to the way that led to the wilderness of Damascus, and go thither.

Anoint Hazael to be king over Syria.] As much as to say (as the forenamed author expounds it), Since thou art so angry with the Israelites for their impiety, go and anoint one king to be of Syria, who shall be a scourge to them. But this was not done presently, nor did he himself anoint Jehu; but ordered that it should be done by his successor Elisha; though it may be doubted whether any of them were anointed, except Jehu. For the word *anoint* may be no more than appoint him king, as kings were constituted in Israel by unction. Hence, by a metaphor, it is accommodated to the preferment of men to all dignities: as in Ps. cv. 15, "Touch not mine anointed;" and Cyrus is called the Lord's anointed, Isa. xlv. 1.

Ver. 16. *Jehu the son of Nimshi*] He was grandson of Nimshi (as appears from 2 Kings ix. 2), who are frequently called *sons* in the holy books.

Elisha—shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room.] This last was the chiefest command (to anoint, that is, to appoint, Elisha to be his successor), for the other two were to be performed by him, not by Elijah; who ordered Elisha to do it in convenient time; and first he appointed Jehu king, and afterward Hazael.

17 And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay : and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay.

18 Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

19 ¶ So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was ploughing with

twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth : and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him.

20 And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again : for what have I done to thee ?

21 And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their

Ver. 17.] This is not to be understood, as if the sword of Hazael should do execution before the sword of Jehu, and the sword of Jehu before that of Elisha : but it only signifies, as Abarbinel observes, that God in his providence had appointed three persons to punish the Israelites, according to their deserts. Thus he intended Hazael should destroy them in battle ; which he mentions first, because it is a general calamity. But Jezebel, and the children of Ahab, and the priests of Baal, not going out to fight, and consequently not falling in battle, God ordered Jehu should cut them off in that manner as he did, with all the worshippers of Baal. But he did not inflict evil upon all the people of Israel, because he was to be their king. And though he slew idolaters, he did not meddle with little children, whose disposition he did not know : but they were reserved to be punished by Elisha, who foresaw they would prove idolaters. Thus he, with too much subtilty : but in general he saith well, that the scripture doth not mention these things according to the time wherein they fell out ; but according to the decree of God, who appointed every one to execute that which was proper for him to do.

Ver. 18. Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel.] This seems to be a correction of Elijah's mistake, who imagined that he alone was the only true worshipper of God that remained in Israel. Though Abarbinel will have it relate to what goes immediately before, that all the Israelites should not be destroyed : for he had a great number (seven thousand being put indefinitely for many thousand) of pious people in Israel, who had never worshipped Baal ; and should not therefore be hurt either by Hazael, or otherwise.

All the knees that have not bowed unto Baal.] Every one knows that bowing the knee was an act of worship ; and so was kissing the idol : which was done two ways : either by applying their mouth immediately to the image (as Cicero against Verres relates of the image of Hercules,) or kissing their hand before the image, and then stretching it out, and, as it were, throwing the kiss to it. Concerning which rite of adoration Salmasius hath given a large account in his annotations upon Flav. Vopiscus, in the life of the emperor Probus ; where he observes such kisses were called *labrata oscula* ; and from hence the phrases *oscula jacere*, and *basia jactare*, and *manu venerari*, and *manu solutare* : which he shows out of many authors are used for this way of adoration : the same he notes in his Plin. Exercit. p. 936, where Pliny saith, in adorando dextram ad osculum referimus, totum corpus circumagimus, “ when we worship, we kiss our hand, and turn about our whole body.”

Ver. 19. So he departed.] From mount Horeb. Found Elisha.] In his journey towards Damascus. Who was ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth :.] His servants managed the rest, and he himself drove the last. This shows him to have been a great man ; who, according to the manner of those ancient times, looked after his

business himself ; and was taken from the plough to be a prophet, as the Romans took some from thence to be dictators and consuls. For nothing was in greater esteem than agriculture among the ancient Greeks and Romans, as well as among the Hebrews. In Homer, we see kings and princes living upon the fruits of their lands and their flocks, and labouring with their own hands. Hesiod hath made a poem on purpose to recommend the country life and labour to his brother. It would be too tedious to show how the Carthaginians and Persians, and indeed all other ancient nations, did not think that to do nothing was to live nobly ; but they studied how to cultivate their lands, and employed themselves, as well as their servants, in that business. Whence such persons, who were of the best quality, were called *αὐτοργοί*, “ men that did their work themselves,” and did not commit the care of it to others, but ploughed with their own hands. So Quinctius Cincinnatus is said by Dionys. Halicarn. lib. x. to have returned from his consulship, to lead, *τὸν αὐτοργόν βίον*, “ a rustic life, as he did before it.” As the learned Jac. Perizonius observes upon Ælian's Var. Histor. lib. i. cap. 31. As for the rest, the Greeks ascribe this invention of yoking oxen together to plough (withal either to Ceres, and Triptolemus, or Bacchus, (or some other great person) ; though Moses, who was before them all, was well acquainted with it (Deut. xv. 9 ;) and Job before him (Job i. 3. xlii. 12). Abarbinel thinks these twelve yoke of oxen with which Elisha was ploughing, denoted that he should be leader of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Cast his mantle upon him.] He put upon him the prophetic habit ; which was his inauguration. Or, as some understood it, this was a token that he must become his servant, and attend upon him ; and consequently succeed in his office. For servants were wont to carry their master's shoes after them, and their garments. And accordingly he waited upon him, as appears from two phrases, in the last verse : first, he “ went after him ;” and secondly, “ he ministered unto him.”

Ver. 20. Ran after Elijah.] To desire him to stay a little.

Let me—kiss my father and my mother.] Take his leave of them.

Then I will follow thee.] For he understood that to be the meaning of his throwing his mantle upon him.

Go back again:] Return to thy oxen, and do as as thou desirest.

For what have I done to thee?] He asks him whether he thought he had done any thing to hinder him ? And so this was said to try whether he understood his meaning, and was inclinable to attend him. But Abarbinel thinks these words signify, that he had conferred a great dignity upon him ; which required him to despatch his business immediately : and taking leave of his father and mother, to come after him without any delay ; since he had done such a great thing to him. Which illustrates the words of our Saviour, Matt. xix. 21.

flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he

Ver. 21. *He returned back*] Went home, and then came to those that were ploughing.

Took a yoke of oxen, and slew them,—gave unto the people,] He made a feast for his servants, neighbours, and friends, before he parted with them; in token of the joy he conceived at his new calling. Which shows he was not a poor peasant, such

arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.

as our ploughmen are; but a man of condition, who was able to make a great expense upon occasion.

Went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.] Glad to leave his estate, his friends, and all that he had; glad to serve God in a lower station first, before he executed the office of a prophet.

CHAPTER XX.

1 *Ben-hadad, not content with Ahab's homage, besiegeth Samaria.* 13 *By the direction of a prophet, the Syrians are slain.* 23 *As the prophet forewarned Ahab, the Syrians, trusting in the valleys, come against him in Aphek.* 23 *By the word of the prophet, and God's judgment, the Syrians are smitten again.* 31 *The Syrians submitting themselves, Ahab sendeth Ben-hadad away with a covenant.* 35 *The prophet, under the parable of a prisoner, making Ahab to judge himself, denounceth God's judgment against him.*

1 AND Ben-hadad the king of Syria gathered all his host together: and there were thirty and two kings with him, and horses, and chariots: and he went up and besieged Samaria, and warred against it.

2 And he sent messengers to Ahab king of Israel into the city, and said unto him, Thus saith Ben-hadad,

3 Thy silver and thy gold *is* mine; thy wives also and thy children, *even* the goodliest, *are* mine.

4 And the king of Israel answered and said, My lord, O king, according to thy saying, I am thine, and all that I have.

5 And the messengers came again, and said, Thus speaketh Ben-hadad, saying, Although I

have sent unto thee, saying, Thou shalt deliver me thy silver, and thy gold, and thy wives, and thy children;

6 Yet I will send my servants unto thee to morrow about this time, and they shall search thy house, and the houses of thy servants; and it shall be, *that* whatsoever is pleasant in thine eyes, they shall put *it* in their hand, and take *it* away.

7 Then the king of Israel called all the elders of the land, and said, Mark, I pray you, and see how this *man* seeketh mischief: for he sent unto me for my wives, and for my children, and for my silver, and for my gold; and I denied him not.

CHAPTER XX.

Ver. 1. *Ben-hadad the king of Syria*] Ben-hadad is as much as the son of Hadad. Which Hadad was of the seed-royal in Edom, and escaped into Egypt when David slew all the males in Edom (xi. 16, 17); but infested Solomon in his latter days, and endeavoured to recover his kingdom; in which he not succeeding, it is probable he established himself in Syria.

Gathered all his host together:] The father of this king had taken several cities from the Israelites (ver. 31. xv. 20), and perhaps had made them tributaries to the Syrians; which tribute Ahab refusing to pay, he made war upon him.

There were thirty and two kings with him,] Such petty princes as those in the land of Canaan before the conquest of it by Joshua; who were under the protection of the king of Syria, and bound to serve him in his wars. But he had better have been without them, and employed his own natural subjects only, who had done his business more successfully (ver. 24), because it was their own.

Horses, and chariots:] It is not said what number; which is an argument it was not very great.

He went up and besieged Samaria,] He did not actually besiege it; for his army was routed before he could do it. Therefore the sense is, "he went up to besiege Samaria," and assault it. Which is like that speech, Gen. xviii. 10, "Jacob went out from Beer-sheba and went to Haran." Which Rasi interprets, "He went out to go to Haran." For it presently follows, that God appeared to him in the way.

Ver. 2.] he speaks in a haughty style; just like the messengers of the Assyrian monarch to Hezekiah, "Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria."

Ver. 3.] This message is explained by the king of Israel's answer.

Ver. 4.] He was content to be his vassal, and to hold all that he enjoyed of him; for so he understood his demands. But Ben-hadad intended more: or, from his submissive answer, took occasion to enlarge his demands; requiring the property of all he had, which he resolved (as appears from his second message, in the next verses) to take into his own possession.

Ver. 6.] He tells him the meaning of his first demand, that he should deliver all he had into his hands. Unto which, if he now consented, it should not suffice; but he would send some of his officers to take all, and to ransack every corner of his palace, and carry away from him and from his courtiers (who are meant, I suppose, by his *servants*) whatsoever was valuable: or, perhaps, by *servants* he means all his subjects.

Ver. 7. *The king of Israel called all the elders*] Summoned a general council of all the great men to advise what to do.

He sent unto me for my wives, &c. and I denied him not.] But now nothing will content him, but my utter ruin, and enslaving of our country. In this Ahab showed some sparks of virtue remaining in him; in that while Ben-hadad desired only what he had in his own disposal, that is, all his private goods, he agreed to it: but when all the people, and the public good were concerned, he would do nothing without their consent.

8 And all the elders and all the people said unto him, Hearken not unto him, nor consent.

9 Wherefore he said unto the messengers of Ben-hadad, Tell my lord the king, All that thou didst send for to thy servant at the first I will do: but this thing I may not do. And the messengers departed, and brought him word again.

10 And Ben-hadad sent unto him, and said, The gods do so unto me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that follow me.

11 And the king of Israel answered and said, Tell him, Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off.

12 And it came to pass, when Ben-hadad heard this message, as he was drinking, he and the kings in the pavilions, that he said unto his servants, Set yourselves in array. And they set themselves in array against the city.

13 ¶ And, behold, there came a prophet unto Ahab king of Israel, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou seen all this great multitude? behold, I will deliver it into thine hand this day; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord.

Ver. 8.] They promising unanimously, I suppose, to stand by him, and defend him against so insolent an enemy.

Ver. 9. *Tell my lord the king,*] Of whom he speaks in as humble a manner as he did at first (ver. 4).

This thing I may not do.] For his people would not yield to it.

Brought him word again.] Delivered this answer to Ben-hadad, that Ahab stuck to his first concession, according as he understood his demands, but would not consent to more.

Ver. 10.] He wishes he may perish, if he did not bring such an army against the king of Israel, that if every soldier in it should take a handful of his country, nothing of it would be left remaining. Others explain it thus: I will not leave a bit of Samaria standing. But the other is most natural; and this is included in it.

Ver. 11.] A speech like that, "Do not sing a triumph before the victory."

Ver. 12.] Whilst the treaty lasted between him and Ahab he was remiss: but now he commands his army to be put in order, and that they should invest Samaria, and plant their batteries against it.

Ver. 13. *There came a prophet unto Ahab*] One of those that had been hid; but was now commanded by God to appear and carry a message to Ahab. Which the prophet thought he might do safely, when he brought him such good news, as that which follows.

I will deliver it into thine hand this day;] Hereby God showed, that, as he hated idolatry, of which Ahab was notoriously guilty, so he hated also insolent proud boasters, who imagine they have no superior; and that they can carry all things as they please by their own power.

Thou shalt know that I am the Lord.] Have a new demonstration that he was the Lord of all things. For Ahab had no such message brought by any of Baal's prophets; which was sufficient to convince him, that the Lord, who could foretell and do such wonderful things, was the only God.

Ver. 14. *By whom?*] He gave some credit to his word; and only asks by whom this deliverance should

14 And Ahab said, By whom? And he said, Thus saith the Lord, *Even* by the young men of the princes of the provinces. Then he said, Who shall order the battle? And he answered, Thou.

15 Then he numbered the young men of the princes of the provinces, and they were two hundred and thirty two: and after them he numbered all the people, *even* all the children of Israel, *being* seven thousand.

16 And they went out at noon. But Ben-hadad was drinking himself drunk in the pavilions, he and the kings, the thirty and two kings that helped him.

17 And the young men of the princes of the provinces went out first; and Ben-hadad sent out, and they told him, saying, There are men come out of Samaria.

18 And he said, Whether they be come out for peace, take them alive; or whether they be come out for war, take them alive.

19 So these young men of the princes of the provinces came out of the city, and the army which followed them.

20 And they slew every one his man: and the

be wrought: for he knew he had not forces enough to encounter and overthrow such powerful enemies.

Even by the young men of the princes of the provinces.] The "princes of the provinces" were the governors of the several provinces, into which the kingdom was divided. And their *young men* seem to signify their servants, or their pages (as we speak), that waited on them. As much as to say, Not by old experienced soldiers, but by youths; who, perhaps, had never seen a fight, but had always lived at court.

Who shall order the battle?] Or, who shall begin the fight (as some understand these words), they or we? Shall we make a sally, or expect till they assault us!

Thou.] He bids the king begin, and lead them on. Which was commanded, to encourage the young men, and to try whether Ahab would thus far trust God or not.

Ver. 15. All that he could get together: for these surely were not all the men of war in Israel.

Ver. 16. *They went out*] Of Samaria.

At noon.] When they knew the Syrians were at dinner, taking a repast; if not debauching themselves, as their king was.

Ben-hadad was drinking himself drunk in the pavilions.] Being perfectly secure that the Israelites durst not appear to disturb him.

Ver. 17. *The young men of the princes—went out first;*] And Ahab, no doubt, at the head of them.

Ben-hadad sent out, and they told him,—There are men come out of Samaria.] The meaning is, that upon their first coming out, Ben-hadad hearing a bustle, sent to know what was the matter: and they told him a small party was come out of Samaria.

Ver. 18.] It was against the law of nations to apprehend those that came to treat of peace: but he, in his insolent pride, bade his people not trouble themselves to examine what they came for, but to take them alive; which he thought they might easily do, being so few.

Ver. 19.] The young men only appeared at first; but the rest of the army came out a little after.

Ver. 20. *They slew every one his man:*] Who came to apprehend them.

The Syrians fled; and Israel pursued them:] At

Syrians fled; and Israel pursued them: and Ben-hadad the king of Syria escaped on a horse with the horsemen.

21 And the king of Israel went out, and smote the horses and chariots, and slew the Syrians with a great slaughter.

22 ¶ And the prophet came to the king of Israel, and said unto him, Go, strengthen thyself, and mark, and see what thou doest: for at the return of the year the king of Syria will come up against thee.

23 And the servants of the king of Syria said unto him, Their gods are gods of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they.

24 And do this thing, Take the kings away every man out of his place, and put captains in their rooms:

25 And number thee an army, like the army that thou hast lost, horse for horse, and chariot for chariot: and we will fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than

which the Syrians were so amazed, by the suddenness of the attempt, that they fled: imagining them to be stronger and better prepared for war than they were.

Ben-hadad—escaped on a horse with the horsemen.] He was possessed with the same fear; and did not endeavour to make his men rally again, but fled away together with them.

Ver. 21.] He went out, by the prophet's order, at the head of the young men, when they first issued out of the city. But now he went out further than he had done at the beginning, and overtook the chariots and horsemen; among whom he made a great slaughter.

Ver. 22. *Go, strengthen thyself, and mark, and see what thou doest.*] He bade him make what preparations he was able, and take care that nothing was wanting to oppose the designs of the Syrians against him; who would certainly return, and renew the fight the next year.

For at the return of the year.] At the time when kings used to go out to war. Of which see 2 Sam. xi. 1.

Ver. 23. *Their gods are gods of the hills;*] They did not know the God of the universe, but only worshipped particular gods; who they thought ruled over particular countries, and distributed several parts of those countries among them (some being gods of the woods, others of the rivers, &c.); and they imagined the God of the Hebrews to be *ορειβατης*, as Pan was called by the heathen. For they had heard, perhaps, that their law was given from heaven upon a mountain, and there God appeared to them: and the country of Israel also was very hilly: where, upon one eminent hill, God's temple was built, and he was worshipped. And it was known, that the Israelites delighted to sacrifice in *high places*; insomuch, that when they could not come at them, they sacrificed on the house-tops (Jer. xx. 13).

But let us fight against them in the plain.] For, besides that the Syrian gods, they thought, had more power in a flat plain country, wherein they delighted; there also they should have more service of their horses and chariots, which could not fight so well upon mountains.

Ver. 24.] He had made the thirty-two kings, who were his tributaries, chief commanders in his former

they. And he hearkened unto their voice, and did so.

26 And it came to pass at the return of the year that Ben-hadad numbered the Syrians, and went up to Aphek, to fight against Israel.

27 And the children of Israel were numbered, and were all present, and went against them: and the children of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of kids; but the Syrians filled the country.

28 ¶ And there came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the Lord, because the Syrians have said, The Lord is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thy hand, and they shall know that I am the Lord.

29 And they pitched one over against the other seven days. And so it was, that in the seventh day the battle was joined: and the children of Israel slew of the Syrians an hundred thousand footmen in one day.

30 But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city;

army: which his counsellors represented to him as a great error; and therefore advised him to displace them, and put his own captains in their stead, who would fight better. For they fought for their country, which the other did not: and besides, the kings, it is likely, were too delicate to be warriors; and were not so obedient to discipline as his captains would be.

Ver. 25.] For his army they knew would be superior; and they should have the advantage of the ground.

Ver. 26.] This was a city in the tribe of Asher: which, it is probable, was one of those that Ben-hadad's father had taken from the king of Israel (ver. 34). Not far from which was the plain of Gath, where he intended to fight.

Ver. 27. *The children of Israel were numbered,*] That is, as many as could be got together were numbered, and put in order to give them battle.

Like two little flocks of kids;] The Hebrew word *chasiph* is nowhere found but in this place; which Kimchi and others translate a *little flock*. But there is no need to add the word *little*; for the flocks of goats are always small; never so great as those of sheep. For they love to ramble, and are scattered up and down, as Bochartus observes, who translates these words, *two flocks of young kids*; denoting their contemptible number, and that they were weak, feeble, and timorous, like those fugacious creatures, as he speaks, Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 51.

Ver. 28.] This man of God, the Jews say, was the prophet Micah.

Ver. 29. *They pitched one over against the other seven days.*] It may seem strange that they should look upon one another so long, and watch for advantages, without coming to any action; for the Syrians had so much advantage in their numbers, that one would think they should have immediately encompassed the Israelites, and destroyed them all. But, perhaps, the Israelites were pitched upon a rising ground, and the Syrians durst not attack them till they came down into the plain.

Israel slew of the Syrians an hundred thousand footmen.] In all probability they surprised them by a sudden unexpected assault; and God dismayed them, and struck such a terror into them, that they could make no resistance.

and *there* a wall fell upon twenty and seven thousand of the men *that were left*. And Ben-hadad fled, and came into the city, into an inner chamber.

31 ¶ And his servants said unto him, Behold now, We have heard that the kings of the house of Israel *are merciful kings*: let us, I pray thee, put sackcloth on our loins, and ropes upon our heads, and go out to the king of Israel: peradventure he will save thy life.

32 So they girded sackcloth on their loins, and put ropes on their heads, and came to the king of Israel, and said, Thy servant Ben-hadad saith, I pray thee, let me live. And he said, *Is he yet alive?* he is my brother.

33 Now the men did diligently observe whe-

ther *any thing would come* from him, and did hastily catch it: and they said, Thy brother Ben-hadad. Then he said, Go ye, bring him. Then Ben-hadad came forth to him; and he caused him to come up into the chariot.

34 And Ben-hadad said unto him, The cities, which my father took from thy father, I will restore; and thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria. Then said Ahab, I will send thee away with this covenant. So he made a covenant with him, and sent him away.

35 ¶ And a certain man of the sons of the prophets said unto his neighbour in the word of the Lord, Smite me, I pray thee. And the man refused to smite him.

Ver. 30. *A wall fell upon twenty and seven thousand of the men that were left.*] The wall of the city, under which they lay, to be ready to defend it, fell down; either by the Israelites batteries, or by an earthquake; and killed or maimed a great number of them that fled thither for safety.

Into an inner chamber.] In the Hebrew the words are, "into a chamber within a chamber;" that is, into a very secret place, where he thought he should not be easily found.

Ver. 31. *We have heard that the kings of—Israel are merciful kings:*] Better natured than other kings unto those who are in distress; they retaining still something of the temper of that good king David; who was full of humanity and tenderness, unto which true religion disposes men above all other things.

Let us, I pray thee,] One of his principal courtiers spake this in the name of the rest.

Put sackcloth on our loins, and ropes upon our heads,] This it seems was the posture in those times, wherein supplicants presented themselves, when they petitioned for mercy; as among the Greeks and Romans they came in a mournful manner, with a branch of olive in their hands. The sackcloth upon their loins was a token of great sorrow for what they had done; and halters about their necks, a token of their subjection to what punishment he pleased to inflict.

Ver. 32. *Thy servant Ben-hadad saith, I pray thee, let me live.*] He now as humbly petitions Ahab, as Ahab a little while ago had petitioned him (ver. 4), and he begs of him life. Such are the strange turns of human affairs, which the ancient historians among the heathens have observed, as admonishments to men not to bear themselves high in a prosperous condition, nor trust to their present fortune (as they called it), not knowing, quid serus vesper vohat, "what might fall out before the day was done."

Is he yet alive? he is my brother.] He rejoiced to hear that he did not perish in the battle; and not only pardoned him at the first word, and gave him his life; but expressed as great affection to him as if he had been his brother. This was folly, not mercifulness or good nature. It had been enough not to have tormented him; but to let him not only live, but own him for a brother, was stupid inconsideration. For a man that lately treated him so disdainfully could never make a true friend.

Ver. 33. *Now the men did diligently observe whether any thing would come from him,*] They were wise persons whom he employed in this embassy; who watched attentively whether any kind word would drop from his mouth, on which they might lay hold, and make their advantage of it, before he could retract it. And they caught at the word *brother*, and said, Thy

brother Ben-hadad lives, and implores this favour, that he may live.

Go ye, bring him.] This was strange rashness, to make such haste as not to advise with his privy council what to do in such a case.

And he caused him to come up into the chariot.] It seems that Ahab was still in the field.

Ver. 34. *The cities which my father took from thy father, I will restore;*] The word Ben-hadad not being in the Hebrew, Osiander and some others think that Ahab, who was so kind as to take him up into his chariot, made this speech to him when he came there, that he would not only give him his life but his kingdom also, which he had now power to take from him; and be so far from diminishing his power, that he would restore all that had been taken from him by his father. Which senseless kindness was the thing that provoked God to pronounce that heavy doom upon him, ver. 42. But the next words do not well agree with this; therefore I take these to be Ben-hadad's words to Ahab, whereby he endeavoured to smooth him up and sweeten him, by offering to become his subject (as the next words signify), and making restitution of all that had been taken from his predecessor.

Thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria.] Some think by *streets* he means *market-places*, where commodities were sold, the toll of which should belong to Ahab. Others think he means "courts of judgment" where he should maintain a jurisdiction over Ben-hadad's subjects: others, that we now call a *piazza*, of which Ahab should receive the rents. But commonly interpreters think he means *fortifications*, whereby he might bridle the chief city of the kingdom of Syria; that they might not make new irruptions into the land of Israel: *citadels*, as we now speak, to keep them in awe, and to be a check to them, if they attempted any thing destructive to the Israelites. Yet, after all, Gotf. Vallandus hath said a great deal to prove that the Hebrew word signifies *palaces*, which he being allowed to build, was a great token of subjection. We do not read of any such things that were built by the Syrian kings in Samaria: nor of any cities they took from the Israelites: unless those taken from Baasha (xv. 20), who was not Ahab's father.

So he made a covenant with him, and sent him away.] Wherein he discovered his great weakness; for his covenant was soon broken, as we read in the last chapter of this book.

Ver. 35. *A certain man of the sons of the prophets*] This the Jews will still have to be Micaiah; which is not likely, for he is called "a prophet of the Lord;" not one of the "sons of the prophets."

Smite me, I pray thee.] He bade him give him such a blow as might wound him (ver. 37).

36 Then said he unto him, Because thou hast not obeyed the voice of the Lord, behold, as soon as thou art departed from me, a lion shall slay thee. And as soon as he was departed from him, a lion found him, and slew him.

37 Then he found another man, and said, Smite me, I pray thee. And the man smote him, so that in smiting he wounded him.

38 So the prophet departed, and waited for the king by the way, and disguised himself with ashes upon his face.

39 And as the king passed by, he cried unto the king: and he said, Thy servant went out into the midst of the battle; and, behold, a man turned aside, and brought a man unto me, and said, Keep this man; if by any means he be miss-

ing, then shall thy life be for his life, or else thou shalt pay a talent of silver.

40 And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone. And the king of Israel said unto him, So shall thy judgment be; thyself hast decided it.

41 And he hastened, and took the ashes away from his face; and the king of Israel discerned him that he was of the prophets.

42 And he said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people.

43 And the king of Israel went to his house heavy and displeased, and came to Samaria.

The man refused to smite him.] Because it looked like inhumanity to strike an innocent person, who had done him no wrong.

Ver. 36. *Because thou hast not obeyed the voice of the Lord,—a lion shall slay thee.]* This may seem too severe a punishment, till these two things be considered. First, that the prophet commanded him to smite him, and that “by the word of the Lord.” Not of his own will, and from his proper private motion: but God required it. As if he had said (so Theodoret glosses on it), *οὐκ ἐγὼ σοι, &c.* “It is not I that require this of thee, but the Spirit that is within me.” And accordingly the punishment was inflicted, because he “obeyed not the voice of the Lord.” And secondly, the prophet commanded this in God’s name, not to an ordinary man, but *el reehu*: which should not be translated, “to his neighbour;” but, as St. Jerome, “to his companion.” And so the Targum, and other ancient interpreters, “to his fellow;” that is, a prophet bred in the same school with himself; who well understood the weight of these words, I command thee in “the name of the Lord.”

A lion found him, and slew him.] The Jews say in the title Sanhedrin, and other places, that some prophets were put to death by the hand of man, and others by the hand of God. They that prophesied what they were not told by God, or they that prophesied in the name of idols, were to be put to death by the judges: but they who concealed their prophecy, or rejected a prophecy, their death was by the hand of God.

Ver. 37.] The intention of this was, that he might find the freer access to Ahab, as a soldier well deserving; and that he might the better feign his story: for in such a matter the king was not to be dealt withal in downright words.

Ver. 38.] As a man in a very mournful condition. The Hebrews understand it, that he covered his face with a veil, or a handkerchief, or bound it about with a fillet (for one cannot tell how *ashes* should cover it), in token that he was wounded. So that the king could not know who he was (see Bochart’s *Canaan*, lib. ii. cap. 8).

Ver. 39. *Thy servant went out into the midst of the battle:]* He pretended that he had adventured his life in the late fight; being engaged in the hottest service.

Keep this man:] He pretended, I suppose that his captain having a prisoner of great quality, charged him with him; telling him that he should be answerable for him with his life, if he let him escape; or redeem his life with a greater sum of money than he was able to pay.

Ver. 40. *As thy servant was busy here and there,] Endeavouring, in the fight to do the best service he was able everywhere.*

He was gone.] In the Hebrew, “he could not be found.”

So shall thy judgment be; thyself has decided it.] Thou hast pronounced thy own sentence; according to thy agreement so shalt thou suffer. He had forgot how he had dismissed a greater person willingly, else he could not have been so hard-hearted as to condemn one that had offended unwillingly. But he soon made him think of it.

Ver. 41. *Took the ashes away from his face;] Threw away his disguise immediately; by pulling off the cloth wherein his face was wrapped.*

He was of the prophets.] Some of the by-standers perhaps knew him, when they saw his bare face: or by the very motion of his eyes before he spake (which he did immediately), he sufficiently discovered what he was.

Ver. 42. *Because thou hast let go—a man whom I appointed to utter destruction,] For the battle was the Lord’s; and the victory being obtained purely by the divine power, and the singular favour of God, Ahab ought not to have resolved how to dispose of Ben-hadad without God’s leave; but have consulted him (who had put him into his hands) what he would have done with him for he was God’s prisoner; who was to have his part of the spoil, which he would please to choose.*

Therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people.] The former part of this decree of God was fulfilled three years after, when Ahab was killed in a battle against the Syrians (xxii. 1—4, &c.) But the latter part was deferred until the reign of Hazael, who fulfilled it by the wars he had with the Israelites (2 Kings x. 32, 33.)

Ver. 43.] This heavy sentence turned all their joy for the late victory into mourning; Ahab being much troubled for what he had done, and for what he was like to suffer.

CHAPTER XXI.

1 *Ahab being denied Naboth's vineyard is grieved.* 5 *Jezebel writing letters against Naboth, he is condemned of blasphemy.* 15 *Ahab taketh possession of the vineyard.* 17 *Elijah denounceth judgments against Ahab and Jezebel.* 25 *Wicked Ahab repenting, God deferreth the judgment.*

1 AND it came to pass after these things, that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab king of Samaria.

2 And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near unto my house: and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; or, if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money.

3 And Naboth said to Ahab, The LORD forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.

4 And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread.

CHAP. XXI.

Ver. 1. *After these things, that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard.*] After all those wonderful things which God had done, in giving such victories to Ahab, he coveted the vineyard of a neighbour of his. Which is peculiarly noted, as Abarbinel thinks, to have followed the foregoing history, to set forth the extreme great wickedness of Ahab; who spared Ben-hadad, as Saul did Agag king of the Amalekites, and killed Naboth, that he might get his vineyard. This was a high aggravation of his crime, that he basely murdered a just Israelite, and let an impious enemy escape.

Hard by the palace of Ahab] Not far from it, if not adjoining to it: being planted on the same rising ground, whereon the palace stood; for vines thrive best in mountainous places.

Ver. 2. *For a garden of herbs.*] For a flower garden, as some understand it.

I will give thee the worth of it in money.] This was a fair proposal, but the law was against it.

Ver. 3. *That I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.*] As it is natural to all men to value and love the ancient possessions that have been in their family; so the law of Moses prohibited the alienation of lands from one tribe to another, unless a man was reduced to poverty; in which case he might sell it till the jubilee; but then it was to return to him (see Lev. xxv. 15. 25. 28). Now, as Naboth was in no need, so he considered that if he should, out of respect to the king, and merely to do him a pleasure, part with his vineyard, he should never get it out of his hands at the jubilee; being made part of the ground belonging to the royal palace. This makes it probable that Naboth was one of the seven thousand who observed the law strictly.

Ver. 4. *Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased*] Just as he had done, after the prophet had pronounced the severe sentence against him (xx. 43).

I will not give thee the inheritance] Made him a peremptory denial; which he could not bear.

He laid him down upon his bed—and would eat no bread.] He was so vexed to be denied by a subject, that he fell into such a passion, as made him sick,

5 ¶ But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread?

6 And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money; or else, if it please thee, I will give thee another vineyard for it: and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard.

7 And Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.

8 So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that were in his city, dwelling with Naboth.

9 And she wrote in the letters, saying, Pro-

and took away his stomach, and made company unacceptable to him. In short he was very melancholy.

Ver. 5.] He soon found his mind was more out of order than his body; and therefore desired to know what had disturbed him.

Ver. 6.] He doth not acquaint her with his reason, but reports his answer, as if he gave him a surly refusal. Which was far otherwise; Naboth representing it as a religious duty (ver. 3) founded upon the law of God, not to part with the inheritance of his fathers, which was allotted to them by Joshua, never to be alienated. For in truth they that possessed them were only usufructuaries (i. e. enjoyed the profits of them), God himself being the true proprietor (Lev. xxv. 23), who charged their land with no other payments but tithes and first-fruits to his ministers: after which he gave them an entire possession of it, to remain in their several families for ever, without any alteration, which none could make but himself.

Ver. 7. *Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel?*] Is this like a king, to torment thyself in this manner? as Rabbag glosses. Or, doth it become a king to beg and pray, and not rather command? Thou knowest not thine own power, but actest like a minor, who hath no authority. Or, as Abarbinel understands it, Canst thou expect things should go well in thy kingdom, if thou hast neither will nor power to do any thing in such a small matter as this! She would not have him trouble himself, but leave her to accomplish his desires.

Ver. 8. *So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal.*] These seals were wont to be worn upon one of the fingers of their hand (Jer. xxii. 24) and never to be taken off night nor day, but when they used them. Which shows she was an audacious woman, that durst steal this from Ahab's finger (for it doth not appear he knew of these letters) and write what she pleased in his name; that is, use his kingly authority to what purposes she thought good.

And sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles] The Israelites, it seems, after their separation from Judah, kept up the civil polity which was ordained by Moses (though they forsook his religion,) having

claim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people :

10 And set two men, sons of Belial before him, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king. And then carry him out, and stone him, that he may die.

11 And the men of his city, even the elders and the nobles who were the inhabitants in his city, did as Jezebel had sent unto them, and as it was written in the letters which she had sent unto them.

elders and judges in their several cities, as they had here at Jezreel : where they had not only elders, but also nobles ; that is, captains of thousands, and hundreds, as Bon. Bertram observes, cap. 12. De Repub. Judaea.

Ver. 9. *Proclaim a fast.*] As if there had been some grievous crime committed, or some great calamity had befallen them ; which all the people were to bewail, and purge themselves from that sin, lest they also should become guilty. And, consequently, they were to see the crime punished very severely : for such days of fasting were spent in punishing offences, and doing justice, and praying to God for pardon. Some ask, where it was kept ? And Vitringa thinks it might possibly be in the very streets of the city : where Ezra kept his fast (Neh. viii. 1—3).

Set Naboth on high among the people.] In this religious assembly of the people. For he being a person of an illustrious house (as Josephus reports) was ordered to be set in an honourable place : that so it might not be thought they condemned him out of hatred, but with grief and respect to his person, being constrained merely by the evidence given against him. Yet, others will have it, that the reason he was set in an eminent place, was only because all people accused and arraigned were wont so to appear before the judges ; that all the people might see them, and hear what was alleged against them, and the proofs of it, and their defence.

Ver. 10. *Set two men—of Belial.*] Men of no conscience, that would swear any thing for money.

To bear witness against him.] Such was the Roman custom also (which was most rational), that the accused should “have the accusers face to face ;” as Festus saith, Acts xxv. 16. But some think that she need not have put herself to this trouble of proceeding in such a formal manner against Naboth in a court of justice ; for by the *jus regium*, mentioned 1 Sam. viii. 14, she might have taken his vineyard from him by Ahab's absolute power. But that is a great mistake ; for Samuël only meant that their kings would take the fruits of their vineyards upon occasion for their use, but not the possession of the vineyards themselves ; for so all the land might have become the king's ; and that *jus regium* Josephus calls a mere tyranny.

Thou didst blaspheme God and the king.] The Hebrews so much abhorred this crime of blasphemy, that they would not express it by its proper name, but said *bless*, instead of *curse* ; as here and in the book of Job. Now it was death by the law of Moses to blaspheme God (Lev. xxiv. 16) and by custom it was death to blaspheme the king, which is forbidden in those words, Exod. xx. 28. And perhaps they might stretch that law hither, which forbade any man, upon pain of death, to curse his father or his mother (Exod. xxi. 17), for the prince is the father of his country. But to make all sure, they accused Naboth of both, of treason against God and against the king ; that so the people might be the better satisfied to see

12 They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people.

13 And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him : and the men of Belial witnessed against him, even against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died.

14 Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, Naboth is stoned, and is dead.

him stoned. But there is this difference to be observed between these two : that if a man had only blasphemed God, he was to be tried by the great court at Jerusalem (as the Hebrew doctors tell us), and his goods came to his heirs ; but when any man was executed for treason against the king, his estate went to the exchequer, being forfeited to him against whom the offence was committed. And therefore it was that they accused Naboth of this crime, on purpose that his estate might be confiscated, and Ahab enjoy his vineyard. And they accused him of blasphemy against God for other reasons : that justice might be done the sooner upon him ; or, as the Talmudists speak, to increase their indignation (see Selden, De Successionibus, cap. 25. fol. 87, 88).

Then carry him out.] Not merely out of the assembly, but out of the city (ver. 13). For in the wilderness, and before the conquest of Canaan, they executed punishments without the camp (Lev. xxiv. 23. Josh. vii. 24), and afterward without the gate of the city : whereby they intended to testify, that they would take the evil out of the midst of them, and not suffer wickedness to remain among them. So it is explained, ver. 13 (see Grotius, Matt. xxvii. 32).

And stone him.] For this was the punishment of blasphemy : as we see by their attempt to stone our Saviour, and their killing St. Stephen in this manner. Concerning this punishment, see Sanhedrin, cap. 6.

Ver. 11. *The elders and the nobles*] The principal inhabitants.

Did as Jezebel had sent unto them.] Perhaps she sent private messengers to tell them by word of mouth what she expected from them, and how she would reward them ; as well as public letters to authorize what they did. And princes never want instruments to execute their pleasure. But it is much there should be none among the judges, and great men, that abhorred such villany : which argues the great corruption of their manners by idolatry.

Ver. 13. *There came in two men,—and sat before him.*] As the witnesses used to do in courts of judgment ; testifying to his face the truth of the accusation brought against him.

The men of Belial witnessed against him,—in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king.] This signifies no more but that they had the impudence publicly to testify a falsity. Though Bertram, in the book before mentioned (cap. 12) from these words, “in the presence of the people” argues, *potestatem populi* ; “the power of the people in this kingdom ;” because these suborned witnesses gave their testimony before them. So that it was a mixed government, like ours, consisting of the power of the king, of the nobles, and of the people. If this be true, it argues all these people of that place to be very wicked ; in that none of them excepted against the testimony of such persons which ought not (as Maimonides observes) to have been admitted.

Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him] And his sons with him, as many gather from

15 ¶ And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned, and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money: for Naboth is not alive, but dead.

16 And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.

17 ¶ And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,

18 Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria: behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he has gone down to possess it.

19 And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine.

20 And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee: because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord.

21 Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity, and will cut off

from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel,

22 And will make thine house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked me to anger, and made Israel to sin.

23 And of Jezebel also spake the Lord, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.

24 Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat.

25 ¶ But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up.

26 And he did very abominably in following idols, according to all things as did the Amorites, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel.

27 And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly.

28 And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,

29 Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself

2 Kings ix. 26, they being condemned as accessories to his crime.

Ver. 14.] They knew that the order came from her; and therefore let her know they had obeyed it.

Ver. 15.] But by what title did he take possession? The Hebrews, I observed before, think it was by the right of confiscation; which was practised in all such crimes against the king (see upon 2 Sam. ix. 7, and Grotius, upon Josh. i. 18, and upon this place). Though others think he took possession for want of heirs; his children being condemned with him.

Ver. 16.] He could not but know how Naboth died; and therefore, by this consented to that wickedness, which was committed also by his authority (ver. 8).

Ver. 17.] Some lesser prophets were employed in the late messages sent unto him (xx. 13. 28. 35). But upon this great occasion God sends Elijah, whom he dreaded, not merely to reprove him, but to condemn him to a punishment suitable to the crime he had committed.

Ver. 18. Which is in Samaria:] That is, who reigns in Samaria (ver. 1).

He is in the vineyard of Naboth.] That he might be sure not to lose his labour, he tells him where he might find him.

Ver. 19. Hast thou killed, and also taken possession?] He expresses in brief the barbarity of this fact; as if he had said, Was it not enough that thou hast taken away his life, but thou must seize on his estate, and go thyself in person to take possession of it?

In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine.] He declares the cause of this judgment upon him, but doth not assign the place; for the dogs licked Ahab's blood in Samaria (xxi. 38.) Therefore these words should be translated, as the dogs licked or in like manner as they licked Naboth's blood, so shall they lick thine: mark what I say, even thine.

Ver. 20. Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?] As much as to say, Wilt thou never suffer me to be quiet?

How darest thou to appear in my presence again, with such terrible threatenings?

Thou hast sold thyself to work evil] They that sell themselves are wholly under the power of their masters; so was Ahab under the power of sin; a perfect slave to his sinful lusts and passions, which hurried him into the foulest crimes.

Ver. 21.] See upon xiv. 10.

Ver. 22.] These two families were utterly extirpated (see xv. 29. xvi. 11, 12, &c.), as he prophesied Ahab's should be.

Ver. 23. In the territory where Naboth was judged and unjustly condemned.

Ver. 24.] See xiv. 11.

Ver. 25.] But there was none like unto Ahab which did sell himself to work wickedness] Made himself a perfect bond-slave to all manner of wickedness.

Whom Jezebel his wife stirred up.] Which did not excuse him, yet something mitigated his punishment: for she died more miserably than he.

Ver. 26. He did very abominably in following idols, — as did the Amorites.] There was no abomination which the people of Canaan committed (who are here called the Amorites, according to the ancient language, Gen. xv. 16), which he did not imitate.

Whom the Lord cast out] As he intended to cast out the whole family of Ahab: who by God's judgments upon the Amorites, might have taken warning not to tread in their steps.

Ver. 27.] All these were expressions of very great sorrow and heaviness; which were usual in mourning. And the last words the Chaldee paraphrast translates, he went barefoot. But it is rejected by the greater part of interpreters, who take it as we do, for such a slow pace as signified he was reduced to great weakness and feebleness of body, by fasting and grief; or that he had no heart to go about any business. The Jews tell us in Pirke Eliezer, cap. 43, that he sent to Jehoshaphat king of Judah, who came and gave him a certain number of stripes every day: and that three times

before me? because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days: *but* in

in a day. But without this fabulous addition, here is enough to signify that he was extremely cast down, and very much troubled; I cannot say for his sin, but for the heavy punishment God had laid upon him. It is likely, indeed, for the present he might have some sense of his sins; but it did not last to bring him to true repentance: that is, to make him forsake them. For we read not so much as of any restitution of the vineyard; much less of his forsaking idols.

Ver. 29. *Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself*] Which neither Jeroboam nor Baasha had done, but

his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house.

obstinately went on, without the least token of sorrow, when the same doom was passed on them.

I will not bring the evil in his days: but in his son's days] Such a power there is in hearty repentance and reformation of life to obtain a pardon, that God remitted part of Ahab's punishment, at least deferred it, upon this imperfect repentance. Which argued some degree of belief of what the prophet said: and accordingly it was his son's blood, not his, which was licked up by the dogs in that portion of ground where Naboth's was (2 Kings ix. 25, 26).

CHAPTER XXII.

1 *Ahab, seduced by false prophets, according to the word of Micaiah, is slain at Ramoth-gilead.* 37 *The dogs lick up his blood, and Ahaziah succeedeth him.* 41 *Jehoshaphat's good reign.* 45 *His acts.* 50 *Jehoram succeedeth him.* 51 *Ahaziah's evil reign.*

1 AND they continued three years without war between Syria and Israel.

2 And it came to pass in the third year, that Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel.

3 And the king of Israel said unto his servants, Know ye that Ramoth in Gilead is our's, and we be still, and take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria?

4 And he said unto Jehoshaphat, Wilt thou go with me to battle to Ramoth-gilead? And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses.

5 And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of

Israel, Inquire, I pray thee, at the word of the LORD to day.

6 Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall I go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? and they said, Go up; for the LORD shall deliver it into the hand of the king.

7 And Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might enquire of him?

8 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the LORD: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good

CHAP. XXII.

Ver. 1. *They continued three years*] Not complete but part of three years, (see 2 Chron. xviii. 2).

Without war between Syria and Israel.] Though God was very angry with Israel, and intended to plague them by the Syrians: yet his anger being deferred for some time upon Ahab's humiliation, Elijah did not cause Hazael to be anointed King of Syria, who was to be the executioner of God's wrath, because it was prolonged for the reason now named. Thus Abarbanel.

Ver. 2.] For there was an affinity made between him and Ahab (2 Chron. xviii. 1), Jehoshaphat's son having married Ahab's daughter (2 Kings viii. 18).

Ver. 3.] Some think Ben-hadad had not made good his covenant to restore all the cities the Syrians had taken from Israel (xx. 34), whereof this, it is likely, was one.

Ver. 4. *Wilt thou go with me to battle to Ramoth-gilead?*] He acted now like a prudent man; who, before he resolved upon a war, desired to know whether he might depend upon Jehoshaphat for his assistance in it; for his forces, in comparison with the Syrians, were very small (xx. 27).

I am as thou art,] He professes himself entirely at his service; as if they were but one person and people.

Ver. 5.] But he desired first, that the prophets who were in Israel might be forthwith consulted, whether God approved of their design, and would give them success in it. So good men were wont to do (Judg. i. 1. 1 Sam. xxiii. 2).

Ver. 6. *Then the King of Israel gathered the pro-*

phets] Some think these were the prophets of the groves, who were not slain with the prophets of Baal, because they are just the same number (xviii. 19). But perhaps there were schools of the prophets kept up still in Israel, in imitation of those in Judah, wherein men were bred up, who pretended to have this gift. But it is plain they were false prophets; for Micaiah calls them Ahab's prophets (see ver. 23).

Go up; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king.] They speak as if they were inspired by the Lord, and in his name promise good success; for they knew Jehoshaphat regarded not Baal, nor Astarte, but only the Lord.

Ver. 7.] He doth not reject these as no prophets of the Lord, though he suspected them; and therefore desired to know, if there was any other that was accounted a prophet of the Lord, from whom he might receive further satisfaction. And indeed it is not likely that Ahab would adventure to send for such prophets as were professed servants of Baal, from whom Jehoshaphat, he knew would receive no advice; but they professed themselves to be servants of the Lord, for whom Elijah's late miracle had wrought in Ahab some respect. And Dr. Jackson seems to me to have produced a good argument for this, from Jehoshaphat's continuing his resolution of accompanying Ahab to battle, notwithstanding all that Micaiah had said against it. Which he would never have done, had he believed that Micaiah alone belonged unto the Lord, and his adversaries unto Baal (book ii. upon the Creed, ch. 18. par. 2).

Ver. 8.] We ought to love those who speak the truth, not those who speak what pleaseth us.

concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so.

9 Then the king of Israel called an officer, and said, Hasten *hither* Micaiah the son of Imlah.

10 And the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah sat each on his throne, having put on their robes, in a void place in the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them.

11 And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made him horns of iron: and he said, Thus saith the LORD, With these shalt thou push the Syrians, until thou have consumed them.

12 And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramoth-gilead, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver *it* into the king's hand.

13 And the messenger that was gone to call Micaiah spake unto him, saying, Behold now, the words of the prophets *declare* good unto the king with one mouth: let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak *that which is good*.

14 And Micaiah said, As the LORD liveth,

Ver. 9.] He would not deny Jehoshaphat's desire of hearing him, as well as others; lest he should fly off from his kind offer (ver. 4).

Ver. 10. *Having put on their robes.*] Their royal apparel and all the ensigns of majesty.

In the entrance of the gate of Samaria;] Where the people used to meet, and causes were heard by the courts of justice (see upon 2 Sam. xix. 8).

All the prophets prophesied before them.] Continued to encourage them in their design.

Ver. 11.] Such was the manner, it seems, of prophets in ancient times, by external signs to represent future events: as Isaiah and Jeremiah continued to do in future ages (Isa. xx. 2. Jer. xxvii. 2).

Ver. 12.] Every one of them accorded in the same sense; that he should certainly be victorious.

Ver. 13.] So mightily did the opinion of *universality* sway with the superstitious people, that the messenger thought he could persuade Micaiah not to dissent from the rest, lest he should fall under the censure of singularity, peevishness, and privacy of spirit. And thus it is in the church at this day, as the same excellent doctor there observes.

Ver. 14.] He seems as yet to have no revelation about the matter; but when the question was put to him, God taught him what to answer.

Ver. 15. *Micaiah, shall we go against Ramoth-gilead to battle.*] The very same question that had been asked the rest of the prophets (ver. 6).

Go and prosper.] And he gave the very same answer in the same word that the other prophets had done (ver. 12), but spake them in such a manner, that Ahab plainly discerned he derided and mocked. It being as if he had said, To what purpose shall I contradict your prophets? For you have a mind to go, and do so: try the truth of their prediction.

Ver. 16.] He had not abjured him at all, but now he doth: and would do it again, and again, if he did not speak seriously, and tell him what God said to him; which Micaiah had not yet done. For he doth not use the common preface of prophets to the foregoing answer, *Thus saith the Lord*; because he did not speak in God's name but in his own.

Ver. 17. *I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills,*] Routed, and flying from their enemies to the hills for safety.

what the LORD saith unto me, that will I speak.

15 ¶ So he came to the king. And the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall we forbear? And he answered him, Go, and prosper: for the LORD shall deliver *it* into the hand of the king.

16 And the king said unto him, How many times shall I adjure thee that thou tell me nothing but *that which is true* in the name of the LORD?

17 And he said, I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the LORD said, These have no master: let them return every man to his house in peace.

18 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil?

19 And he said, Hear thou therefore the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left.

20 And the LORD said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-

As sheep that have not a shepherd;] In a most miserable condition, as sheep are without a shepherd to look after them: they being neither strong, nor cunning nor nimble, and swift of feet; but exposed to the injuries of all creatures, when they are left to themselves without a shepherd; which is very often repeated in the scriptures, as if it were a proverbial speech among the Hebrews (Numb. xxvii. 17. 2 Chron. xviii. 16, Zech. x. 2. xiii. 7. Matt. ix. 36).

These have no master;] They have lost their king and governor: who was represented by the *shepherd* before mentioned.

Let them return every man to his house in peace.] All go home, and think no more of war; having lost their ruler. This was an exact representation of what followed.

Ver. 18.] He had always been wont to bring threatening messages from God to him; and therefore was not (as the Jews imagine) the prophet who brought him that gracious message, when Ben-hadad treated him so insolently (xx. 13).

Ver. 19. *Hear thou therefore the word of the Lord;*] If thou dost not delight only in lies, hear what I have further to say from the Lord.

I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, &c.] This is a parabolical speech, as Abarbinel calls it, signifying that there was a greater king than Ahab, who would judge him according to his works. And in a vision he saw him sitting on a throne, for that purpose, and attended by the heavenly host, as Ahab was by his prophets: some on his *right hand*, by which many think he means the good angels; and some on his *left hand*, by which are meant the bad, who are the executioners of his judgments when he pleases.

Ver. 20. *Who shall persuade Ahab.*] It is not to be thought there was any such consultation before the divine majesty, who should be employed to persuade him to undo himself: but these representations are contrived to bring down invisible things to the meanest capacities of men. Who were to know that the Lord resolved to let Ahab be deceived and perish at Ramoth-gilead, rather than any other place: that he who let Ben-hadad escape, might be punished by Ben-hadad.

One said on this manner, and another said on that

gilead? and one said on this manner, and another said on that manner.

21 And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him.

22 And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so.

23 Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the LORD hath spoken evil concerning thee.

24 But Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near, and smote Micaiah on the cheek, and said, Which way went the Spirit of the LORD from me to speak unto thee?

25 And Micaiah said, Behold, thou shalt see in that day, when thou shalt go into an inner chamber to hide thyself.

26 And the king of Israel said, Take Micaiah, and carry him back unto Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son;

manner.] This is said, only to signify that God hath many ways of bringing men to ruin, when he declares it.

Ver. 21.] This is not to be understood literally, but that there are evil spirits who are very forward to entice men to their own destruction, and have power so to do, if the Lord do not hinder them.

Ver. 22. *Wherewith?*] God was not ignorant of what he could and would do: but this is said, to represent more familiarly to vulgar understandings by what means Ahab was led into destruction.

Will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.] Suggest to them that which will deceive him.

Go forth and do so.] God permitted this lying spirit to follow his own inclinations, which he knew would have success, and prevail with Ahab to believe he should prosper in this war, wherein God intended he should be destroyed. For the prophets had observed how prosperous Ahab had been in former wars with the king of Syria, which made them forward to promise the same success in this also; and Ahab was as forward to believe it as they were to assure it.

Ver. 23. *The Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets.* They were properly Ahab's prophets, not the Lord's; who only employed them to mislead him.

Hath spoken evil concerning thee.] The Lord had decreed he should perish in this war; and in order to it, stirred up the spirit of the prophets (as Abarbanel speaks) to prophesy according to their own inclination; and him to believe them, and rush into his own ruin.

Ver. 24. *Zedekiah—went near.*] He seems to be the chief of Ahab's prophets: the head, perhaps, of the whole college.

Smote Micaiah on the cheek.] By way of reproach and scorn, Jer. xx. 2. Mark. xiv. 45, and other places.

Which way went the Spirit of the Lord from me to speak unto thee?] He was confident he had the Spirit, and could not imagine how it should depart from him and enter into Micaiah, bidding him contradict all that he and his brethren had prophesied.

Ver. 25. *Into an inner chamber*] Into a secret place (xx. 30).

To hide thyself.] For fear he should be seized and punished as a false prophet, and the cause of Ahab's death.

27 And say, Thus saith the king, Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace.

28 And Micaiah said, if thou return at all in peace, the LORD hath not spoken by me. And he said, Hearken, O people, every one of you.

29 So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth-gilead.

30 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and enter into the battle; but put thou on thy robes. And the king of Israel disguised himself, and went into the battle.

31 But the king of Syria commanded his thirty and two captains that had rule over his chariots, saying, Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel.

32 And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, Surely it is the king of Israel. And they turned aside to fight against him: and Jehoshaphat cried out.

Ver. 26.] It seems he was in custody when he was sent for by the messenger to come to Ahab.

Ver. 27. *Put this fellow in the prison.*] He ordered him, I suppose, to be kept a closer prisoner than before.

Feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace.] He would not have him starved, but fed with coarse bread and bad water, till he came home and brought victory along with him; and then perhaps he intended to put him to death.

Ver. 28.] He desires all the people to mark, and be witnesses of what he said; and take this for a sign whether he was a true prophet or not.

Ver. 29.] Notwithstanding the long declaration Micaiah had made of God's decree (which was altogether concerning Ahab), Jehoshaphat gave some credit to the other prophets, who spake in the name of the Lord as well as he (see upon ver. 7).

Ver. 30. *I will disguise myself.*] Like a private man.

But put thou on thy robes.] Appear like a king.

The king of Israel disguised himself.] He knew they would aim most at him, as the author of this war, and therefore he would not be known; but gives Jehoshaphat the honour (as he pretended) of leading the army, and appearing as the chief commander of it. But this seems a very odd compliment, to pray him to expose himself to the danger which he shunned. Therefore others render it, "Put on these robes?" (which he then offered him); after my example, lay thy cloak, the garment of a chief commander, aside, and put on these robes. For he brought a double change of raiment into the field, that neither of them might be known by their clothes.

Ver. 31. *The king of Syria commanded his thirty and two captains*] Which were divided, it is likely, into so many distinct bodies.

Fight neither with small nor great.] With common soldier, or officer, belonging to Jehoshaphat.

Save only with the king of Israel.] Whom he looked upon (as I said) as the sole author of the war into which he had drawn Jehoshaphat.

Ver. 32. *Surely it is the king of Israel.*] Which shows that whatsoever his robes were, he looked like more than a common man.

Jehoshaphat cried out.] Unto the Lord for help,

33 And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it *was* not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him.

34 And a *certain* man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness : wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thy hand, and carry me out of the host ; for I am wounded.

35 And the battle increased that day : and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and died at even : and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot.

36 And there went a proclamation throughout the host about the going down of the sun, saying, Every man to his city, and every man to his own country.

37 ¶ So the king died, and was brought to Samaria ; and they buried the king in Samaria.

38 And *one* washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria ; and the dogs licked up his blood ; and they washed his armour ; according unto the word of the LORD which he spake.

39 Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, and all that he did, and the ivory house which he made, and all the cities that he built, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel ?

who delivered him, and moved them to depart from him, as we read in 2 Chron. xviii. 31.

Ver 33. *When the captains of the chariots perceived that it was not the king of Israel,*] By calling upon the Lord for help ; or perhaps some of them knew him.

They turned back from pursuing him.] Which was to be ascribed to the secret providence of God, as Ezra tells us in the place above named ; who resolved as wonderfully to preserve Jehoshaphat as to destroy Ahab.

Ver 34. *A certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness :*] The Lord, no doubt, directing the arrow to that part, where it should penetrate into his vital parts. The LXX. "into his breast through his lungs ;" for it entered between his upper and lower armour.

Turn thy hand—for I am wounded.] He bade him drive to some place where he might look after his wound, which was very painful to him.

Ver 35. *The king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and died at even.*] There was a sharp fight after this : inasmuch that the king, for fear his soldiers should run away, would return into the field, notwithstanding his wounds, and be supported in his chariot to encourage his army, till the even parted them, and then he died.

The blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot.] It could not be stanch'd by any means they could use, but ran out of his body into his chariot.

Ver 36.] I suppose Jehoshaphat ordered a retreat to be sound'd ; and the Syrians, it is likely, were content to be gone, having slain their capital enemy. By this proclamation the prediction of Micaiah was exactly fulfilled, according to his vision (ver. 17).

Ver 38.] The dogs licked up the blood, which was mixed with the water wherewith his chariot and armour were washed : the LXX. add the word *swine*, as if *swine* as well as dogs had licked it up. But as there is no such word in the Hebrew, so neither is it in the Chaldee, Arabic, or Syriac ; no, nor in the Latin translation. And it is very absurd ; swine being not commonly kept in this country.

40 So Ahab slept with his fathers ; and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead.

41 ¶ And Jehoshaphat the son of Asa began to reign over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel.

42 Jehoshaphat *was* thirty and five years old when he began to reign ; and he reigned twenty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Azubah the daughter of Shillai.

43 And he walked in all the ways of Asa his father ; he turned not aside from it, doing *that which was right* in the eyes of the LORD : nevertheless the high places were not taken away ; for the people offered and burnt incense yet in the high places.

44 And Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel.

45 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, and his might that he shewed, and how he warred, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah ?

46 And the remnant of the Sodomites, which remained in the days of his father Asa, he took out of the land.

47 *There was* then no king in Edom : a deputy *was* king.

48 Jehoshaphat made ships of Tharshish to go

Ver. 39.] It appears by this short history, that he had several noble qualities in him, and would have been a great man, if he had not been incurably addicted to idolatry. But it is not to be imagined that the house here mentioned was built of ivory ; but only inlaid with it.

Ver. 40.] See ver. 51.

Ver. 42.] The intention of the divine writer of this book was, as Abarbinel observes, principally, and in the first place, to give us the history of the kings of the house of David, with which he begins, and then joins to it the history of the kings of Israel. Thus having finished the history of Asa king of Judah, he recounts the affairs of Israel under Ahab ; who being dead, he returns to the history of the kings of Judah, who were the chief objects of his history.

Ver. 43.] This error was so deeply rooted, that the best of their kings, till Hezekiah's time (as I noted before), connived at it : and a great man of ours thinks, the prophets accidentally gave countenance to it : who had this power, that if they dispensed with any positive precept of the law, that precept was to cease for a time. Nor can any other reason be given of the toleration of high places before the temple was built, and after that of Elijah's sacrificing upon mount Carmel, and the forbearance of circumcision in the wilderness (see Mr. Thorndike's Review of the Rites of the Church, p. 107).

Ver. 44.] He did not take advantage, which Ahab's death gave him, to seize upon the kingdom of Israel, and take it from his son.

Ver. 45.] See xi. 41.

Ver. 46.] He made a narrower search after them than his father had done, who is said to have removed them ; but some remained without his knowledge (xv. 12).

Ver. 47.] The king of Judah deputed one to govern the Edomites, who was the viceroy (as we now speak) of the king of Judah. This continued from the days of David, who began this dominion over them (2 Sam. viii. 14), unto those of Jehoshaphat ; whose son lost this authority (2 Kings viii. 21).

to Ophir for gold: but they went not; for the ships were broken at Ezion-geber.

49 Then said Ahaziah the son of Ahab unto Jehoshaphat, Let my servants go with thy servants in the ships. But Jehoshaphat would not.

50 ¶ And Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: and Jehoram his son reigned in his stead.

51 ¶ Ahaziah the son of Ahab began to reign

over Israel in Samaria the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah and reigned two years over Israel.

52 And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of his father, and in the way of his mother, and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin:

53 For he served Baal, and worshipped him, and provoked to anger the Lord God of Israel, according to all that his father had done.

Ver. 48. *Jehoshaphat made ships of Tharshish*] These ships were not to go to Tharshish, but to Ophir. But they are called "ships of Tharshish" from their form: for they were made after the mould of those ships which traded to that place. And all such ships, wheresoever they were built, were called "ships of Tharshish." Thus Abarbanel. Which seems not to agree with 2 Chron. xx. 36, 37 (see there).

[*For the ships were broken*] Before they sailed.

Ver. 49.] He had contracted an amity with this king, and engaged himself so far as to let him join with him in this navy (2 Chron. xx. 35, &c.); but being better instructed by his ill success, and by the reproof of a prophet, he would not continue this league with him.

Ver. 51. *Ahaziah—began to reign over Israel in Samaria the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat*] This seems not to agree with the account we have before, that Jehoshaphat began his reign in the fourth year of Ahab, and Ahab reigned two-and-twenty years. Now if we take four from twenty and two, there remain eighteen; and so Ahaziah began to reign in that year, not the seventeenth of Jehoshaphat. But this is easily and truly solved; for the years which the

kings of Israel reigned are taken from the years of the kings of the house of David; so that if any one reigned in the latter end of the reign of a king of the house of David, and the beginning of the following year, he is said to have reigned two years. An instance of which is in the very next words of this verse.

Reigned two years] Not complete, as appears from 2 Kings iii. 1. but part of two years: for Ahaziah died before his second year was ended.

Ver. 52. *In the way of his mother,*] Who was still alive, to keep him in his idolatry.

In the way of Jeroboam] He was in nothing amended, by all that had befallen his father, and the family of Jeroboam.

Ver. 53. *He served Baal, and worshipped him,*] Which worship had been introduced by his mother Jezebel: beyond the impiety of Jeroboam.

Provoked to anger the Lord God of Israel, according to all that his father had done.] Taking no warning by the hand of God against his father which was very remarkable; nor believing the dreadful threatenings of Elijah against his mother, and their whole family.

THE

SECOND BOOK OF THE KINGS.

COMMONLY CALLED THE FOURTH BOOK OF THE KINGS.

CHAPTER I.

1 Moab rebelleth. 2 Ahaziah, sending to Baal-zebub, hath his judgment by Elijah. 5 Elijah twice bringeth fire from heaven upon them whom Ahaziah sent to apprehend him. 13 He pitieth the third captain, and, encouraged by an angel, telleth the king of his death. 17 Jehoram succeedeth Ahaziah.

1 THEN Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab.

2 And Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber that was in Samaria, and was

CHAPTER I.

Ver. 1.] They paid them no more tribute, but utterly disclaimed their authority over them; which they had owned ever since the days of David (2 Sam. xiii. 2). Whereas Edom (which, it seems, in the division of the kingdom, fell to Judah, as Moab did to Israel) continued still under the dominion of the king of Judah (1 Kings xxii. 47).

Ver. 2. *Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber*] By this lattice, the Jews understand some net-work that was in the dining-room; which being decayed, and he leaning upon it, it fell down, and he together with it.

And was sick:] Was bruised, and, perhaps, fell into a fever.

Go inquire of Baal-zebub] Many think this god was called Baal-semin, the Lord of heaven; whom

sick : and he sent messengers, and said unto them, Go, inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron whether I shall recover of this disease.

3 But the angel of the Lord said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say unto them, *Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron?*

4 Now therefore thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. And Elijah departed.

5 ¶ And when the messengers turned back unto him, he said unto them, Why are ye now turned back?

6 And they said unto him, There came a man up to meet us, and said unto us, Go, turn again unto the king that sent you, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord, *Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that thou sendest to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron?* therefore thou

the Jews, by way of contempt, called Baal-zebub; i. e. the lord of a fly, as a god that was nothing worth; or rather, because his temple was full of flies; whereas the temple at Jerusalem, though so many sacrifices were offered there daily, never had a fly in it; as the Jews relate in Pirke Avoth. But it is not likely, the king of Israel would have called this god, for whom he had a great reverence, by a contemptible name; which signifies, therefore, no more than *Μυρῶδες μύριονος, ἀπύριος*, among the Greeks; which were the titles of Jupiter and Hercules; because they were thought to free their countries from flies, with which the Ekronites were pestered, lying in a moist and hot soil, near to the ocean. Theodoret, Procopius, and others, think they worshipped this god in the image of a fly; but the latter of them doubts whether it was the name of a demon, or of an old woman canonized for a goddess. And after all, Mr. Selden, thinks the reason of this name cannot be found. But the most probable conjecture is, that he was so called from the cure of a contagious disease. For Pliny tells us, that there being a great pestilence in Africa, which was brought among them by a multitude of flies, it was extinguished by the killing of them all after they had sacrificed to the god Achore. He should have said, the god worshipped at Ekron; from whence that word Achore plainly came (lib. x. Nat. Hist. cap. 27). And if this was the original of the name, it is no wonder that Ahaziah sent to inquire of him about his sickness, since he was thought so powerful as to cure the pestilence.

Ver. 3.] There are two negatives in the Hebrew text which increase the sense, *Is it not because there is no God, none in Israel?* That is, do you not plainly declare, that you think there is no God, none at all, in Israel? that he knows nothing nor can do any thing? Which makes you send to Ekron, as if there was a more knowing and mighty, if not the only, God there.

Ver. 4.] Unto mount Carmel, it is very probable: for he was presently after this sitting on the top of a hill (ver. 9).

Ver. 5.] He knew by their speedy return, that they had not executed his command, and asked the reason.

Ver. 6.] Elijah was a man of such a venerable presence, and spake to them with such authority, in the name of the Lord, that they were overawed thereby to obey him, rather than the king.

shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.

7 And he said unto them, What manner of man was he which came up to meet you, and told you these words?

8 And they answered him, *He was a hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins.* And he said, *It is Elijah the Tishbite.*

9 Then the king sent unto him a captain of fifty with his fifty. And he went up to him: and, behold, he sat on the top of a hill. And he spake unto him, Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down.

10 And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, *If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty.* And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.

11 Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty with his fifty. And he answered and said unto him, O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly.

Ver. 7.] He was not so angry at them for not obeying him, as desirous to know who he was that was so presumptuous as to stop their journey.

Ver. 8.] Some think he is said to be "a hairy man," because he had long hair on his head and his beard, like the Greek philosophers: but it is more probable, it was because he was clad with a hairy garment, which the prophets were wont to use (Isa. xx. 2. Zech. xiii. 4. Matt. iii. 4). And, indeed, the leathern girdle shows what kind of garment he wore (see Dr. Hammond, upon the place last mentioned, annot. d). This was the simplest and most ancient garment; and therefore the old heroes are said to have been clothed in the skins of lions, or tigers, or bears, &c. And, perhaps, by this rude habit the prophets expressed their great grief for the sad condition the Israelites were in, when they came to call them to repentance.

Ver. 9. *He went up to him:*] Not to the place where he was, but so near that he might hear him deliver his message.

Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down.] Sent him with an order, to command him to come down to him. But the prophet thought he did but mock him, when he called him a man of God, as appears by the punishment he inflicted on him. For it is as if he had said, Thou that callest thyself a man of God, come down, or I will fetch thee. He would not be at the pains to go to the top of the hill; but thought it sufficient to require him, in the king's name, to come down, and surrender himself into his hands.

Ver. 10.] If I be a man of God, as thou sayest, but dost not think, then I am not bound to obey the king, but God (as Abarbanel glosses upon these words), nor am I subject to his power, but unto God's; who will make thee know that he judges in the earth. And immediately he and his men were consumed with lightning, according to Elijah's word. Who chose to destroy them by fire from heaven (as he goes on), because he had at mount Carmel called for fire to consume the sacrifice. Which miracle they slighting, and coming now in a proud manner to carry him by force to Samaria (where he knew Jezebel would put him to death), he called for fire to consume them.

Ver. 11.] This man was more insolent than the former, charging the prophet to obey without delay, and not to make him stay; or think to dally with him. And, by the following words, it appears, this was the voice of the whole company.

12 And Elijah answered and said unto them, If I be a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And the fire of God came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty.

13 ¶ And he sent again a captain of the third fifty with his fifty. And the third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and besought him, and said unto him, O man of God, I pray thee, let my life, and the life of these fifty thy servants, be precious in thy sight.

14 Behold there came fire down from heaven, and burnt up the two captains of the former fifties with their fifties : therefore let my life now be precious in thy sight.

15 And the angel of the LORD said unto Elijah, Go down with him : be not afraid of

Ver. 12.] He knew that evil was determined against him by Ahaziah, and therefore defended himself, in this manner, from his cruelty ; that he might be afraid to meddle with him, when, he saw the divine vengeance so terrible against those that came to apprehend him.

Ver. 13.] He humbly entreated him, on his bended knees, to spare his life, and the lives of those that accompanied him, who did not come willingly, much less of their own accord ; but were commanded by their lord and master to make known his pleasure to him.

Ver. 14.] He was sensible of the hand of God against those that came with such a command before, and acknowledges he was at Elijah's mercy ; but hoped he would take compassion upon him, since he owned him really to be a man of God, and believed his power ; as appeared by his falling down most reverently before him, and beseeching his pity and calling those with him *his servants*.

Ver. 15. This is a great instance of the prophet's faith and obedience to God ; who he trusted would protect him from the wrath of the king, and the malice of Jezebel. Of whom he had great reason to be afraid, having ordered the prophets of Baal to be slain, and now sent the king an unwelcome message, and done terrible execution upon two of his captains and their companies. The first of which made him fly the country (1 Kings xix. 3), Jezebel threatening his destruction ; and had constrained him to conceal himself for a long time, and not come to Samaria : which was the reason, as Abarbinel observes, that we hear nothing of him in the war of Ben-hadad against Israel (1 Kings xx.), nor in the war of Ahab against Ben-hadad (ch. xxii.). But now, having a command from God for it, as he had in the case of Naboth, he boldly

him. And he arose and went down with him unto the king.

16 And he said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast sent messengers to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron, *is it not because there is no God in Israel to inquire of his word ?* therefore thou shalt not come down off that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.

17 ¶ So he died according to the word of the LORD which Elijah had spoken. And Jehoram reigned in his stead in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah ; because he had no son.

18 Now the rest of the acts of Ahaziah which he did, *are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel ?*

goes to the king, and confirms with his own mouth that ungrateful truth, which he had already told him by his messengers.

Ver. 16.] There was more discourse passed between them, no doubt, than this : but this was the conclusion of all, that the sentence which God had pronounced against him was irreversible ; and therefore he should not think of living much longer, but make use of the time remaining to repent of his sins.

Ver. 17. *So he died*] It is likely he told him the very day when he should die.

Jehoram reigned in his stead—because he had no son.] Therefore this brother of his succeeded him. Who began to govern in this second year of Jehoshaphat's son ; but was king before (iii. 1), only very young, and, as some of the Jews think, under the care of Jehoshaphat. But Kimchi seems to have better reconciled this seeming difference, That Jehoshaphat declared his son Jehoram king while he lived, and he reigned with him seven years. The occasion of which is intimated in 2 Chron. xx. 3, "He gave the kingdom to Jehoram, because he was the first-born," and gave gifts to the rest of his sons. Who being many, began to strive about the succession to the kingdom ; which belonging to the first-born, Jehoshaphat, to quiet them all, declared Jehoram king together with himself, and he reigned with him seven years. When it is said therefore that Ahab's Jehoram reigned in the second year of Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram, the meaning is, the second year that he reigned with his father Jehoshaphat who was then living.

Ver. 18.] They were but few, because he reigned a very short time ; but yet, according to custom, they were recorded in a public register. Of which, see on 1 Kings xi. 41.

CHAPTER II.

1 *Elijah, taking his leave of Elisha, with his mantle divideth Jordan, 9 and, granting Elisha his request, is taken up by a fiery chariot into heaven. 12 Elisha, dividing Jordan with Elijah's mantle, is acknowledged his successor. 16 The young prophets, hardly obtaining leave to seek Elijah, could not find him. 19 Elisha with salt healeth the unwholesome waters. 23 Bears destroy the children that mocked Elisha.*

1 AND it came to pass, when the LORD would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.

CHAP. II.

Ver. 1. *By a whirlwind.*] By a mighty sound of wind which the angels raised, who came to fetch him :

2 And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee ; for the LORD hath sent me to Beth-el. And Elisha said unto him, As the LORD liveth,

of which translation he himself had some notice, by the spirit of prophecy.

That Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.] Unto

and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Beth-el.

3 And the sons of the prophets that were at Beth-el came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.

4 And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the Lord hath sent me to Jericho. And he said, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho.

5 And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy

this place he retired before his assumption to heaven, it having been (as Abarbinel discourses) a place of great holiness; where the Israelites made their first encampment, after they entered the land of Canaan; and where Joshua had set up twelve stones, taken out of Jordan, in memory of their miraculous passage over that river. Here also Joshua circumcised the Israelites, and kept the first passover, and set up the tabernacle, and the ark of the covenant, which remained here a long time.

Ver. 2. *The Lord hath sent me to Beth-el.*] Another place in ancient time very holy, God appearing here to Jacob more than once (Gen. xxviii. 19, xxxv. 6, 9). This Elijah said to try Elisha; for he did not intend to conceal his assumption into heaven, and to have no witnesses of it. His humility indeed was great, but it was not fit to obscure the glory of God, which herein miraculously appeared.

As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.] They were not wont anciently to swear by the name of God (out of the reverence they bare to him), but by some lesser thing which depended on it; as Joseph did by the life of Pharaoh; that is, as true as that Pharaoh lives. And Elisha puts both heretogther, "as sure as God liveth, and thou livest." I will not leave thee (see Grotius, De Jure Belli et Pacis, lib. ii. cap. 13. n. 2).

Ver. 3. *The sons of the prophets that were at Beth-el.*] In these very corrupt times, and in that place where the golden calves were worshipped, God did not wholly forsake the Israelites; but continued the schools of the prophets among them. For by the "sons of the prophets" are meant the scholars of the prophets, whom they educated, and trained up in religion and piety; and God, by degrees, bestowed on some of them the spirit of prophecy. This was a great testimony of God's love to an apostate people; among whom he left prophets to recover them from their idolatry. For even in the chief place of impiety (which was Beth-el) they were not wanting. And it is still more remarkable, that prophets of greater excellency for their miracles were continued in Israel than were in Judah; because they needed them more, to turn their hard hearts from the worship of idols; and to support the pious persons that remained among them, and preserve them from deserting their religion. For it seems to me very probable, that these *sons of the prophets* were such ministers to the prophets, as the evangelists were to the apostles: whom the prophets sent to publish their prophecies and instructions to the people, where they could not go themselves. And perhaps they taught them the law of God, and explained it to them; of which there was great need in those idolatrous times.

Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to-day?] It was revealed to some of

master from thy head to day? And he answered, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.

6 And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the Lord hath sent me to Jordan. And he said, As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on.

7 And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view afar off: and they two stood by Jordan.

8 And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground.

9 ¶ And it came to pass, when they were

them by God, and they told it to the rest of the company of the prophets. Who allude to their manner of sitting in their school, when they say God would "take away Elijah from his head:" that is, deprive him of his instructions. For, it is well-known, that the scholars sat below at their master's feet, and the master above over their head, when they taught them.

Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.] Say no more of it: I would not be disturbed with the thoughts of it. Or, let not my master know that I understand it.

Ver. 4. *Tarry here, I pray thee;*] He doth not lay his commands upon him (as he did unto a former servant, 1 Kings, xix. 3), but only entreats him, and in a more tender manner than he did before, to accompany him no further.

For the Lord hath sent me to Jericho.] Another remarkable place, as Abarbinel observes, to which he went: that, as Moses, when he turned his face towards this place (Deut. xxxiv. 1), departed this life; so this should be the last place wherein Elijah would remain, before he left the world. A place also famous for many miracles done there.

I will not leave thee.] He hoped for some great blessing from him, when he was carried up to heaven; and therefore continued firm in his resolution, to attend that wonderful change.

Ver. 5.] Here was another school, where the same holy Spirit revealed the mind of God to them; as it had done at Beth-el. And it is a probable opinion of Kinchi, who affirms there were the like schools in other cities of Israel.

Ver. 6. *Jordan.*] Another place where God had wrought great wonders. Not far from which, as Kinchi notes, the great prophet Moses died; and therefore God intended to translate Elijah near to this place.

They two went on.] From Jericho to the river Jordan.

Ver. 7.] *And fifty men—stood to view afar off:*] They were confident the time of his assumption drew near, and were very desirous, if it were possible, to see the manner of it: but were not admitted to accompany him to the place, where he was taken up to heaven, as Elisha did; for they took this view at Jericho (ver. 15).

They two stood by Jordan.] The rest being forbidden, I suppose, to go thither with him.

Ver. 8. *And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together;*] This mantle of his is mentioned five times in these books; thrice in this chapter, and twice in 1 Kings xix. 13. 19. In all which places it is called *adareth*: which is a word signifying a royal robe, as well as a prophetic (Jonah iii. 6). The LXX. in all the five places now mentioned, translate it *μυρωτήριον*, which properly signifies the prophetic mantle

gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.

10 And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: *nevertheless*, if thou see me *when I am taken* from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so.

11 And it came to pass as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, *there appeared* a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

12 And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces.

13 And he took also the mantle of Elijah that

to be made of lamb-skin: being an upper garment thrown over the shoulders, and some think coming down to the heels.

And smote the waters, and they were divided] God made a dry path in the middle of the river, whose waters stood on each side of it.

Ver. 9.] They are much mistaken, who imagine he begged as much more of the Spirit as Elijah had; for that had been very arrogant. He only desired to have such a portion of it, as the first-born in a family had of his father's estate. That is, as much more of his spirit, as any of the rest of the sons of the prophets: for the portion of the first-born was double to that of the rest of the children. In short, he did not desire to excel his master, but his school-fellows (see P. Fagius upon Deut. xxi. 17).

Ver. 10. *Thou hast asked a hard thing*:] Such gifts were rarely bestowed.

If thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee:] Mark, this is a sign whether thou shalt have what thou desirest or not.

Ver. 11. *As they still went on, and talked*,] Of the happy state, it is likely, to which Elijah was going.

There appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder:] Angels appeared before them, in the form of a bright chariot and horses, running towards them upon the ground; which coming between them, separated them one from the other. For Elijah mounted the chariot, and in a great gust of wind governed by angels, was transported into heaven. That is, saith Abarinel, into the air: for he being a stranger to Christianity, could not conceive how an earthly body could live among the celestial inhabitants; and therefore, according to the gross imaginations of the Jews, imagines he is still upon the earth, in the garden of Eden. But these are ignorant conceits. The plain sense is, that his body being transformed in his passage towards heaven, he was carried up to live among the angels.

The heathens themselves did not disbelieve such things: as appears by the story of Æganympa, who was made immortal by Jupiter; and of Driope by the Hamadryades: and Bacchus assured Cadmus, that by the help of Mars he should live for ever in the isles of the blessed, whither they said Alcumene was snatched up by Mercury, at the command of Jupiter, &c. (see Dan. Huetius in his Alnetanæ Questions, lib. ii. cap. 12. n. 30).

Ver. 12. *My father, my father*,] So they called their masters and instructors.

The chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof,]

fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan;

14 And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the Lord God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over.

15 And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.

16 ¶ And they said unto him, Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master: lest peradventure the Spirit of the Lord hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley. And he said, Ye shall not send.

17 And when they urged him till he was

And he alludes to what he beheld; and very fitly compared Elijah to chariot and horsemen, which the Israelites wanted in their armies: but he was instead of them by his counsels and prayers; whereby they might have obtained great victories, if they would have been obedient to his word.

He took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces,] To express his sorrow for so great a loss.

Ver. 13. *He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him*,] This dropped from him as he went up to heaven: in token of the spirit that should be given to Elisha, according to his promise.

And stood by the bank of Jordan,] Whose waters were come together again, after he and Elijah got over.

Ver. 14. *Where is the Lord God of Elijah?*] That is, let him show his presence with me, and his power, as he did with Elijah. But we do not translate these last words exactly, two words being left out, viz. *aph-hu*, which the LXX. put into one, *αφφω*, of which I know not the sense. And the Chaldee translates it, *receive my petition*; without any reason; those words carrying in them nothing of that signification. The best account of them is that which I meet with in a short dissertation by Joh. Frischmuthus, De Orig. et Prosapia Eliæ, where he observes, that Elisha having asked this question, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" answers himself in these words, *Aph-hu*, etiam ille adhuc superest; "yea, he is yet in being." Thus Abarinel expresses the sense: "Though Elijah be not here, yet his God is." The servant is wanting, but not the Lord. The blessed God is still present, and will supply his place.

Elisha went over,] Just as Elijah had done a little before (ver. 8).

Ver. 15.] In token of their reverence to him, as the father of the prophets.

Ver. 16. *There are with us fifty strong men*,] Fit to undertake such an expedition as they propose.

Let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master,:] They had but an imperfect notice of what God intended, when they asked Elisha if he knew the Lord would take his master from him. For they imagined he might not be quite taken away; but only for a time: or, that if his spirit were taken into heaven, his body might possibly be thrown upon some of the neighbouring mountains or valleys.

Ye shall not send,] For he knew it would be to no purpose.

Ver. 17. *When they urged him—he said, Send*,] He was afraid they should think he wanted love to his

ashamed, he said, Send. They sent therefore fifty men; and they sought three days, but found him not.

18 And when they came again to him, (for he tarried at Jericho,) he said unto him, Did I not say unto you, Go not?

19 ¶ And the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water is naught, and the ground barren.

20 And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought it to him.

21 And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters;

master; or, was so ambitious to enjoy his place and authority, that he was loath he should be found alive.

They sought three days.] In that time they searched every place where they thought it likely he might be cast.

Ver. 18.] By this he settled his authority, in that he foretold them their labour would be lost.

Ver. 19.] Things did not thrive in that soil, but the people and the cattle miscarried, and the fruit fell from off the trees, as the margin translates it. Which curse, Abarbinel thinks, had been upon this place ever since the time of Joshua.

Ver. 20.] He would have a new cruse, that had never been used; and brought by them, together with the salt, that there might be no suspicion of fraud (as Abarbinel observes), nor the virtue ascribed to any thing that was in the cruse before, but merely to the power of God. The Jews also in Michilta say, that his putting salt into it made this a miracle in a miracle; for it makes water less potable, and ground more barren.

Ver. 21.] He wrought the miracle at Jordan, as the forenamed author observes, for his own sake; that he might make an experiment whether the divine influence which was upon Elijah was derived unto him. But this at Jericho he wrought for the sake of the sons of the prophets who dwelt there; that they might know the hand of the Lord was with him.

Ver. 22.] By this the people of the city (who besought this favour from him, ver. 19) saw that he was a man of God, to whom they owed obedience.

Ver. 23. *He went up from thence unto Beth-el:*] That he might visit the sons of the prophets who were in that city, and comfort them for the loss of Elijah, by letting them see the Spirit of God was upon him. It is very properly said he *went up* thither, because it stood upon a hill, and there was an ascent from Jericho thither (Josh. viii. 3. 17); though Elijah and he, going another way, are said to go down to Beth-el (ver. 2).

There came forth little children out of the city.] The word *naarim* signifies "grown youth," as well as little children; for Isaac, when he was twenty-eight years old, is called *naar* (Gen. xxii. 5. 12), and Joseph, when he was thirty (xii. 12), and Rehoboam, when he was forty (2 Chron. xiii. 7). And this is to be understood here of adult persons, who had a hatred to the prophet.

And mocked him.] By the instigation of their pa-

thers shall not be from thence any more death or barren land.

22 So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake.

23 ¶ And he went up from thence unto Beth-el: and as he was going up by the way, there came forth little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head.

24 And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them.

25 And he went from thence to mount Carmel, and from thence he returned to Samaria.

rents, or of Baal's priests (as they will have it who take them for mere children), who stirred them up, and taught them to jeer at his bald pate, and so laughed at the ascension of Elijah.

Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head.] Their repetition of these words expresses their earnestness and vehemence in their contempt of him. For, as hair was always accounted a singular ornament, so baldness was disgraceful; inasmuch that Cæsar, as Bochartus hath observed, could not bear with those who jeered him upon this account, and thought it the highest honour the senate did him, in decreeing he should always appear with a wreath of laurel upon his head.

When they call upon Elisha to *go up*, they flouted, as Abarbinel thinks, at the ascension of Elijah to heaven; the news of which had been brought thither, and reported by the prophets of that place. Which the idolaters laughed at, and bade Elisha go up to heaven also, that they might not be troubled with him. Thus I find also the author of the questions and answers, ad Orthodoxos, understands these words: which were spoken, *πρὸς διασυρμὸν τῆς τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ἀναστρέφουσ*, "to reproach the assumption of Elijah:" as if they had said, *λαμβάνετω καὶ σε πνεῦμα*, "Let the Spirit take thee also," and cast thee upon some inaccessible mountain, that we may be rid of thee, as we are of him (Respons. 80).

Ver. 21. *And cursed them*] This contempt of him, not as a man merely, but as a prophet, provoked the anger of God; who moved Elisha to lay a curse upon them, and punish them, as Moses did Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; and St. Peter did Ananias and Sapphira.

There came forth two she bears out of the wood,] Who it is likely had been robbed of their whelps: which made them the more fierce and outrageous.

And tare forty and two children] This was done by an extraordinary direction of God; who moved the bears at that moment to come out of the wood, when Elisha pronounced the curse; and to make such a great havoc among them, when two or three would have satisfied their hunger.

Ver. 25. *He went from thence to mount Carmel,*] Where it is probable he had many disciples, among whom he intended to be awhile retired.

He returned to Samaria.] To testify against their idolatry. And it is highly probable there was a college of prophets even in Samaria, as there was in Beth-el and Jericho, whom he went to encourage.

CHAPTER III.

1 *Jehoram's reign. 4 Mesha rebelleth, 6 Jehoram, with Jehoshaphat, and the king of Edom, being distressed for want of water, by Elisha obtaineth water, and promise of victory. 21 The Moabites, deceived by the colour of the water, coming to spoil, are overcome. 26 The king of Moab, by sacrificing the king of Edom's son, raiseth the siege.*

1 Now Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned twelve years.

3 And he wrought evil in the sight of the LORD; but not like his father, and like his mother; for he put away the image of Baal that his father had made.

3 Nevertheless he cleaved unto the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom.

4 ¶ And Mesha king of Moab was a sheepmaster, and rendered unto the king of Israel a

hundred thousand lambs, and a hundred thousand rams, with the wool.

5 But it came to pass, when Ahab was dead, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel.

6 ¶ And king Jehoram went out of Samaria the same time, and numbered all Israel.

7 And he went and sent to Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, saying, The king of Moab hath rebelled against me: wilt thou go with me against Moab to battle? And he said, I will go up: I am as thou art, my people as thy people, and my horses as thy horses.

CHAP. III.

Ver. 1.] Ahaziah his brother reigned two years, and began his reign in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat (1 Kings xxii. 51): that is, part of the seventeenth year and part of the eighteenth, which was accounted for two years. In the latter end of which Jehoram his brother began to reign: when Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, had two years reigned with his father (see i. 17).

Ver. 2.] He did not break it in pieces, as he would have done if he had heartily hated it, but only put it away out of the temple; being afraid lest the judgments of God should fall upon him, as they had done upon his father. And the king of Moab being now in rebellion against him, Jehoshaphat perhaps refused to help him whilst he was a worshipper of Baal. It is much that his mother, who had brought this worship with her from the Zidonians, should suffer him to remove this image; but she was a little daunted, perhaps, at the many disasters which had befallen their family, and was contented with worshipping Baal in private.

Ver. 3.] It was easier to remove the image of Baal than to put away the calves; for that was new, but the other had been of long standing; and the most likely course they could think of to maintain the division of the two kingdoms.

Ver. 4. *Mesha king of Moab was a sheepmaster.*] The riches not only of private men, but also of kings, in ancient time, consisted much in sheep and cattle; which, I have observed before, they looked after themselves, and their sons kept their sheep, as Bochartus shows in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 44. And thus the greatest part of the world lived, during the space of near four thousand years. Which did not hinder them from being, at the same time, a brave and warlike people, as appears by the ancient Romans, who were thus bred, and subdued all Italy, and at last made themselves masters of the world. For this sort of life was the cause of their great strength, making their bodies robust, and hardened to labour, and accustomed to a severe discipline. There cannot be a greater instance of this than we have in Cato the Censor, who passed through all the great offices of the republic of Rome, had governed provinces, commanded armies, was a great orator, lawyer, and politician; who did not disdain to write a treatise concerning all the ways that are necessary

for the improving lands, and how stables and houses were to be built for several sorts of cattle, and how presses were to be made for wine and oil, &c.; insomuch that any one may see he was perfectly acquainted with country business, and that he did not write for ostentation, but for the use and service of mankind.

And rendered unto the king of Israel a hundred thousand lambs, and a hundred thousand rams.] This was a prodigious number, and being rendered unshorn, made them more valuable. But we are to consider that these countries abounded with sheep; insomuch that Solomon offered a hundred and twenty thousand at the dedication of the temple (2 Chron. vii. 5), and the Reubenites drove from the Hagarites a hundred and fifty thousand (1 Chron. v. 21). For they frequently brought forth two at a time, and sometimes twice a year, as that great man Bochartus shows in the same book, cap. 46, and produces a famous place in Pliny, which shows that this was the most ancient tribute. For he saith in the Censorian Tables, all the rents of the people are called pastures, "quia diu hoc solum vectigal fuerat" (lib. xviii. Nat. Hist. cap. 3). But Ludolphus hath observed two things for the illustrating this history of the king of Moab, which seem to be very considerable. First, that this was not annual tribute, but satisfaction for damages which the Israelites had sustained in the war with them, or by their revolt from them, as the LXX. understand it. And then the word *ajil* should not be translated a ram, but a *wether*; for one ram will serve a great many sheep (lib. i. Comment. in Histor. Æthiop. cap. 3. n. 30).

Ver. 5.] As was said before, ch. i. 1, and here again repeated, only to introduce the following history.

Ver. 6.] As soon as he was settled in his kingdom, his first business was to raise an army to reduce Moab to obedience.

Ver. 7. *He went*] After his army was raised, he went out of Samaria.

He said, I will go up:] He returned the very same answer to him which he had given to Ahab his father, when he desired his assistance against Syria (1 Kings xxii. 4), wherein he had been so unsuccessful, that it should have made him more cautious how he joined with his son; especially since he seemed to have been afraid to have to do with his brother Ahaziah (1 Kings xxii. 49). But Jehoram having reformed some things (ver. 2), it made him, perhaps, have a better opinion

8 And he said, Which way shall we go up? And he answered, The way through the wilderness of Edom.

9 So the king of Israel went, and the king of Judah, and the king of Edom: and they fetched a compass of seven days' journey: and there was no water for the host, and for the cattle that followed them.

10 And the king of Israel said, Alas! that the Lord hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab!

11 But Jehoshaphat said, *Is there not here a prophet of the Lord, that we may inquire of the Lord by him?* And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said, Here is Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah.

12 And Jehoshaphat said, The word of the Lord is with him. So the king of Israel and

Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him.

13 And Elisha said unto the king of Israel, What have I to do with thee? get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother. And the king of Israel said unto him, Nay: for the Lord hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab.

14 And Elisha said, As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee.

15 But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him.

16 And he said, Thus saith the Lord. Make this valley full of ditches.

of him: and by showing kindness to him, he might hope to persuade him to proceed further. And besides, the Moabites had lately invaded his country (2 Chron. xx. 1. 10), which might move him to embrace an opportunity to chastise them for it.

Ver. 8. *Which way shall we go up?* Jehoshaphat having agreed to join with him, it is likely the king of Israel asked this question, and Jehoshaphat made the following answer.

The way through the wilderness of Edom.] Which he chose, because he would have the assistance of the Edomites, who were his tributaries. And it is probable Moab was but weakly fortified on that side.

Ver. 9. *King of Edom:]* There was no king at this time in Edom, as we read in the last chapter of the foregoing book (ver. 47), but a viceroy appointed by the king of Judah. Yet such are called kings, 1 Kings xx. 1 (see Grotius). And Jehoshaphat, I suppose, now required him with his people to help him in this war.

They fetched a compass of seven days' journey:] That they might come upon the backs of the Moabites, where they did not expect them.

There was no water—for the cattle that followed them.] That drew their carriages. For either there was a great drought in those parts, or they had mistaken their way.

Ver. 10.] He doth not cry to God for help, but only bewail the straits into which they were fallen; which his own guilt made him imagine God had contrived for their destruction.

Ver. 11. *Is there not here a prophet of the Lord, that we may inquire by him?* This was spoken like a pious man; but it was a fault that he did not inquire before for direction in this war; as he did in that with the Syrians (1 Kings xxii. 5).

Here is Elisha—which poured water on the hands of Elijah.] That is, was his servant, and ministered unto him.

Ver. 12. *The word of the Lord is with him.]* For no doubt he had been informed how Elijah had chosen him to be his successor; and how he attended him till he was taken up to heaven; and what wonders he had already done.

Went down to him.] It is uncertain whither they went; but it is very observable, first, how much they honoured the prophet, for whom they did not send to come to them, but went to him. And secondly, how desirous the prophet was to do good, in that he followed the camp into this wilderness. For it is not likely they went back to Samaria to wait on him

(where the story last left him, in the last verse of the foregoing chapter), which would have been a seven days' journey; and the army might in the mean time have been lost. Besides, ver. 16 shows he was not far from them; and the servant in the foregoing verse speaks of him as present; saying, *Here is Elisha.*

Ver. 13. *What have I to do with thee?* He refuses with great disdain to entertain any discourse with him; and bids him confer with those who he knew could do him no service.

Nay:] That is, I will not consult them; but do thou give us counsel how we may be brought out of this great distress. Though he refused to do anything for his sake, yet he beseeches him to have respect to the other two kings, who must perish as well as he, if he did not help them.

Ver. 14. *As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand.]* It is observable, that the sons of the prophets are said to sit before their masters the prophets when they instructed them (iv. 3. 8. and see the foregoing chapter, ver. 3), but the prophets themselves stood before the Lord, their master, when he sent them upon any message (see Corn. Bertram. De Rep. Jud. cap. 16).

Were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat—I would not look toward thee,] He saith nothing of the king of Edom, who was a dependant upon Jehoshaphat; whose piety he esteemed, and had some respect to all that belonged to him.

Ver. 15. *But now bring me a minstrel.]* One that could play well upon an instrument of music.

When the minstrel played,] Every one knows that some sort of music wonderfully quiets and composes the spirits, when they are disordered, and raises them when they are flat and heavy. And therefore holy men did not neglect such helps to make them so sedate and cheerful, that they might be fit to receive divine inspirations. But it is likely he that played now to Elisha, sung withal some hymn in the praises of God, and of his wonderful works, whereby the spirit of the prophet was sweetly composed, which had been disturbed, perhaps more than was fit, by his indignation at the king of Israel. And from hence we may conclude there were excellent musicians in Israel, as well as in Judah, where David had settled divine music in great perfection. And it is very probable, what the heathen boast of their muses, was from hence derived.

That the hand of the Lord came upon him.] That is, God wrought in him; and he felt himself moved by a divine inspiration.

17 For thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink, both ye, and your cattle, and your beasts,

18 And this is *but* a light thing in the sight of the LORD: he will deliver the Moabites also into your hand.

19 And ye shall smite every fenced city, and every choice city, and shall fell every good tree, and stop all wells of water, and mar every good piece of land with stones.

20 And it came to pass in the morning, when the meat offering was offered, that, behold, there came water by the way of Edom, and the country was filled with water.

21 ¶ And when all the Moabites heard that the kings were come up to fight against them, they gathered all that were able to put on armour, and upward, and stood in the border.

22 And they rose up early in the morning, and the sun shone upon the water, and the Moabites

Ver. 16.] This shows they were in a place where the army was encamped in a valley, in which he ordered them to be set at work, to dig large ditches to hold water enough for them all.

Ver. 17.] The words belonging to one of our senses are frequently applied to another: as to *see wind* is to feel it, or hear it. And the meaning is, there should no wind stir to blow up clouds (as the south wind commonly did), nor should they see any rain fall; and yet they should have plenty of water in that valley, for themselves and all belonging to them. I suppose it fell upon the mountains at a distance from them, and came pouring down into the lower ground.

Ver. 18.] Of which, I suppose, they had no hope, being much dispirited for want of water.

Ver. 19.] Prophets were to be obeyed, when they commanded things contrary to a positive precept, as some part of this (see Deut. xx. 19). Which they had power to dispense withal for a time, though not always, so as to annul the precept, as Maimonides expounds this matter in his preface to Seder-Zeraim. But some think this usage so severe, that they take the prophet's meaning to be no more than this: that God would give them such an entire victory, that they might be able to do all this if they pleased; and the Moabites were so ill neighbours, that it is very likely they did this execution upon them (ver. 25).

Ver. 20. *In the morning, when the meat offering was offered,*] When the people of God were praying at Jerusalem, at the time of the morning sacrifice, Elisha joined his prayers with them for this blessing.

There came water by the way of Edom,] Whether it came from a sudden collection of a vast number of clouds, which poured down rain in abundance in the land of Edom, or from some rocks which God caused to gush out water; it came by a miraculous power, when there was no natural cause to produce it.

Ver. 21.] Intending to defend themselves; but not to march out of their country to give the enemy battle.

Ver. 22.] *They rose up early in the morning,*] The next morning, I suppose, after the water filled the valley.

On the other side] On the east side of the country.

Ver. 23.] They knew there was no water there a few days before, and that there had been no rain; and therefore (the sun shining directly in their eyes, which made it look red) they concluded it could be nothing else but blood. And what blood could it be,

saw the water on the other side *as red as blood*:

23 And they said, This *is* blood: the kings are surely slain, and they have smitten one another: now therefore, Moab, to the spoil.

24 And when they came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and smote the Moabites, so that they fled before them: but they went forward smiting the Moabites, even in *their* country.

25 And they beat down the cities, and on every good piece of land cast every man his stone, and filled it; and they stopped all the wells of water, and felled all the good trees: only in Kir-haraseth left they the stones thereof; howbeit the slingers went about it, and smote it.

26 ¶ And when the king of Moab saw that the battle was too sore for him, he took with him seven hundred men that drew swords, to break through *even* unto the king of Edom: but they could not.

27 Then he took his eldest son that should

but that of the three kings' army, who had fallen out, by reason, perhaps, of their different religion; or vexed at the straits they had brought one another into? And the Moabites easily believing what they wished, imagined they had nothing to do but to go and gather spoil, and not to fight at all.

Ver. 24.] They entirely routed and dispersed them. But they did not content themselves with this victory, but pursued them so close, that they got into their country with them, and there made a great havoc of them.

Ver. 25. *They stopped all the wells of water,*] According to the permission given them by the prophet, ver. 19, intending, I suppose, to depopulate the whole country.

Only in Kir-haraseth left they the stones thereof;] They left no walls standing, but only these of the royal city, which was exceeding strong (see Isa. xvi. 7. 11).

Howbeit the slingers went about it,] They raised such batteries against it, that they drove them who defended it from the wall, and made great breaches in it.

Ver. 26. *When the king of Moab saw that the battle was too sore for him,*] That he was not able to defend the place any longer.

He took with him seven hundred men—to break through even unto the king of Edom:] He made a sally with seven hundred stout men upon the quarters of the king of Edom (which it seems were the weakest), hoping to break through them and escape. But they were repulsed, and forced to retreat.

Ver. 27. *Then he took his eldest son—and offered him for a burnt offering*] Hereupon the king of Moab took his eldest son and made him a sacrifice before them all, as the last desperate remedy, hoping thereby to obtain powerful help from his god, through so precious a sacrifice of the dearest thing he had unto him. For it is well known, not only by the holy scriptures, but heathen writers, that in great distress they were wont to offer their own children upon their altars. Eusebius, lib. v. Præpar. Evangel. and Lactantius, lib. i. Div. Instit. cap. 21, mention several nations who used these sacrifices: and Cæsar, lib. iv. De Bello Gallico, saith of the Gauls, that when they were afflicted with grievous diseases, or in time of war, or great danger, "they either offered men for sacrifices, or vowed they would offer them." For they imagined God would not be appeased, Nisi pro-

have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burnt offering upon the wall. And there was

great indignation against Israel: and they departed from him, and returned to *their own land*.

vita hominis reddatur vita hominis, "unless the life of a man was rendered for the life of a man."

Abarbanel, indeed, thinks that he offered the eldest son of the king of Edom, whom he took prisoner in the late sally. But it could not be said of him, that this son was to reign in his stead; for the king of Judah made whom he pleased his deputy over Edom. And this would not have made the three kings withdraw the siege, but prosecute it with greater fury. And Abarbanel acknowledges, that their wise men in Pesikta and the Sanhedrin understand it as I do: and that some of them think he offered him, in imitation of Abraham, to the God of Israel, hoping to move him to be favourable to him. Which no less man

than Grotius follows. And indeed it is highly probable, that this custom of offering human sacrifices sprang from the offering of Isaac, from whence the Moabites, who were neighbours to Canaan, learnt it.

There was great indignation against Israel.] Or, as it may be translated, "great repentance upon (or in, or among) Israel." That is, they were extremely sorry and troubled at this barbarous sacrifice, and wished they had not pushed on the war so far; which ended in such a horrid action, which brought an odium upon them.

They departed from him.] Hereupon they raised the siege, by common consent, and returned home, for fear any such thing should be done again.

CHAPTER IV.

1 *Elisha multiplieth the widow's oil.* 8 *He giveth a son to the good Shunammite.* 18 *He raiseth again her dead son.* 38 *At Gilgal he healeth the deadly pottage.* 42 *He satisfieth a hundred men with twenty loaves.*

1 Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the LORD: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen.

2 And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thy handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil.

3 Then he said, Go, borrow the vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, *even empty vessels*; borrow not a few.

4 And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full.

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 1. *Of the wives of the sons of the prophets*] It is observed by St. Jerome, that Elijah and Elisha had no wives: et virgines multi filii prophetarum; "and many of the sons of the prophets were virgins" but it is plain by this place that they were not all so; but had liberty to marry if they pleased.

Thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord:] Was a worshipper of the true God, and not of Baal, nor the calves: which was the reason, it is likely, of his poverty; such men being discountenanced among the idolatrous Israelites.

The creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be his bondmen.] Because she was not able to pay his debts: in which case the Hebrews had such a power over their children, that they might sell them (being looked upon as their goods) to pay what they owed: and the creditor might force them to it. And Huetius thinks that from the Jews this custom was propagated to the Athenians; and from thence to the Romans. The Hebrew doctors have a fancy, that this prophet was Obadiah (mentioned 1 Kings xviii. 3), and that the creditor was Jehoram the son of Ahab. Which is utterly ungrounded.

Ver. 2. *What hast thou in the house?*] Towards the discharge of thy husband's debt.

A pot of oil.] Which was a thing of great use; both for the service of God and of men.

5 So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured out.

6 And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, *There is not a vessel more.* And the oil stayed.

7 Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest.

8 ¶ And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread.

9 And she said unto her husband, Behold

Ver. 3. As many as she could get, and not small vessels.

Ver. 4. *Shut the door upon thee*] That none might come in to disturb her in what she was about.

Pour out] Of the pot of oil which she had.

Set aside that which is full.] And call for another that was empty.

Ver. 5.] Believing she should by this means be relieved.

Ver. 6. *She said unto her son,*] Who brought her the empty vessels; for the other son was employed in setting aside those that were full.

Bring me yet a vessel.] For she was confident the pot of oil would still afford more.

The oil stayed.] When there was no vessel to receive it.

Ver. 7.] We must first do justice; and then expect God's blessing upon the provision we make for ourselves and our family.

Ver. 8. *Shunem,*] A city in the tribe of Issachar (Josh. xix. 18).

Where was a great woman;] Who had a great estate, and it is likely kept a great house.

She constrained him to eat bread.] Was very importunate with him to take a repast at her house, and prevailed with him to accept of her kindness.

As oft as he passed by, he turned in thither] She made him so welcome, that he made no scruple,

now, I perceive that this is a holy man of God, which passeth by us continually.

10 Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither.

11 And it fell on a day, that he came thither, and he turned into the chamber, and lay there.

12 And he said to Gehazi his servant, Call this Shunammite. And when he had called her, she stood before him.

13 And he said unto him, Say now unto her, Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care; what is to be done for thee? wouldst thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host? And she answered, I dwell among mine own people.

14 And he said, What then is to be done for her? And Gehazi answered, Verily she hath no child, and her husband is old.

when he had occasion to go that way, to step in there and refresh himself: which it is likely she invited him to do.

[Ver. 9. *Behold now, I perceive*] By her frequent conversation with him.

[*That this is a holy man of God,*] Not only a prophet; but a person of great sanctity.

[*Which passeth by us continually.*] For Shunem was in his way as he went from Carmel (which was not far from hence) to Beth-el and Jericho, and other places of the sons of the prophets.

Ver. 10. *Let us make a little chamber,—on the wall;*] A private room remote from the house, where he might retire; and without noise or disturbance give himself to prayer and meditation, and follow his sacred studies.

[*And let us set for him there a bed,*] Furnish it with all things necessary for a single person.

[*He shall turn in thither.*] Take up his lodging there, if he think good.

Ver. 11.] And it appears by the story, that he became their constant guest.

Ver. 12.] Waiting to know what he wanted. But he having been so kindly entertained by her for some time, sent for her to give her thanks, and to desire to know what he should do for her.

Ver. 13. *Say now unto her.*] He seems to me to have whispered to Gehazi, to ask her the following question. Whereupon she withdrew, thinking he had some business with him before he could speak with her.

[*Thou hast been careful for us*] Been exceeding kind to us, in taking care we should want nothing.

[*What is to be done for thee?*] That is, wherein can I serve thee? For he was very desirous, as all good men are, to be grateful.

[*Wouldst thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host?*] It seems the prophet had a great power at court since the late victory over the Moabites. And therefore, if she had any suit to make to the king, he doubted not to effect it; or had any grievance to complain of, which she suffered by the soldiers, he offered to get it remedied.

[*I dwell among mine own people.*] Whatsoever vexation any might suffer by the soldiers upon the borders, she tells him she lived safely and quietly among her friends and good neighbours; being so free from want that she needed not petition the king for any thing.

15 And he said, Call her. And when he had called her, she stood in the door.

16 And he said, About this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son. And she said, Nay, my lord, thou man of God, do not lie unto thy handmaid.

17 And the woman conceived and bare a son at that season that Elisha had said unto her, according to the time of life.

18 ¶ And when the child was grown, it fell on a day, that he went out to his father to the reapers.

19 And he said unto his father, My head, my head. And he said to a lad, Carry him to his mother.

20 And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died.

21 And she went up, and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him, and went out.

Ver. 14. *What then is to be done for her?*] This answer being returned to his master by Gehazi, Elisha asked him, what he thought might be most welcome to her. Which he might easily know, going about the house and observing all things there, which Elisha did not, who lived retired.

[*Verily she hath no child, and her husband is old.*] He knew women were desirous above all things to have children: which she neither had, nor was like to have, by reason of her husband's age.

Ver. 15. *Call her.*] This shows she withdrew presently, when he first sent for her (ver. 12, 13).

[*She stood in the door.*] Either out of modesty or reverence; or being afraid to disturb him.

Ver. 16. *About this season,*] The next year, after thou hast gone the usual time.

[*Thou shalt embrace a son.*] From the word *habeketh*, which we translate "thou shalt embrace," some of the Hebrew doctors conjecture that this son proved afterward the prophet Habakkuk: which is a mere fancy, rejected by Abarbanel and others; who make account Habakkuk prophesied in the time of Manasseh or Josiah.

[*Do not lie unto thy handmaid.*] Do not jest with me.

Ver. 17. It is likely he named the very day when he should be born; and it fell out exactly as he had said.

Ver. 18.] Either for pleasure, or to inquire of his health. This shows still the truth of that which I have often observed, that great men in ancient times (for the quality of his wife shows this was no mean person, ver. 8), followed their country business themselves; looking after their corn and their cattle, and labouring with their own hands for their health, and the increase of their estates, by their industry in their improvement.

Ver. 19. *My head, my head.*] Either walking so far, or staying long in the sun (which shone hot in harvest-time), put him into a fever, which grievously affected his head.

[*Carry him to his mother.*] That she might look after him, and do what was proper for his case.

Ver. 20.] It seems he went out in the morning to his father, and was seized with such a sudden violent pain, as in a few hours killed him.

Ver. 21. *Laid him on the bed of the man of God.*]

22 And she called unto her husband, and said, Send me, I pray thee, one of the young men, and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God, and come again.

23 And he said, Wherefore wilt thou go to him to day? *it is* neither new moon, nor sabbath. And she said, *It shall be well.*

24 Then she saddled an ass, and said to her servant, Drive, and go forward; slack not *thy* riding for me, except I bid thee.

25 So she went and came unto the man of God to mount Carmel. And it came to pass, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to Gehazi his servant, Behold, *yonder is* that Shunammite :

26 Run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, *Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child?* And she answered, *It is well.*

27 And when she came to the man of God to

Hoping for help by him, whose master she had heard (no doubt) had restored a child to life.

And went out.] Kept it as private as she could, that her husband might not know the child was dead; which would have been a great grief to him.

Ver. 22. *She called unto her husband.*] By a messenger which she sent to him.

Come again.] So as not to hinder his business.

Ver. 23. *It is neither new moon, nor sabbath.*] It appears by this, that the prophets were the public instructors of the people; and their houses were a kind of school or synagogue, unto which they resorted upon the days here mentioned, to be taught their duty, out of the law of God, and to be resolved in their doubts. And the prophets accordingly were constantly in some certain place upon these days, to give the people their instruction.

It shall be well.] In the Hebrew, "It is peace." That is, she prays him to believe that she went for no hurt; but for his and her benefit.

Ver. 24.] She ordered him to make all the haste he could, as fast as the ass would go; without any respect to her, unless she called to him to drive more softly.

Ver. 25. *Mount Carmel.*] This is a place which he, and Elijah also, much frequented: which makes it credible there was a school of the prophets here; it being a mountain full of trees, which made it fit for sacred exercises. As soon as Elijah was taken from him, Elisha fetched a circuit by Jericho and Beth-el to come hither; and from thence went to Samaria. For which no good reason can be given, but that it was to visit the places which his master had frequented, and instruct those who studied there, as Elijah had been wont to do.

Yonder is that Shunammite.] He was surprised to see her coming at an unusual time.

Ver. 26. *Run now,—to meet her.*] To show his respect to her.

Is it well with thee?] He bids him make particular inquiry after all that were most dear to her.

It is well.] Some translate it, "It shall be well." But there is no need of that. For they were well in part; that is, she and her husband. And she did not think fit to tell Gehazi all the truth, but to deliver it to the prophet himself.

Ver. 27. *She caught him by the feet.*] After the manner of a most humble suppliant; resolving not to let him stir till he granted her request.

the hill, she caught him by the feet: but Gehazi came near to thrust her away. And the man of God said, Let her alone; for her soul *is vexed* within her: and the LORD hath hid *it* from me, and hath not told me.

28 Then she said, Did I desire a son of my lord? did I not say, Do not deceive me?

29 Then he said to Gehazi, Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thy hand, and go thy way: if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again: and lay my staff upon the face of the child.

30 And the mother of the child said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And he arose, and followed her.

31 And Gehazi passed on before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child; but *there was* neither voice, nor hearing. Wherefore he went again to meet him, and told him, saying, the child is not awaked.

Gehazi came near to thrust her away.] Believing his master did not expect such abasement, especially from her, who had been so kind and friendly to them.

Let her alone; for her soul is vexed within her.] Do not disturb her, for she is too full of grief already.

The LORD hath hid it from me.] God had not shown him the cause of it, that he might have prevented it.

Hath not told me.] The prophets did not know all things, but only what God was pleased to impart unto them (see 2 Sam. vii. 3). For the Spirit was not in them after the manner of a supernatural faculty, or infused habit (as we speak), whereby they might act what and when they pleased; Moses himself, the great prophet, not being able to determine some things till he had consulted the divine majesty (Numb. xv. 13, 14).

Ver. 28.] As much as to say, she was well satisfied without a son: and did neither desire one, nor was forward to believe she should have one when freely promised: but to lose him after he was bestowed upon her, was an unspeakable affliction to her.

Ver. 29. *Gird up thy loins.*] That he might travel with greater expedition.

If any salute thee, answer him not again.] Lest they should enter into discourse, and stop his speed.

Lay my staff upon the face of the child.] He thought it might work a miracle, as Moses's rod and Elijah's mantle did: and if the woman had had a faith strong enough, it might have been sufficient. But she distrusted it, and would have Elisha go himself. Abarbinel, thinks he had no thoughts of reviving the child by this means, but only ordered his staff to be laid upon it, to preserve him from putrefaction: which is a low conceit.

Ver. 30. *I will not leave thee.*] This seems to me to signify, that she did not confide in what he ordered Gehazi to do; but thought his presence necessary to touch the child, and pray to God to restore him.

He arose, and followed her.] Being overcome by her importunity, and his own kindness to so great a friend.

Ver. 31. *There was neither voice, nor hearing.*] No sign of life appeared, as Gehazi, I suppose, expected.

The child is not awaked.] He speaks of death as a sleep: in which he continued, notwithstanding he had done as Elisha commanded. And it is likely

32 And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed.

33 He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the Lord.

34 And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands : and he stretched himself upon the child ; and the flesh of the child waxed warm.

35 Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro ; and went up, and stretched himself upon him : and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes.

36 And he called Gehazi and said, Call this Shunammite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son.

37 Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out.

38 ¶ And Elisha came again to Gilgal : and

that power was withheld which might have accompanied the staff, because the prophet changed the method of his proceeding in working this miracle ; when the woman would have him go himself, and did not pray to God, that upon the laying on of the staff he might revive.

Ver. 32.] Where his mother had left him when she went to Elisha (ver. 21).

Ver. 33.] He shut the door, that he might not be disturbed by any body in his prayer to God.

Ver. 34. *He went up.*] Upon the bed.

And lay upon the child.] This could not be done all together, because his face and body were much larger than the child's, but successively : he laid his mouth upon the child's mouth, and his eyes and hands upon the child's eyes and hands, as Elijah had done in the like case, in token that God inspired his soul again into him, at his earnest prayer.

The flesh of the child waxed warm.] Not from the external heat of Elisha's body, but from an inward principle of life, which was restored, and began to move in him.

Ver. 35. *He returned,*] From the bed.

And walked in the house to and fro ;] Took a turn or two in the house to refresh himself, after the pains he had taken in prayer, and otherways, for the child's recovery.

And went up, and stretched himself upon him :] As he had done before. For this miracle was not wrought in an instant, but gradually : by continued vehement prayer to God.

The child sneezed seven times,] A sign of health, whereby his head was purged, in which his pain lay (ver. 19).

The child opened his eyes.] After his sneezing he looked upon Elisha, and it is likely spake to him.

Ver. 36.] She came only to the door of the room, till he bade her take up her son, and then she came in, as it follows.

Ver. 37. *Then she went in, and fell at his feet,*] Giving thanks to God, and to him, with a most profound reverence.

Took up her son, and went out.] Publishing, no doubt, this wonderful work of God to all her family ; who made it known abroad.

Ver. 38. *Elisha came again to Gilgal :*] Where he was with Elijah, a little before he was taken up into heaven (ii. 1). For those places, wherein he had been with his master, he loved to visit ; that he might work

there was a dearth in the land ; and the sons of the prophets were sitting before him : and he said unto his servant, Set on the great pot, and see the pottage for the sons of the prophets.

39 And one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered thereof wild gourds his lap full, and came and shred them into the pot of pottage : for they knew them not.

40 So they poured out for the men to eat. And it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out, and said, O thou man of God, there is death in the pot. And they could not eat thereof.

41 But he said, Then bring meal. And he cast it into the pot ; and he said, Pour out for the people, that they may eat. And there was no harm in the pot.

42 ¶ And there came a man from Baal-shalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley, and full ears

wonders there, and confirm them in a belief that he was a prophet.

Dearth in the land ;] A great scarcity of provisions.

The sons of the prophets were sitting before him :] Which was the posture of disciples when their masters taught them, who sat above, and their scholars below, as I observed, ii. 3, and see Acts xxii. 3, whence Bertram observes, their schools and academies were called *ishiboth*, that is, *sessions*.

See the pottage for the sons of the prophets.] This shows that they lived together in society, and after their lectures were wont to eat together with their master : who ordered his servants to prepare some food for them ; which was very plain and common, such as the gardens or fields would afford ; without much labour, and of small price.

Ver. 39. *One went out into the field to gather herbs,*] They went into the fields, I suppose, to gather what green things they could find ; because there were no pot-herbs in their garden at home, by reason of the drought.

And found a wild vine,] This is thought to have been colcoquintida, which hath a leaf something like that of a vine, and purges vehemently.

And came and shred them into the pot of pottage :] Neither he that gathered them, nor they that shred them, knew what they were ; but took them to be the leaves of a wild vine.

Ver. 40.] It was so bitter and distasteful, that they concluded there was some venomous herb in the pot. Perhaps they might know it by the taste to be what it was : an herb that purges extremely, and is poison, if not qualified and taken in a moderate quantity.

Ver. 41.] Which alteration was not from any virtue in the meal, but from the power of God. Therefore, the Jews justly reckon this as the eighth miracle which Elisha wrought, after he was made a prophet.

Ver. 42. *Bread of the firstfruits.*] This was a seasonable present, it being a time of dearth, when bread was very scarce. And it being called *biccurim* (which was the name of the first-fruits belonging to the priests), it is likely this was not such a present as men were wont to make when they came to ask a prophet any question, and to be resolved of their doubts (like that, 1 Kings xiv. 3), but a freewill-offering for the better subsistence of the prophet. Unto whom, it is probable, pious people gave that portion, which was assigned by God for the priests, to whom they could not now carry their first-fruits, they being in

of corn in the husk thereof. And he said, Give unto the people, that they may eat.

43 And his servitor said, What, should I set this before a hundred men? He said again, Give the people, that they may eat: for thus

the land of Judah. And I suppose the schools of the prophets might be partly maintained by this means.

Twenty loaves of barley.] Which were not very large; for then it would not have been a miracle, that they sufficed for a hundred men.

Full cars of corn in the husk.] Which being parched, they were wont to eat (see Ruth ii. 15). But Dr. Hammond approves rather of our marginal translation, and thinks these words should be rendered, He brought ears of corn *in a satchel, or scrip* (see Matt. x. annot. e).

Give unto the people, that they may eat.] That is, to the sons of the prophets, with whom he then was, when this present was brought to him.

Ver. 43. *What, should I set this before a hundred*

saith the LORD, They shall eat, and shall leave thereof.

44 So he set it before them, and they did eat, and left thereof, according to the word of the LORD.

men?] Just as the apostles said unto our blessed Saviour, when he intended to feed a far greater multitude with less food. By this it appears there were a great many scholars, who lived in this community; and that they used a frugal diet.

Give the people, that they may eat:] That is, do as I bid you, and make no objections.

They shall eat, and shall leave thereof.] As the multitude left of the loaves our Saviour caused to be set before them, John vi. 11.

Ver. 44.] Something like this was done by his master Elijah, for the woman of Sarepta, in time of famine; whose barrel of meal and cruse of oil wasted not for many days, till God sent rain upon the earth (1 Kings xvii. 14. 16).

CHAPTER V.

1 Naaman, by the report of a captive maid, is sent to Samaria to be cured of his leprosy. 8 Elisha, sending him to Jordan, cureth him. 15 He refusing Naaman's gifts granteth him some of the earth. 20 Gehazi, abusing his master's name unto Naaman, is smitten with leprosy.

1 Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, *but he was a leper.*

2 And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife.

3 And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy.

4 And one went in, and told his lord, saying,

Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel.

5 And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment.

6 And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy.

7 And it came to pass, when the king of Is-

CHAP. V.

Ver. 1. *Naaman, captain of the host.*] Commander-in-chief of his whole army, whom we call general. *A great man with his master.*] In great favour with him.

Honourable.] In high esteem with all the people.

Because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria:] He had been victorious in such battles as he had fought; which this divine writer would have the Israelites look upon as the Lord's doing.

He was also a mighty man in valour.] Being the person (as the Jews say in Midrasch Tehillim) who drew the bow at adventure and killed Ahab (1 Kings xxii. 31).

But he was a leper.] Which did not exclude him from the society of men, in that country, where the Jewish law was not in force. But it was a great blemish to him, and also like to prove deadly; there being no cure for this disease, which was very common in Syria, as I have elsewhere noticed.

Ver. 2. *Companies.*] The word which we translate company, doth not signify an army; but such troops (or parties, as we call them) as made excursions and inroads into the enemy's country, to get booty.

A little maid;] Young men and maids were a desirable part of the prey which they got; whom they

sold for money, or employed them in their own service.

She waited on Naaman's wife.] Either she was his part of the spoil in that expedition, or they made a present of her to him (being beautiful, perhaps, and ingenious), or he bought her of the soldiers.

Ver. 3. *Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria!*] The history left him last at Gilgal; but he used to be in several other places; and when she was taken captive was at Samaria.

For he would recover him.] She related, it is likely, the wonderful things which he had done; and therefore was confident he could work this cure.

Ver. 4.] Her words being related to Naaman, he went and told the king his master what she said, and begged his leave to go to the prophet in the land of Israel. The following words warrant this sense.

Ver. 5.] That he might honourably reward the prophet, and those that attended him.

Ver. 6.] The beginning of the letter is omitted, as not pertinent to the matter in hand. It is likely it contained the usual compliments; after which he desired him, together with this letter, to receive his servant Naaman, and to cure him of his leprosy; that is, to take care he might be cured by the prophet. But this not being plainly expressed, the king of Israel apprehended that the intention of this demand was

rael had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, *Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me.*

8 ¶ And it was so, when Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, *Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.*

9 So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha.

10 And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, *Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and*

only to pick a quarrel with him, and seek an occasion, or rather a pretence, for a war with him.

Ver. 7. *He rent his clothes, and said, Am I God,*] He rent his clothes either as one in great affliction and trouble, or (as some will have it), because he looked upon it as blasphemy, to ascribe that power to him which belonged to God alone. For none but he could cure a leprosy; which he expresses by killing and making alive. Every body, even beasts, can kill; but when one is killed, to make him alive again (thus these words must be understood in conjunction) is the work only of the Almighty.

To recover a man of his leprosy?] To cure this disease was as hard as to raise a dead man to life; for the skin was dead, and the leprosy fretted and eat into the flesh.

See how he seeketh a quarrel against me.] Though he had seen what miracles Elisha had wrought, yet he either had forgot them, or thought this beyond his power; or was loath to see still more demonstrations of his power with God; and so did not send to him upon this occasion.

Ver. 8.] As the word prophet commonly signifies a man that declares things which none could know but God, who reveals them by his Spirit; so here it signifies a man endued with a divine power, who could do that which no man could effect unless God was with them.

Ver. 9.] Expecting, I suppose, that the prophet would come out to him; or rather out of reverence to the prophet, unto whom he sent a message, letting him understand the cause of his coming; for the prophet presently answers him, though by his servant, not by himself.

Ver. 10. *Elisha sent a messenger*] It is not to be thought that Elisha took state upon him; but it is to be ascribed to the retired sort of life which the prophets led, that he did not show himself to Naaman. We see an instance of this in the foregoing chapter, where we read that he did not so much as speak with the great woman who entertained him at her house, and built an apartment on purpose for him; but let her understand what he had to say by his servant Gehazi (ver. 12, 13, &c.).

Go and wash in Jordan seven times,] Thus lepers were sprinkled, by the law of Moses, seven times (Lev. xiv. 7, &c.). But it is plain, by the next verse, Naaman expected the prophet would have been so civil as to come out to him, or invite him to his house, and discourse with him: neither of which the prophet thought fit to do; partly for a trial of his faith, and partly to let him know that this was not so difficult a thing as the king imagined, but so easy for him to effect by the power of God, that he need not come out to talk with him about it: let him but go to Jor-

thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.

11 But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.

12 *Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.*

13 And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, *if* the prophet had bid thee *do some* great thing, wouldest thou not have done *it*? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?

dan and wash there seven times, and the cure should be performed. Jordan had no more virtue in it (as he rightly saith afterward) than other rivers; nor was the earth of Israel better than that of Syria (though he begged two loads of it), but God presided more particularly over this country, and his power here appeared: and in this appeared the more, because water being cold, was very bad for this disease: the root of it being a white waterish humour, as Abarbanel notes, which would naturally, by this means, be increased.

Thy flesh shall come again] For the leprosy had eaten into it, and consumed it in part, as it did Miriam's (Numb. xii. 12).

Thou shalt be clean.] Freed from this filthy disease.

Ver. 11.] He was as angry with the prophet, as if he had scorned and mocked him. First he thought himself despised, in that he did not come to him and salute him: and then he thought it a thing ridiculous to go and wash in Jordan; for what could that water do more than any other? Thus men slight common and easy things, and admire those that are rare and difficult; and in their passion reject that which God himself propounds to them, if it be not agreeable to their humours and their conceits. In which passion, if he had continued, he had been a leper to his dying day.

Ver. 12. *Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus,*] The valley of Damascus, which lay between Libanus and Antilibanus, was washed by five rivers; the two principal of which descended from mount Hermon, viz. Abana and Pharpar; the last of which ran by the walls of Damascus and the other ran through the city, and divided it into two parts, as Bochartus observes.

May I not wash in them, and be clean?] He did not consider that he was now under the direction of a prophet, who was supposed to speak from God, who might have prescribed what method he pleased for his cure; which was to come from his divine power alone, and not from the virtue of any water whatsoever.

Ver. 13.] Happy are they who have such excellent servants as these, who both had the courage to speak the truth to their master, and the prudence to order it with all submission and reverence. For *my father* was a title of honour in that country; by which name they called their lords: as kings were called the fathers of their country. And these servants, perhaps, had heard the young maid talk much of the power of the prophet, which made them very desirous their master would not refuse his advice; which they urge him to follow with great reason; by representing to him that it was the advice of a prophet, who was guided by God to give him these directions. And as

14 Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God : and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

15 ¶ And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him : and he said, Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel : now therefore I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant.

16 But he said, As the Lord liveth, before

it was not fit for servants to say to their masters, when they ordered a thing, Why so? Why not otherways? so much less should a man say to God, of his minister, who speaks in his name; especially when he commands things that may be done without much trouble, or any pain. For if he had bidden him cut and burn, as chirurgeons many times do in grievous sores, he would have submitted to it: and, therefore it was unreasonable not to comply with his prescriptions, when he required him only to go and wash himself in the river Jordan, which was a thing very easy, in his way home, and would put him to no pain.

Ver. 14. *Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan.*] He showed himself a person of great probity and discretion; who was not in such a rage but he could hear reason; and did not refuse good counsel from his servants; but suffered himself to be convinced and overruled to yield unto it.

His flesh came again.] God was not so angry with him, as he was with Elisha; but upon his repentance and obedience to his directions, vouchsafed him a perfect cure; there being no mark left of his leprosy, but his skin as clear and smooth as that of a little child. This was the only cure of a leprosy that we read of, till Christ the great prophet came into the world.

Ver. 15. *He returned to the man of God,—and stood before him.*] Now Elisha seems to have admitted him into his presence.

Now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel.] He returned to give thanks to God, as the good Samaritan did to our Saviour; acknowledging the God that Elisha worshipped to be the true God, and that there was no other.

Take a blessing of thy servant.] A reward, or rather a token of his gratitude to him; for the Hebrews call all gifts a *blessing*: the Hebrew word *barac* signifying not only *benedicere*, but *benefacere*.

Ver. 16.] He did not think it unlawful to take it, for he receivde gifts from others. But he would have strangers to their religion know how good the God of Israel was; who made his servants so good, that they did the greatest good to mankind for nothing. Which generous piety was apt to invite others to the worship and service of this great and good God. For it gives great authority to a teacher of virtue not to be covetous (see Laetantius, lib. i. Div. Instit. cap. 4).

Ver. 17. *Two mules' burden of earth?*] As much as two mules could carry or draw.

For thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto other gods.] Though he refuse to accept his present, yet he doubted not he would present him with two burdens of earth, which he intended to employ in erecting an altar, whereon he would sacrifice to no other god but the Lord. He judged it reasonable to have an altar out of God's land, because he saw he peculiarly dwelt in Israel. And though he might have taken enough as he went along in his way home, yet he desired it as a gift

whom I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take it; but he refused.

17 And Naaman said, Shall there not then, I pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules' burden of earth? for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the Lord.

18 In this thing the Lord pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rim-

mon from the prophet; fancying, perhaps, that he would put a greater virtue into it by his blessing; as he had done into the waters of Jordan; therefore Rabbag thinks he desired to have this earth out of Elisha's house where he dwelt; and Abarinel thinks, from under his very feet in the place where he stood; of which there is no certainty. But it is plain he desired to receive it from the prophet, who had convinced him that there was no god like to his; who had such power, and made men so virtuous, as to be above the love of money.

Ver. 18. *When my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there.*] This was the god of the Syrians, but no author informs us what god this was, nor whence so called. Only many conjecture, because *Rimmon* in Hebrew signifies a pomegranate, that *Venus* is hereby meant, to whom such fruit was sacred. But Sealiger understands this to be *Jupiter*, the thunderer, as they called him. And our Selden thinks it is derived from *rum*, which signifies *high*. Whence Hesy chius saith ὁ Ῥαμῆς signifies ὕψιστος *Zeus*, the most high God.

He leaneth on my hand,] Or *shoulder*: which he does out of state; or, perhaps, out of weakness, for his support. In the additions to the book of Esther, mention is made of two young women that waited on that queen, upon one of which she leaned, and the other held up her train (xv. 4). And it was not only the custom among the Persians and Syrians, but the Israelites also, as we read in this book (vii. 2. 17).

And I bow myself in the house of Rimmon.] Together with his master; who could not well bow, if Naaman stood upright, and did not bow his body with him.

When I bow down myself—the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing.] He hoped he might, without offence to the divine majesty, whom alone he resolved to worship, keep the great office he had under the king his master, and consequently bow himself when he went with him into the temple of Rimmon: he who sees into the hearts of men, knowing it was no act of worship to that god; but only a necessary respect to his master. And so the word is used for civil honour, as well as religious adoration. Thus Lud. De Dieu hath clearly rendered this whole verse “In this thing the Lord pardon thy servant; when my master enters into the temple of Rimmon to worship there, he leans upon my hand, and so I bow myself (that is, together with him) in the house of Rimmon: when I bow myself in the house of Rimmon the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing.” Let him not take offence, since I intended not to worship Rimmon; as appeared by his sacrificing only to the God of Israel. An Israelite, indeed, was forbidden to bow before an idol, whatsoever his mind or intention was in that act: but a stranger was not bound by this law, as Mr. Selden shows the opinion of the Jews is (lib. ii. De Jure Nat. et Gent. cap. 11). Therefore when Naaman went into the temple, not of his own accord, but merely to wait upon his master, and perform the

mon : when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, the LORD pardon thy servant in this thing.

19 And he said unto him, Go in peace. So he departed from him a little way.

20 ¶ But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought : but, as the LORD liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him.

21 So Gehazi followed after Naaman. And when Naaman saw him running after him, he lighted down from the chariot to meet him, and said, *Is all well?*

22 And he said, *All is well.* My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets : give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments.

23 And Naaman said, Be content, take two talents. And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and laid them upon two of his servants ; and they bare them before him.

24 And when he came to the tower, he took them from their hand, and bestowed them in the house : and he let the men go, and they departed.

25 But he went in, and stood before his master. And Elisha said unto him, Whence comest thou, Gehazi ? And he said, Thy servant went no whither.

26 And he said unto him, Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee ? *Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants ?*

duty of his office ; since he professed himself a worshipper of the most high God alone, and brought earth out of his land, and sacrificed only upon the altar made of it : all, he thought, might understand he did not worship Rimmon, but only paid his respects to the king when he bowed with him.

Ver. 19. *Go in peace.*] The prophet did not condemn this, but bade him not trouble himself about this matter ; for he did not offend against God's law, which was not intended for such as he was : though there are some of the Jews who think that these words, *go in peace*, relate to the verse foregoing ; that he need not trouble himself about carrying earth with him out of the land of Israel to make an altar (for it doth not appear he gave him any), and so left this matter of bowing in the house of Rimmon undetermined. And no less a person than Bochartus hath a large dissertation about this whole matter ; wherein he endeavours to defend their opinion, who think Naaman begs pardon for what he had done in times past, not for what he should continue to do ; and renders these words (as Dr. Lightfoot also doth), "when I have bowed," &c. But this seems to me altogether improbable ; for then he would not have mentioned what he did as the king's servant ; but simply the idolatry he had committed in worshipping Rimmon. Besides, the oriental versions, as well as the Greek and the Vulgar, and the Hebrew doctors generally, as well as Christian interpreters, understand it as we do, that he speaks of the future act of bowing ; which, being only a civil action, and he declaring himself publicly to be a worshipper only of the God of Israel, he hoped would not be imputed to him as a sin. And so the famous Buxtorfius, in a letter to Theod. Hackspar saith, Omnes, quotquot vidi, interpretes referunt ad futurum, &c. "All interpreters, as many as I have seen, refer this to the future, and not to the times past." And so doth the Chaldee paraphrast himself : and I am very much of the same opinion.

So he departed from him a little way.] About a mile from the city, as the Jewish doctors understand it.

Ver. 20.] He seems to be angry that his master had been so kind to one that needed not his charity, and was also one of another nation ; and therefore, in his passion, swore he would take something of him. Which-covetousness plunged him into a great many other sins, as the apostle observes it usually doth (1 Tim. vi. 9, 10). Dr. Lightfoot thinks the Hebrew text hath divinely omitted a letter in one word, that it might the more brand him for this villany. "I will

run," saith he, "after Naaman, and take מומה *blot*," instead of מומה "somewhat."

Ver. 21.] Behold the honour he gave to the prophet, in doing such honour to his servant ; which testified he had a great sense of God, and of his goodness to him, in his heart.

Ver. 22. *Mount Ephraim*] It seems there was a school there, as well as at Jericho, Beth-el, Carmel, and other places.

Give them,—a talent of silver, and two changes of garments.] To relieve their poverty. This was the first fruit of his covetousness, which put him upon inventing such a wicked slander of his master. For why should Elisha desire so much silver for two young scholars ? Which might tempt Naaman to think, that though he publicly declined to take a gift from him, yet he secretly desired it (see Dr. Hammond on St. Matt. vi. annot. k).

Ver. 23. *Be content, take two talents.*] It is likely Gehazi pretended to keep strictly to his master's orders, and would have but one, till Naaman's generosity pressed and overcame him to take more.

They bare them before him.] As servants do before persons of honour.

Ver. 24. *The tower,*] To the place where Elisha lodged : or, as some will have it, to a *secret place*, where he laid up what he had got.

Let the men go, and they departed.] For he was afraid his master should see them.

Ver. 25. *Stood before his master.*] As servants were wont to do, to see if their master wanted any thing.

Thy servant went no whither.] This was another impudent lie, wherein he thought to deceive his master, though he was a prophet. Which was an impious endeavour to deceive the Spirit of God, whose minister Elisha was : like that lie of Ananias and Sapphira, Acts v. 3, &c.

Ver. 26. *Went not mine heart with thee,*] Did not God represent to my mind, as if I had been present, how Naaman came to meet thee, and what thou saidst to him, and what he gave thee ? For, no doubt, he recited all that passed between them ; to convince him of his folly (in thinking to cheat him), and put him to shame and confusion.

Is it a time to receive—and maidservants ?] Which Gehazi designed to purchase with the two talents : at a very unseasonable time, when the nation for their sins, were in danger to be carried captive out of their land. Which, though it did not fall out till above a hundred and fifty years after this, yet great devastations followed the death of Elisha.

27 The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever.

Ver. 27. *The leprosy—shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever.*] Unto many generations, as the word for ever frequently signifies. But the Hebrew doctors say this only relates unto his children that were then born; who were conscious to his crime, and approved of it (see more of this, viii. 4, 5).

He went out from his presence a leper] He punished him with the worst sort of leprosy, which was incurable. For his sin was exceeding great, or rather he was guilty of many sins besides those already mentioned; being a thief, and taking that to himself

And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.

which was given to others. Nay, he was a sacrilegious person, in robbing the sons of the prophets, who were men belonging to God, in a special manner. The Hebrew doctors reckon seven sins, for which God punished men with the plague of leprosy, and endeavour to prove it out of scripture; and Gehazi was guilty of more than one of them, and therefore justly punished in an extraordinary manner. They are, an evil tongue, shedding of blood, a false oath, uncovering of any forbidden nakedness, inflation of spirit, rapine, and envy.

CHAPTER VI.

1 Elisha, giving leave to the young prophets to enlarge their dwellings, causeth iron to swim. 8 He discovereth the king of Syria's counsel. 13 The army, which was sent to Dothan to apprehend Elisha, is smitten with blindness. 19 Being brought into Samaria, they are dismissed in peace. 24 The famine in Samaria causeth women to eat their own children. 30 The king sendeth to slay Elisha.

1 AND the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us.

2 Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell. And he answered, Go ye.

3 And one said, Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants. And he answered, I will go.

4 So he went with them. And when they came to Jordan, they cut down wood.

5 But as one was felling a beam, the ax head fell into the water: and he cried, and said, Alas, master! for it was borrowed.

6 And the man of God said, Where fell it? And he shewed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast it in thither; and the iron did swim.

7 Therefore said he, Take it up to thee. And he put out his hand, and took it.

8 ¶ Then the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place shall be my camp.

CHAP. VI.

Ver. 1. *The sons of the prophets*] That were at Gilgal; for that is the place last mentioned where the prophet was (iv. 33), and was also near to Jordan, mentioned in the next verse.

The place where we dwell with thee] They had their colleges sometimes in cities (as in Beth-el), and sometimes in the fields, and sometimes upon mountains. It is probable this was in the fields; where Elisha, for the present, was resident among them.

Is too strait for us.] Their number of scholars was so much increased under so eminent a master as he was, that there was not room enough for them.

Ver. 2. *Let us go.*] They were so much under his government, that they did not take the liberty to go any whither without his leave.

Unto Jordan.] Near to which many trees grew.

Every man a beam.] A piece of timber.

Let us make us a place there.] A tabernacle large enough to contain them all. From whence we may gather, that the sons of the prophets did not spend all their time in studying the law, meditation, and prayer, and such holy exercises; but also employed themselves in some manufactures, as the apostles did in aftertimes, some of which were tent-makers (Acts xviii. 3), like to these here mentioned.

Go ye.] He consented to their design, the place which they chose being very commodious for students. As St. Jerome observes, who, in more places than one (see his epistles to Rusticus and to Paulina), compares the monks of his time with these sons of the prophets, "Qui habitabant in agris, et solitudinibus, et faciebant sibi tabernacula prope fluentia Jordanis."

Ver. 3.] They thought their design would prosper

the better under his conduct; and that if any one questioned what they did, his authority would overawe them.

Ver. 4.] They began to go about their work.

Ver. 5. *The ax head fell into the water:*] Being not well fastened to the helve; or rather the helve breaking.

Alas master! for it was borrowed.] Good men are religiously careful that none suffer by their kindness to them. This shows, that as these sons of the prophets wrought with their own hands, going themselves to cut down wood to build withal, so (some of them at least) they were but poor, being not furnished with tools for their work, but forced to borrow.

Ver. 6. *He cut down a stick,*] To serve, I suppose, instead of a helve.

And cast it in thither: and the iron did swim.] A double miracle, as the Jews understand it, that iron, which was sunk down to the bottom, rose up; and then went to the stick and was joined to it, at its helve. For to what end should he throw a stick into the water, but that it should serve this purpose?

Ver. 7.] It fell near the river-side, or was brought thither when it rose up.

Ver. 8.] He did not rely merely on the number of his forces, but secretly resolved, by the advice of his council, to place them in such posts where he might hope to surprise the Israelites. It may seem strange, that after such a great benefit lately received in the cure of Naaman, the king should send him, who was captain of his host, to fight against Israel. But who can tell how long this was after that time, when Naaman might be dead? or, perhaps, Naaman might have lost his place; because he refused to worship Rimmon; and no benefit will reconcile inveterate enemies.

9 And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are come down.

10 And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice.

11 Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not shew me which of us is for the king of Israel?

12 And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bed-chamber.

13 ¶ And he said, Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in Dothan.

14 Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about.

15 And when the servant of the man of God

Ver. 9.] And had laid an ambush for him there.

Ver. 10. *The king of Israel sent to the place*] He sent some spies to see whether Elisha gave him true information.

And saved himself there,] By this means he frequently saved his soldiers from falling into the hands of the Syrians; who lay in wait for them in such places, where they would certainly have gone, if they had not been told of the danger.

Ver. 11. *He called his servants,*] With whom he had consulted how to carry on this war (ver. 8).

Will ye not shew me which of us is for the king of Israel?] Betrays my counsels to him; for he could not think he should meet with such constant disappointments, unless it were by treachery.

Ver. 12.] It is likely Naaman had spread the fame of the prophet so much in this court, that some of them made further inquiry after him; and heard more of his miraculous works; and thence concluded he could tell the greatest secrets, as well as do such wonders as were reported of him.

Ver. 13. *Go and spy where he is,*] A very foolish design. As if the prophet could not as well know this, as he did the rest of his other counsels.

Dothan,] A city in the tribe of Manasseh, not far from Shechem and Samaria.

Ver. 14. *Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host:*] That the people of Dothan, being affrighted at the sight of such a number of soldiers, might not dare to defend the prophet.

They came by night,] That no intelligence might be carried to Samaria.

Ver. 15. *When the servant of the man of God was risen early,*] As students were wont to do.

And gone forth,] Out of the door of the house, which stood high; the city being built upon a hill.

Alas, my master! how shall we do?] Perhaps the Syrians had assured the inhabitants they intended no harm to them; but only came to take Elisha. Which the young man hearing, it put him in great fear; for being but newly come to his master in the room of Gehazi, and having perhaps seen none of his wonderful works, he gave himself and his master up for lost men.

Ver. 16.] Faith drives away fear; but it was hard for the young man to believe this, till he had more experience of God's providence over his prophet: and therefore Elisha prays he might have a demonstration of it.

was risen early, and gone forth, behold, a host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do?

16 And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.

17 And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

18 And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.

19 ¶ And Elisha said unto them, This is not the way, neither is this the city: follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek. But he led them to Samaria.

20 And it came to pass, when they were come

Ver. 17. *He saw: and—the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire*] He beheld the camp of God there (as the angels are called Gen. xxxii. 2), ready at hand to defend his master. Legions of angels (Matt. xxvi. 35), which were far more numerous and powerful than the host of the Syrians which he saw compass the city; but did not see this heavenly host till God opened his eyes, and represented them to him. The ancients think that the angels, when present with us, appear where they please, and are invisible where they please, though present. Now this appearance of theirs in this place is called the opening of his eyes; because it had the same effect. For he beheld the mountain (on which, I suppose, the city stood), where he saw none but Syrians before, was now full of fiery chariots and horses, which, as it here follows, had encircled Elisha.

Round about Elisha,] That is, he saw in this vision, as if Elisha was in the midst of this glorious camp of angels; who defended him so that none could penetrate and break through unto him.

Ver. 18. *When they came down to him,*] He seems to have gone out of the city to them, under the divine protection; intending to go to Samaria. And they seeing him, asked him the way to the man of God.

And he smote them with blindness] So that they might not be able perfectly to distinguish one thing from another.

Ver. 19. *This is not the way, neither is this the city:*] Some think we are not bound to speak truth to an enemy; but there is no need this should be asserted here. For it was true that they were not in the way to find Elisha: whom they should not see till they came to another city.

Follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek,] As he really did. But their minds were struck with blindness, as well as their eyes; or else they would not have committed themselves to the conduct of a stranger, to follow him in an enemy's country, they knew not whither.

But he led them to Samaria,] This shows they were not wholly blind, for then they could not have been led by him; but were dark, as we speak, and could not clearly discern who it was that led them, nor whether they were going. Here the Jews cry, Behold, a double miracle! Elisha's servant saw that which appeared to nobody else; and the Syrians could not discern that which every body else saw.

Ver. 20.] To their great astonishment, no doubt,

into Samaria, that Elisha said, **LORD**, open the eyes of these *men*, that they may see. And the **LORD** opened their eyes, and they saw; and, behold, *they were* in the midst of Samaria.

21 And the king of Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them, My father, shall I smite them? shall I smite them?

22 And he answered, Thou shalt not smite them: wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master.

23 And he prepared great provision for them: and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent

when they found that he had made them all captives, when they came to carry away to Syria.

Ver. 21. *My father,*] This miracle touched him with great reverence to the prophet.

Shall I smite them? shall I smite them?] This repetition of the question expresses his eager desire to fall upon them and kill them, if the prophet would have permitted.

Ver. 22. *Thou shalt not smite them:*] There was a command to destroy the people of the seven nations; yet not if they yielded to them. But as for other persons who were taken in the war, they were not bound to destroy them; but it was humanity rather to spare them. Whence it is that the prophet here forbids the king to smite these, who were not under the curse of the people of Canaan.

Wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword,] As much as to say, thou wouldest not be so cruel, as in cold blood to kill those whom thou thyself hadst taken prisoners in a battle. Much more then are those to be spared who are not thy captives, but God's. Thou hast not taken them with thy sword, or with thy bow; but he hath brought them to thee, and delivered them into thy hand, not that thou mayest kill them, but use them kindly. To this purpose Ralbag (see Selden, De Jure Nat. et Gent. p. 745).

That they may eat and drink, and go to their master.] And tell him what civility and kindness there is among the people of God. This is a rare example of that which St. Paul recommends to us, Rom. xii. 20, "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink," &c.

Ver. 23. *He prepared great provision for them:*] This is a new wonder, that the hearts of the Israelites should so yield unto the command of the prophet, as not only to spare, but to entertain bountifully their old enemies.

The bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.] Great hatreds are sometimes overcome by unexpected and undeserved benefits; as many of the heathens have observed, that this is the noblest way to conquer them, particularly Valerius Maximus: *Speciosius injuriæ beneficiis vincuntur, quam mutui odii pertinaciæ pensantur*; "injuries are more gloriously overcome by benefits, than requited by pertinacious mutual hatred." But the sense of benefits in bad natures doth not last long; for in the very next verse we read how the king of Syria besieged Samaria. Which seems to contradict what is said here, that the Syrians came no more into the land of Israel. But the meaning of that is (for no man can think that any author whatsoever would contradict himself in the same breath), either that for this time they retreated quite, and laid aside all thoughts of war, though afterwards they broke out again into hostility; or (which is the plainest) that their hands made no

them away, and they went to their master. So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.

24 ¶ And it came to pass after this, that Ben-hadad king of Syria gathered all his host, and went up, and besieged Samaria.

25 And there was a great famine in Samaria: and, behold, they besieged it, until an ass's head was sold for fourscore *pieces* of silver, and the fourth part of a eab of dove's dung for five *pieces* of silver.

26 And as the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall, there cried a woman unto him, saying, Help, my lord, O king.

more incursions and inroads; but they resolved to come and fall upon them, not in small parties, and by ambushes (as they did before, ver. 8), but with a formed army, wherewith they laid siege to Samaria.

Ver. 24. *Ben-hadad king of Syria*] The name of Ben-hadad was common to all the kings of Syria, as Pharaoh was to those of Egypt.

Gathered all his hosts,—and besieged Samaria.] It seems the Israelites had not forces to appear against him in the field, so that he marched directly to Samaria, and laid siege to it.

Ver. 25. *They besieged it, until an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver,*] The siege lasted so long, or they were so ill provided for it, that there was a great scarcity of food in this city: insomuch that an ass's head was sold for so many shekels as make five pounds of our money. A great sum for the head, when the whole body was little worth; and it being an unclean creature, it was not lawful for the Israelites to eat (yea, was accounted unclean by the Arabians), unless in case of extreme necessity. See Bochartus, in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 13, where he observes out of Plutarch, that there was such a scarcity in Artaxerxes's army, when he was among the Cadusii, that an ass's head was sold for threescore drachms.

And the fourth part of a eab] A *cab* was a very small measure of corn, containing, as the Jews say, as much as twenty-four eggs would hold. It is never mentioned in the Scripture, but only here; though very often in the Talmud, in the title Kiddushin (see Inbonacius, in the Biblioth. Mag. Rabbin. tom. v. p. 349). All agree it was such a measure as I have mentioned; so that the fourth part of it was no more than six eggs would contain, called a *log*, as Bochartus thinks.

Of dove's dung] So the Chaldee, Syriac, Arabic, and LXX. translate the Hebrew word *hirjonim*: and so a great many of the Jewish doctors, Jareli, Kimchi, Ralbag, understand it. Though it be very hard to believe that *dove's dung* should be so plentiful in a city as to be sold in any quantity, or that men should eat it, when every one knows there is no nourishment in such excrements, and less in that of doves than in others, as is observed by Bochartus; who, after he hath confuted many other opinions, hath made it very probable that *fiches* or *lentils* are here meant, which were the vilest of all food, and yet sold at this dear rate. For that some sort of food is here meant, is plain from what goes before (see his Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. i. cap. 7).

For five pieces of silver.] Which the same author computes to be as much as nine French livres.

Ver. 26. *As the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall.*] To see if they kept their guards well, or to observe how the enemy lay.

27 And he said, If the LORD do not help thee, whence shall I help thee? out of the barnfloor, or out of the winepress?

28 And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, This woman said unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat him to-day, and we will eat my son to-morrow.

29 So we boiled my son, and did eat him: and I said unto her on the next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him: and she hath hid her son.

30 ¶ And it came to pass, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he rent his clothes; and he passed by upon the wall, and the people looked, and, behold, he had sackcloth within upon his flesh.

Ver. 27. *If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee? out of the barnfloor, or out of the winepress?*] Some take the first words to be a curse, and translate them as we do in the margin, "Let not the Lord save (or help) thee." Like that among the gentiles, *Dii deaque* to perdant, "may thou perish." Thus Josephus understands them to be the words of a man in a great passion, and full of fury, that she should implore relief from him, who could do nothing for himself. For he thought she had cried to him for victuals, as appears by the last words.

Ver. 28. *What aileth thee?*] When she had pacified his anger, or it cooled of itself, he asked her the cause of her cry.

This woman] Who stood by her.

Give thy son, that we may eat him] Thus began the prophecy of Moses to be fulfilled, Deut. xxxviii. 54, 55, &c.

Ver. 29.] Either that she might save him, or that she might eat him alone, and thereby preserve her life the longer.

Ver. 30. *He rent his clothes;*] Out of great grief at what the woman had said; or perhaps out of indignation at the prophet, with whom the next verse shows he was very angry.

He had sackcloth within upon his flesh.] His royal robes, which were uppermost, being torn, they saw sackcloth (in token of great humiliation) next to his skin. For these idolatrous kings were not so profane but they observed some of the ancient rites of religion, among which this was one; to abase and afflict themselves, in times of great calamity, by putting sackcloth upon their naked body.

Ver. 31.] Such was the arbitrary power which these kings exercised; which took away men's lives without any formal process against them: and the reason of this furious resolution seems to be, either because Elisha had hindered him from smiting the great host of the Syrians, when he had them cooped up in Samaria (ver. 20—22), which might have disabled them from bringing him into these straits; or because Elisha did not employ his interest in God, as he expected, to give them deliverance. Therefore he swore he should not live till night.

Ver. 32. *Elisha sat in his house.*] In the school, where the sons of the prophets came to be instructed by him.

The elders sat with him;] We often read in Ezekiel of the elders of Israel sitting before the prophet to

31 Then he said, God do so and more also to me, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat shall stand on him this day.

32 But Elisha sat in his house, and the elders sat with him; and the king sent a man from before him: but ere the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, See ye how this son of a murderer hath sent to take away mine head? look, when the messenger cometh, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door: is not the sound of his master's feet behind him?

33 And while he yet talked with them, behold, the messenger came down unto him: and he said, Behold, this evil is of the LORD; what should I wait for the LORD any longer?

hear him (viii. 1. xxii. 24); and so some understand it here, of the chief persons in Samaria, who were come to consult him. But it rather signifies his chief scholars, some grave persons, who applied themselves to the study of divine things, and were now with him.

The king sent a man from before him:] Com-manded one that attended him to go and execute the sentence he had pronounced against Elisha.

See ye how this son of a murderer hath sent to take away mine head?] He understood, by the spirit of prophecy, the wicked intentions of the king: who was like his father Ahab, that had murdered many of the prophets of the Lord.

Hold him fast at the door: is not the sound of his master's feet behind him?] He charged them to lay hold of him before he came into the room, and not suffer him to enter; for the king would immediately follow him, to revoke his order. So he foresaw, by the same spirit of prophecy, that the king repented of what he had decreed, and was coming to revoke it; and therefore he only required the elders to do that which he knew the king would do himself, viz. stop the messenger at the door, and let him proceed no further. This will not warrant private men to apprehend public officers; nor to use such words to princes as the prophet here doth to Joram, whom he calls "the son of a murderer," by a divine motion. Which authorized him to represent him as the impious son of a very impious father.

Ver. 33.] Some imagine that the messenger being come, spake these words in the king's name; but it seems more reasonable to think the king, who was also come, spake them himself, in a fit of raging despair. He could not but acknowledge that the Lord had brought them into this distress. Upon which Elisha exhorted him to wait till he would please (who only could do it) to deliver them. But he impatiently answered, he had waited so long in vain, that he had no hope left, since they were driven to such extremity that women ate their own children. Or these words may be thus interpreted (taking the former part of them to be spoken by the prophet, and the latter by the king), *And he said* (that is, the prophet said), acknowledge the hand of God in this evil, which comes from him. To which the king replied, and what else can I expect from the Lord, unless it be such plagues? No, saith Elisha in the very next words, ye shall have plenty here to-morrow.

CHAPTER VII.

1 *Elisha prophesieth incredible plenty in Samaria.* 3 *Four lepers, venturing on the host of the Syrians, bring tidings of their flight.* 12 *The king, finding by spies the news to be true, spoileth the tents of the Syrians.* 17 *The lord, who would not believe the prophecy of plenty, having the charge of the gate, is trodden to death in the press.*

1 THEN Elisha said, Hear ye the word of the LORD; Thus saith the LORD, To-morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria.

2 Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, Behold, if the LORD would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.

3 ¶ And there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate: and they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die?

4 If we say, we will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there:

and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die.

5 And they rose up in the twilight, to go unto the camp of the Syrians: and when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria, behold, there was no man there.

6 For the LORD had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host: and they said one to another, Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us.

7 Wherefore they arose and fled in the twi-

CHAP. VII.

Ver. 1. *Elisha said,*] Unto the king, who followed the messenger (see foregoing chapter, ver. 32, 33), and spake such words as Elisha here satisfies him were very unreasonable.

Two measures of barley for a shekel,] The Hebrew word *seah* signifies a certain measure, containing the thirtieth part of an *omer*: which is about a peck of our measure.

In the gate of Samaria,] Which was the marketplace, as well as a place for other public meetings (see 2 Sam. xix. 8).

Ver. 2. *Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned*] Some think this was the messenger which the king sent to see execution done upon Elisha. Whosoever he was, he was greatly beloved by the king; for when he went abroad he leaned on him, which was a sign he was dear to him. For this state kings in those countries took upon them, to lean upon some favourite. As queen Esther, the Jews say, had a young lady on whom she rested her right hand, after the manner of the eastern kings (see upon ver. 18).

If the Lord should make windows in heaven, might this thing be?] He was incredulous, and seems to have laughed at what the prophet said: looking upon it as unlikely as that God would rain corn from heaven, as once he did manna.

Thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.] A just punishment of his unbelief. And such will be the portion of those that believe not the promise of eternal life.

Ver. 3. *There were four leprous men*] The Jews will have these to have been Gehazi and his three sons; as they say in Gemara Sanhedrin, p. 416. edit. J. Coeh.

At the entering in of the gate;] Of the city of Samaria. From whence lepers were thrust out, as anciently out of the camp (Lev. xiii. 46. xiv. 3. Numb. v. 23). But they got as near the gate of the city as they could, for fear of the enemy. It appears by this that the Israelites observed the ceremonial law, though they were gross idolaters.

Why sit we here until we die?] For the city could no longer supply their wants, having not sufficient for themselves.

Ver. 4. *We will enter into the city.*] Lepers might

sometimes come into their cities, if there was a great occasion, keeping their due distance from every one; as appears, some think, from Gehazi's talking with the king himself in the next chapter (viii. 4), but more plainly from this place (see Grotius upon St. Luke vii. 12).

If we sit still here, we die also.] The besiegers having carried away all the food thereabout.

Let us fall unto the host of the Syrians;] Who possibly might take compassion upon miserable people, though enemies to them.

If they save us alive, we shall live;] They will not let us starve, but give us food.

If they kill us, we shall but die.] They knew the worst that could happen to them was to lose their lives, which they should certainly do where they were; and therefore they chose an uncertain evil before a certain.

Ver. 5. *They rose up in the twilight,*] In the close of the evening, as appears from ver. 9. 12.

Uttermost part of the camp] Upon their trenches.

There was no man there.] Not a man to guard them, nor so much as a sentinel to watch them.

Ver. 6. *The Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, &c.*] By the ministry of angels he made such a rattling like that of chariots, and prancing of horses, that the Syrians imagined a great army was not only marching towards them, but ready to fall upon them.

The king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites,] Those people of the land of Canaan called Hittites, who dwelt about Hebron and Beer-sheba, were rooted out by the Israelites. But either some of them fled, and settled themselves in some neighbouring country, and there grew very populous; or else, we are to understand by the kings of the Hittites (as Josephus doth), the kings *των νησων, of the isles*, lib. ix. Antiq. cap. 2. As if *chittim* was the same with *cetum*, as all isles, he saith, are called. Every one of which had a king; as Egypt itself was then divided into several kingdoms; whose help, the Syrians thought, the king of Israel had procured.

Ver. 7. *They arose and fled in the twilight,*] Being but newly gone when the lepers came thither.

Left—their asses,] Asses were employed in war as well as horses; at least for carrying of their baggage. So Bochartus observes out of Pollux, *χρεια δ' εἰς πολέμους σκηνοφόρων μὲν ὄνων*, "asses are of use in war to

light, and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, even the camp as it *was*, and fled for their life.

8 And when these lepers came to the uttermost part of the camp, they went into one tent, and did eat and drink, and carried thence silver, and gold, and raiment, and went and hid *it*; and came again, and entered into another tent, and carried thence *also*, and went and hid *it*.

9 Then they said one to another, We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us: now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household.

10 So they came and called unto the porter of the city: and they told them, saying, We came to the camp of the Syrians, and, behold, *there was* no man there, neither voice of man, but horses tied, and asses tied, and the tents as they *were*.

11 And he called the porters; and they told *it* to the king's house within.

12 ¶ And the king arose in the night, and said unto his servants, I will now show you what the Syrians have done to us. They know that we *be* hungry; therefore are they gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying,

carry burdens." There were several people, also, that fought upon asses, as others did upon horses; which he proves out of Ælian and other authors (see Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. ii. cap. 13).

Fled for their life.] They thought of saving nothing but themselves; their fear being so great, that they left all they had behind them.

Ver. 8.] They had satisfied their hunger in the first tent, so that they had nothing now to do, but to get what treasure they could find, and secure it.

Ver. 9. *We do not well.*] When they had both well refreshed and enriched themselves, and also secured their booty, they began to reflect upon the distress of their brethren; and condemned themselves for making no more haste to impart unto them the discovery they had made of the enemy's flight, and the plenty of all things they found in their camp.

We hold our peace.] Do not publish the goodness of God to us all.

If we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us.] The Syrians might possibly recover out of their fright, and return when they saw none pursue them: or, some of them might be lurking thereabout, and come and kill them.

We may go and tell the king's household.] Impart this joyful news to the city. For every good citizen is in duty bound to discover every thing that is for the public safety.

Ver. 10. *Called unto the porter of the city.*] To him that was the chief commander at the gate of Samaria. *They told them.*] Him and the guard that was with him.

The tents as they were.] Standing without any body in them; but full of provision and riches.

Ver. 11. *He called the porters.*] Of the king's house. *They told it to the king's house within.*] Reported it in the court, till it came to the king's ears.

Ver. 12. *I will now show you what the Syrians have done to us.*] What their stratagem is.

When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the city.

13 And one of his servants answered and said, Let *some* take, I pray thee, five of the horses that remain, which are left in the city, (behold, they *are* as all the multitude of Israel that are left in it: behold, *I say*, they *are* even as all the multitude of the Israelites that are consumed:) and let us send and see.

14 They took therefore two chariot horses; and the king sent after the host of the Syrians, saying, Go and see.

15 And they went after them unto Jordan: and, lo, all the way *was* full of garments and vessels, which the Syrians had cast away in their haste. And the messengers returned, and told the king.

16 And the people went out, and spoiled the tents of the Syrians. So a measure of fine flour was *sold* for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the Lord.

17 ¶ And the king appointed the lord on whose hand he leaned to have the charge of the gate: and the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died, as the man of God had said, who spake when the king came down to him.

18 And it came to pass as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying, Two measures of

They know that we be hungry, &c.] His long sufferings had made him suspicious and cautious; and this was no improbable conjecture.

Ver. 13.] He repeats his advice twice, that it might make the greater impression on the king. The sense of which is this: that they were almost consumed with hunger, and must shortly die, as all the horses and the Israelites had done, whom the famine had killed. Therefore, if these horses and men were taken by the Syrians, there would be no great loss of them; for they would be lost if they remained in Samaria.

Ver. 14.] Whether they were gone or not. Some understand the horses of two chariots, which might in all be five: but it is more probable the king would venture no more than two horsemen, which he thought enough; who took two of the horses of his own chariots to make discovery.

Ver. 15. *They went after them unto Jordan.*] Finding the camp empty, as the lepers had related, they pursued them as far as this river.

The messengers returned, and told the king.] The certainty of their flight to their own country.

Ver. 16.] They found such store of provision in the tents of the Syrians, that it made this sudden change in the price of corn, according to Elisha's prediction.

Ver. 17. *To have the charge of the gate.*] To take care the people did not run out tumultuously, and leave the city empty: nor commit any disorder in the gate, being very eager to get victuals.

The people trode upon him in the gate, and he died.] They came out in such crowds, and pressed upon him so hard, that they threw him down, and trod him to death.

As the man of God had said.] See ver. 2.

Ver. 18.] By this it should seem there was a market kept in the gate of Samaria, where provisions were sold: and this lord was set to see good order kept, that they might neither take them by force, nor make any disturbance.

barley for a shekel, and a measure of fine flour for a shekel, shall be to-morrow about this time in the gate of Samaria :

19 And that lord answered the man of God, and said, Now, behold, if the LORD should make

Ver. 19.] This part of the history is repeated, because it is a most remarkable fulfilling of a divine prediction, whereby their belief of God's providence, ordering all things in a wonderful manner, was confirmed.

Ver. 20.] Before he could enjoy the benefit of that

windows in heaven, might such a thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.

20 And so it fell out unto him : for the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died.

plenty which God had bestowed upon them. Which did not at all alter their hearts; but they continued so obstinately deaf to all the prophet's admonitions and miraculous works, that in the next chapter we read of another long famine coming upon them.

CHAPTER VIII.

1 *The Shunammite, having left her country seven years, to avoid the forewarned famine, for Elisha's miracle sake hath her land restored by the king.* 7 *Hazael, being sent with a present by Ben-hadad to Elisha at Damascus, after he had heard the prophecy, killeth his master, and succeedeth him.* 16 *Jehoram's wicked reign in Judah.* 20 *Edom and Libnah revolt.* 23 *Ahaziah succeedeth Jehoram.* 25 *Ahaziah's wicked reign.* 28 *He visiteth Jehoram wounded, at Jezreel.*

1 THEN spake Elisha unto the woman, whose son he had restored to life, saying, Arise, and go thou and thine household and sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn : for the LORD hath called for a famine ; and it shall also come upon the land seven years.

2 And the woman arose, and did after the saying of the man of God : and she went with her household, and sojourned in the land of the Philistines seven years.

3 And it came to pass at the seven years' end, that the woman returned out of the land of the

Philistines : and she went forth to cry unto the king for her house and for her land.

4 And the king talked with Gehazi the servant of the man of God, saying, Tell me, I pray thee, all the great things that Elisha hath done.

5 And it came to pass, as he was telling the king how he had restored a dead body to life, that, behold, the woman, whose son he had restored to life, cried to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi said, My lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son, whom Elisha restored to life.

CHAP. VIII.

Ver. 1. *Whose son he had restored*] See iv. 35, 36. *And sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn :*] In some country out of the land of Israel.

For the Lord hath called for a famine ;] He had already ordered and decreed it.

It shall also come upon the land seven years.] Continue as long again as that in the days of Ahab, which lasted three years and a half. For as their iniquities increased, so did their punishments. Some of the Jews will have this to be the terrible famine spoken of by Joel the prophet ; who they fancied lived in these days. And four years of it, they say, were caused by noxious creatures, which ate up all the fruits of the earth ; and the other three by a drought, for want of rain.

Ver. 2. *The woman arose, &c.*] Who by this mention hath left us an example of a grateful mind, which never thinks it can sufficiently requite benefits received ; and she was abundantly satisfied, that what he predicted would certainly come to pass.

Sojourned in the land of the Philistines] This country was so near, that she might easily remove her family thither, and likewise hear sometimes from her own country. They were idolaters, indeed, but they suffered those that were not to live quietly among them, as their forefathers had done ; who entertained Abraham and Isaac with much friendship, and did not trouble themselves about their religion ; as Jacob, in like manner, sojourned a long time among idolaters in Mesopotamia. This shows the severity of God's anger against Israel, that he accounted them worse than the Philistines ; who had plenty among them, when the Israelites were almost starved.

Ver. 3.] Which some think her kindred had seized,

as if she had been dead. But it is more likely that she carried her relations along with her into the land of the Philistines ; and it was the custom here, as in other places, that they who left their country had their goods confiscated (see Grotius).

Ver. 4.) Some of the Jews think, that the king seeing Gehazi, asked him how he came to be leprous ; and thereupon he related to him the history of Naaman the Syrian : which moved the king, either to satisfy his curiosity, or pass away the time pleasantly, to desire to hear all the other miracles Elisha had wrought ; but he had no intention to be convinced by them, and turn to God. But then here arises a question, how Gehazi came to be admitted to speak with him ; being a leper, who was not to come into any company, much less into the king's presence. This difficulty, some think, cannot be solved without affirming, that this fell out before Gehazi left Elisha's service ; such *ὄσπεραλογία*, as the Greeks call it, being frequent in scripture ; and the Jews, in Seder Olam Rabba, place this famine before the story of Naaman, which spoils what they say of the occasion of this discourse. But there is no need to assert this : for either Gehazi upon his repentance might be restored to health ; or he might speak with the king at a due distance, as he walked in the field for his recreation ; and desired to be entertained with a relation of Elisha's miracles. Thus Naaman conversed with Elisha's family at a distance ; and the lepers called to our Saviour, as he went along the highway (Luke xvii. 12).

Ver. 5.] By a wonderful providence she came to present her petition, and brought her son with her, in that very nick of time, when Gehazi was telling the story of his restoration to life ; that the king might be the more fully satisfied of the truth of what he related from her own mouth.

6 And when the king asked the woman, she told him. So the king appointed unto her a certain officer, saying, Restore all that *was* her's, and all the fruits of the field since the day that she left the land, even until now.

7 ¶ And Elisha came to Damascus; and Ben-hadad the king of Syria was sick; and it was told him, saying, The man of God is come hither.

8 And the king said unto Hazael, take a present in thine hand, and go, meet the man of God, and inquire of the LORD by him, saying, Shall I recover of this disease?

9 So Hazael went to meet him, and took a present with him, even of every good thing of Damascus, forty camels' burden, and came and stood before him, and said, Thy son Ben-hadad king of Syria hath sent me to thee, saying, Shall I recover of this disease?

10 And Elisha said unto him, Go, say unto him, Thou mayest certainly recover: howbeit

Ver. 6. *She told him.*] That is, confirmed what Gehazi had said.

A certain officer,] In the margin, *an eunuch*; that is, one of his bedchamber.

Restore all that was her's, and all the fruits of the field] Not only her house and land, but all the profits that had been made of them, and brought into his exchequer.

Since the day that she left the land, even until now.] This was a high act of justice, and an argument of some goodness left in a bad man, that he would not gain any thing by her calamity.

Ver. 7. *Elisha came to Damascus*;] In the time of the famine, I suppose, he went thither, as the woman did to the Philistines.

The man of God is come hither.] Who having cured Naaman, had raised a great opinion of his power with God, in that country.

Ver. 8. *The king said unto Hazael,*] Who was the captain of his host.

Take a present in thine hand—and inquire of the Lord by him, saying, Shall I recover of this disease?] They who consulted prophets, were wont always to carry a present with them, in token of the honour they paid them; as appears by many instances, particularly Jeroboam's wife in this book. It is probable, also, he begged his prayers for his recovery, acknowledging him to be a man of God.

Ver. 9. *Hazael went to meet him,*] As he was coming into Damascus.

And took a present with him, even of every good thing of Damascus, forty camels' burden.] This was a very noble present; which, whether he accepted or refused, is not mentioned in the holy scripture. Abarinel thinks he accepted it, because nothing is said to the contrary, as there is in the case of Naaman, who presented him with silver, and gold, and raiment, and such-like things of value. Whereas this was only a provision of food, such as bread, and wine, and fruit, and fowl; which was a fit present for him to make to the prophet, who might be presumed to be weary with his journey, and as fit for him to accept for his refreshment.

Ver. 10.] His disease was not of such a nature as would endanger his life, if he did not lose it by some other means; as the prophet foresaw he would. For Josephus saith, his disease was only a deep melancholy, into which he fell upon the shameful flight of his army, when no enemy was near them. This

the LORD hath shewed me that he shall surely die.

11 And he settled his countenance stedfastly, until he was ashamed: and the man of God wept.

12 And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child.

13 And Hazael said, But what, *is* thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing? And Elisha answered, the LORD hath shewed me that thou shalt be king over Syria.

14 So he departed from Elisha, and came to his master; who said to him, What said Elisha to thee? And he answered, He told me that thou shouldst surely recover.

15 And it came to pass on the morrow, that he took a thick cloth, and dipped it in water, and

affected his body, and took away his appetite; but might have been cured.

Ver. 11.] The most simple sense is, He looked upon Hazael so long, with a settled countenance, that Hazael was ashamed, and he himself fell a weeping. Perhaps he fastened his eyes upon him as a man astonished, and that in an ecstasy saw some dreadful thing represented to him. Others interpret it, he turned away his face on one side, until he was ashamed, because he wept; which he would not have had Hazael seen. Others, he settled his countenance, not to weep; but he could not refrain from tears.

Ver. 12.] This last expresses the highest degree of barbarous cruelty: for which there was no occasion, if he did but kill the women with child, for the child in the womb would die with them, without ripping them up. Therefore, a late learned man, looking on this as a thing unheard of, will have the word *haroth* not to signify women with child, but castles or fortified places which he should demolish: though he cannot but acknowledge, that the cutting up women very naturally follows *slaying their young men, and dashing their children*, which goes just before. And he should have taken notice, that the very first evil he mentions that Hazael should do to them, is *setting their strong holds on fire* (Gousset, Comment. Lingux Hebraicæ, p. 216).

Ver. 13. *But what, is thy servant a dog.*] This is commonly understood as a disclaiming of such barbarity, which he abhorred as a beastly thing. But the words in the Hebrew sound otherways, being a submissive form of speech, wherein the speaker undervalues and debases himself, as appears from 1 Sam. xxiv. 15. 2 Sam. ix. 8, and run thus; "But what is thy servant? a dog." As much as to say, A mean and contemptible creature, who can never have power to do such great things; which none but a prince can do.

The Lord hath showed me that thou shalt be king over Syria.] This was as much as declaring and appointing him king of Syria: which Elijah ordered him to do; and was as much as if he had anointed him (see 1 Kings xix. 15).

Ver. 14.] He told him only the first part of his answer, and that not sincerely, as he intended. For he did not say he *should* surely recover, but that he *might* recover; his disease being in itself not mortal.

Ver. 15. *On the morrow,*] His eager desire to reign would not suffer him to expect his master's death, but

spread it on his face, so that he died: and Hazael reigned in his stead.

16 ¶ And in the fifth year of Joram (the son of Ahab king of Israel, Jehoshaphat being then king of Judah, Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah began to reign.

17 Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem.

18 And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab: for the daughter of Ahab was his wife: and he did evil in the sight of the LORD.

19 Yet the LORD would not destroy Judah

he made haste to dispatch him the very next morning after he came from Elisha.

That he took a thick cloth, and dipped it in water,] The covering of his bed, which (as many think) was made of goat's hair; or, some other thick cloth, that would suck up a great deal of water.

And spread it on his face, so that he died:] He being feverish (as Josephus thinks) and complaining of heat, Hazael pretended to cool him by this means; but indeed choked him; by thrusting the cloth, perhaps, into his mouth: so that he could make no noise, nor did any sign of violence remain upon his body; but the murder was committed so secretly, that it was thought he died a natural death. But nothing can be concealed from God, who took care to have the villany recorded to posterity, by revealing it to his prophet.

Hazael reigned in his stead.] Being in great favour with the people, especially with the soldiery; and Ben-hadad, it is likely, leaving no son.

Ver. 16.] All the seeming contradictions between this verse and ch. i. 17, and ch. iii. 1, are thus briefly reconciled by Huetius:—Jehoram beginning to reign with his father Jehoshaphat in his seventeenth year, and Joram king of Israel in his eighteenth, the first year of Joram king of Israel will fall out in the second year of Jehoram, king of Judah: whose father dying in the twenty-second year of his reign, Jehoram, king of Judah, began to reign alone in the fifth year of Joram king of Israel (see Demonstr. Evang. propos. iv. p. 204).

Ver. 17.] Part of which was with his father, as I now observed, and the rest by himself. Dr. Lightfoot observing three dates of the beginning of his reign, gives this account of it:—The first was when he was made viceroy with his father, at the time he went out of the land for the recovery of Ramoth-gilead. The second was when his father went upon his expedition with Jehoram, king of Israel, against Moab (ch. iii. of this book), from which time, he thinks, the beginning of his reign is fixed here, and in 2 Chron. xxi. 20. For after this time, Jehoshaphat was little at Jerusalem, but abroad either in his own land (which he perambulated that he might reduce the people to the true religion), or, in Moab, to bring them into subjection (2 Chron. xix. 20). And lastly, at his father's death he was completely king of Judah (2 Chron. xxi. 1 (see Harm. of the Evang. Prolegom. sect. 6). So that the clearest solution of the difficulty mentioned in the foregoing verse is this (as Dr. Alix, a great man in this learning, and all others, hath observed to me), that Jehoram had three beginnings of his reign. One in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat, when his father designed him to be king; the second in the twenty-third year of his father, when he was crowned; and the last when his father (after he had reigned five-and-twenty years) died; and he

for David his servant's sake, as he promised him to give him always a light, and to his children.

20 ¶ In his days Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah, and made a king over themselves.

21 So Joram went over to Zair, and all the chariots with him: and he rose by night, and smote the Edomites which compassed him about, and the captains of the chariots: and the people fled into their tents.

22 Yet Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day. Then Libnah revolted at the same time.

23 And the rest of the acts of Joram, and all

reigned alone a little more than four years. Thus Solomon was made king before his father died, and again after his death, as Abarbanel observes (see 1 Kings ii. 12).

Ver. 18. *The daughter of Ahab was his wife:]* viz. Athaliah, ver. 26.

He did evil in the sight of the Lord.] Being seduced by his wife to forsake the religion of his pious father and grandfather. Thus Ahab himself was led to the worship of Baal by his wife Jezebel. So dangerous it is to marry with idolaters; for this wife of Jehoram, in all likelihood, was the author of that cruel policy of murdering all his brethren, for fear they should disturb him in his kingdom (2 Chron. xxi. 2—4).

Ver. 19. *Yet the Lord would not destroy Judah for David his servant's sake,]* Though he punished them severely (see 2 Chron. xxi. 11—17, &c.), yet he would not cut them all off, but had patience with them a long time, upon the account of that excellent servant of his, king David; unto whom he had made a promise, as it here follows, and to his seed after him, of a perpetual kingdom.

To give him always a light, and to his children.] A succession in this dignity (as I have expounded it before), which was completed in the Messiah, whose kingdom shall have no end.

Ver. 20.] After they had been subject to Judah a hundred and fifty years, ever since the time of David who subdued that country. This was a great dishonour to him; but by this means the prophecy of Isaac was fulfilled (Gen. xxvii. 40).

Ver. 21. *Zair,]* This word *Zair* is written differently from *Seir*; and therefore doth not signify any part of the country of Edom; but some city near to it.

All the chariots with him:] With as great a force as he could raise, to reduce them to obedience.

He rose by night, and smote the Edomites which compassed him about,] The Edomites were not wanting in their own defence, but had surrounded him with an army; through which he broke in the night, and routed them.

The people fled into their tents.] To their own camp; where, it is likely, they were entrenched.

Ver. 22. *Yet Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah,]* Notwithstanding this victory, they could not recover their dominion over this country; but Edom continued a kingdom under its own king.

Unto this day.] When this book was written, which was not long after this revolt. And they were not brought again under the power of the Jews till after the captivity of Babylon: when Hyrcanus the son of Simon conquered them, and they received circumcision; and came to have a free commerce with the Jews. Insomuch, that Herod the son of Antipater who was an Edomite, obtained the kingdom of Judea,

that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

24 And Joram slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead.

25 In the twelfth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel did Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah begin to reign.

26 Two and twenty years old *was* Ahaziah when he began to reign; and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Athaliah, the daughter of Omri king of Israel.

27 And he walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the Lord, as

and endeavoured to pass for a Jew, because they had received circumcision under Hyrcanus.

Then Libnah revolted at the same time.] Which was the reason, perhaps, why he could not pursue his victory over the Edomites, and regain their country; because he had enough to do at home, there being a defection of his own subjects from him. For this was a considerable city in the tribe of Judah (Josh. xv. 42), and belonged to the priests (Josh. xxi. 13). Which example, it is likely, other neighbouring cities followed. For the reason why they revolted, was because he attempted to set up his idolatrous worship among them; contrary to the law of God and of the kingdom (see 2 Chron. xxi. 10, 11).

Ver. 23.] See 1 Kings xi. 41.

Ver. 24. *Was buried with his fathers.]* But not in the sepulchre of the kings, as we read 2 Chron. xxi. 20.

Ver. 25.] In the conclusion of the eleventh and beginning of the twelfth: as appears from ix. 29.

Ver. 26. *Two and twenty years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign;]* But in 2 Chron. xxii. 2, it is said, he was forty-two years old when he began to reign: which seeming contradiction was anciently solved in this manner (by the author of Seder Olam Rabba, whom a great many Jewish and Christian writers follow), that the forty-two years mentioned in the book of Chronicles are not to be computed from the birth of Ahaziah, but from the time of the decree of cutting off the house of Omri, which was in the thirty-first year of Asa, when Omri began to reign, who reigned six years, and after him Ahab twenty and two; and Ahaziah his son two years, and Joram twelve: all which put together make forty-two years. This Dr. Lightfoot hath expressed more plainly thus; "The forty-two years have not relation to the age of Ahaziah, but to the kingdom of the house of Omri. And therefore the words of the original are not to be translated, 'Ahaziah was forty-two years old:' but 'Ahaziah was the son of forty-two years,' as Seder Olam translates it. And the reason why his reign is thus differently set down from all other kings of Judah is, because he was a branch of the house of Omri by his mother's side (ver. 18), and therefore was fit to be reckoned not by the line of the kings of Judah, but by the house of Omri and Ahab." But there is an easier and more likely reconciliation of these two places, by Kinchi, Abarbinel, and others, which is, that Joram being invaded by the Arabians, and also diseased, made his son Ahaziah king, together with himself, when he was twenty-two years old. In this condition things remained twenty years: and then his father dying, they made him king alone, when he was forty-two years old; thus a great number of Christian interpreters also understand it. But then they suppose that Jehoram being thirty-two years old when

did the house of Ahab: for he *was* the son-in-law of the house of Ahab.

28 ¶ And He went with Joram the son of Ahab to the war against Hazael king of Syria in Ramoth-gilead; and the Syrians wounded Joram.

29 And king Joram went back to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians had given him at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to see Joram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.

he began to reign, reigned eight years (as it is said ver. 17), after his father's death, that is, happily and prosperously; but after that falling into the hands of the Arabians, and growing sickly, he reigned ingloriously twenty years, till he was sixty years old, his son administering affairs all this time for him; but since the LXX. in the book of Chronicles read not forty-two, but twenty, many learned and good men think the ancient Hebrew copies agreed thereunto; but by the carelessness of transcribers, forty came in instead of twenty. Which it is better they think to acknowledge plainly, than to use forced and constrained interpretations, as the preceding seem to them to be. Perizonius hath lately censured them all, in these words, "Si quid ego video aut intelligo, multo rectius divinitati et auctoritati Scripturæ S. consulant, qui vitium istic librorum in re per se levi agnoscunt, quam quæ difficultatem volunt tollere, contortis, violentis, et absonis interpretationibus: quæ ab ipsa Scripturæ locutione, et clarissima Syntaxi longissime recedunt," &c. And then instances in this very place, and the foregoing expressions of it (Prefat. in Ælian. Var. Histor. * * * * 2).

His mother's name was Athaliah, the daughter of Omri king of Israel.] So she is called also in 2 Chron. xxii. 2, that is, Omri's grand-daughter; who are often called daughters, as I have before observed. For it is certain Athaliah was the daughter of Ahab; but perhaps educated by Omri his father, and upon that account may be called his daughter. He was the youngest son of Jehoram, all whose other children and his wives were carried away by the Philistines and Arabians, when they made an inroad upon Judah, 2 Chron. xxi. 16, 17, where he is called Jehohaz.

Ver. 27. *He walked in the way of the house of Ahab,]* Not only worshipped the calves, but also Baal.

For he was the son-in-law of the house of Ahab.] And so corrupted in his religion, by the affinity he made with that wicked family. Into which Jehoshaphat married his son, hoping, perhaps, to unite thereby the two kingdoms again: but it proved the ruin of his family; as appears by the book of Chronicles.

Ver. 28. *He went with Joram—to the war against Hazael]* Just as Jehoshaphat went with Ahab to the same place; which Joram, it seems, endeavoured to recover to Israel, as his father had done.

The Syrians wounded Joram.] Not mortally, as they did Ahab: but so, that he was fain to leave the field to be cured of his wounds in Jezreel.

Ver. 29. *Joram went back to be healed in Jezreel.]* Leaving his army at Ramoth-gilead.

Ahaziah—went down to see Joram.] By this means the secret providence of God so ordered it, that they were both killed by Jehu, as a punishment of their idolatry.

CHAPTER IX.

1 *Elisha sendeth a young prophet with instructions to anoint Jehu at Ramoth-gilead.* 4 *The prophet having done his message fleeth.* 11 *Jehu, being made king by the soldiers, killeth Joram in the field of Naboth.* 27 *Ahaziah is slain at Gur, and buried at Jerusalem.* 30 *Proud Jezebel is thrown down out of a window, and eaten by dogs.*

1 AND Elisha the prophet called one of the children of the prophets, and said unto him, Gird up thy loins, and take this box of oil in thy hand, and go to Ramoth-gilead :

2 And when thou comest thither, look out there Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi, and go in, and make him arise up from among his brethren, and carry him to an inner chamber ;

3 Then take the box of oil, and pour it on his head, and say, Thus saith the LORD, I have anointed thee king over Israel. Then open the door, and flee, and tarry not.

4 ¶ So the young man, *even* the young man the prophet, went to Ramoth-gilead.

5 And when he came, behold, the captains of the host were sitting ; and he said, I have an errand to thee, O captain. And Jehu said, Unto which of all us ? And he said, To thee, O captain.

6 And he arose, and went into the house ; and he poured the oil on his head, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I have anointed thee king over the people of the LORD, *even* over Israel.

7 And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master, that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the LORD, at the hand of Jezebel.

8 For the whole house of Ahab shall perish : and I will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel :

9 And I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah :

10 And the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the portion of Jezebel, and *there shall be none to bury her.* And he opened the door, and fled.

11 ¶ Then Jehu came forth to the servants of

CHAPTER IX.

Ver. 1. *Elisha—called one of the children of the prophets.*] The prophet Elijah was commanded to do this which Elisha was now about to do ; but Ahab's humiliation had moved God to defer the judgment pronounced upon him and his family : and so the execution of it was left to Elisha, who did not go himself because he was better known, and his business required secrecy ; or, being old, he was unfit for such a journey ; for the last time we read of him he was at Damascus. This young man, who was now attending him, the Jews in Seder Olam Rabba say, was Jonah the son of Amittai : which is the opinion also of Abarbinel, and other Hebrew doctors.

Gird up thy loins.] Which implies he was to make expedition, and despatch his business before it could be discovered.

Go to Ramoth-gilead.] Where Joram had left his army ; and, as some think, they had now possessed themselves of it.

Ver. 2. *Look out there Jehu.*] Who some think was left commander-in-chief of the king's army.

Make him arise up from among his brethren.] From the other officers of the army (ver. 5).

Carry him to an inner chamber.] Lest the rest of the captains should make any opposition, and apprehend him.

Ver. 3. *I have anointed thee king over Israel.*] The Jews think none of the kings of Israel were anointed, but only those of the house of David : nor all they neither, but only when there was a question about the succession. For had it not been for the faction of Adonijah, there had been no need of Solomon's unction. For which reason Jehu was anointed, because the succession to the kingdom of Israel was to be translated out of the right line of the family of Ahab unto another family, which had no right to the kingdom, but merely by this appointment of God : who not only by his word, but by this solemn rite, constituted him king of Israel.

Then open the door, and flee.] Lest by any means what he had done should be discovered, and they might lay hold on him as a traitor.

Ver. 4.] This argued a great faith in this young prophet, that he undertook so readily the execution of this command. For there was no small danger to anoint a new king ; as Elisha himself plainly suggests ; when he bade him flee away, as fast as he could, as soon as he had done.

Ver. 5. *The captains of the hosts were sitting.*] In council, I suppose, how to carry on the war, or about some other business. Though some fancy they were at dinner.

I have an errand to thee.] Looking upon Jehu.

Jehu said, Unto which of all us ?] This shows that Jehu was the head of them, who asked the question in the name of the rest.

Ver. 6. *Went into the house.*] Into a private room (ver. 2).

He poured the oil on his head.] The oil being poured on his head, the Jews say he anointed him with it (as the manner was), in the form of a crown : in token that he was the head of the people, and had the supreme power over them committed to him.

I have anointed thee king over the people of the Lord.] They were still the people of the Lord by right and by profession, though they worshipped other gods with him. And it belonged to him to appoint what ruler he pleased over them ; which he did by his prophet. Without which authority, if Jehu had taken the government upon him, he had been a usurper.

Ver. 7.] Now he acquaints him what God required of him upon this promotion. To execute God's judgment on the house of Ahab, which he pronounced long ago, for their cruel murders of his prophets, and other good men in Israel ; particularly Naboth. In this Jehu acted not out of a spirit of private revenge, for he had no quarrel with the house of Ahab, but as God's minister, who by his prophet authorized him to do what follows.

Ver. 8.] See upon 1 Kings xxi. 21.

his lord: and *one* said unto him, *Is all well?* wherefore came this mad fellow to thee? And he said unto them, Ye know the man, and his communication.

12 And they said, *It is false; tell us now.* And he said, Thus and thus spake he to me, saying, Thus saith the LORD, I have anointed thee king over Israel.

13 Then they hasted, and took every man his garment, and put it under him on the top of the stairs, and blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu is king.

14 So Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi conspired against Joram. (Now Joram had kept Ramoth-gilead, he and all Israel, because of Hazael king of Syria.)

15 But king Joram was returned to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians had

given him, when he fought with Hazael king of Syria.) And Jehu said, If it be your minds, then let none go forth nor escape out of the city to go to tell it in Jezreel.

16 So Jehu rode in a chariot, and went to Jezreel; for Joram lay there. And Ahaziah king of Judah was come down to see Joram.

17 And there stood a watchman on the tower in Jezreel, and he spied the company of Jehu as he came, and said, I see a company. And Joram said, Take a horseman, and send to meet them, and let him say, *Is it peace?*

18 So there went one on horseback to meet him, and said, Thus saith the king, *Is it peace?* And Jehu said, What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me. And the watchman told, saying, The messenger came to them, but he cometh not again.

Ver. 9.] See 1 Kings xiv. 10. xvi. 3.

Ver. 10.] See 1 Kings xxi. 23.

Ver. 11. Then Jehu came forth to the servants of his lord:] Returned to the council-chamber, where they continued sitting (ver. 5).

Is all well? They, seeing the prophet look like a man in a fright, thought he brought some bad news.

Wherefore came this mad fellow to thee? So they call him, because he came in so abruptly upon them, when they were sitting in council; and because he fled away so hastily; and because they observed some motions in him which argued great disturbance. Though some think they, being profane idolaters, spake these words in scorn and contempt.

Ye know the man, and his communication.] They might know him to be a prophet by his habit, and by his way of speaking, as one that had authority. And prophets they knew commonly came to speak something concerning religion. By which general answer he thought to have satisfied them, and put by their further inquiry, that he might take time to deliberate of the most opportune season to declare this message of God to him.

Ver. 12. *It is false; tell us now.*] They were confident he came about some matter of great importance, which he seeming unwilling to discover, they pressed him the harder to tell truth.

Thus and thus spake he to me.] It is likely the spirit of courage, as well as of prudence, entered into Jehu, when he was anointed, so that he took heart to tell them boldly what the prophet had said. And the oil perhaps was still fresh upon his head, wherewith he anointed him, which he showed to them.

Ver. 13. *They hasted.*] God also moved the hearts of all the captains, immediately, without any consultation, to acknowledge him for their king.

And took every man his garment, and put it under him] They made a kind of throne of their very garments, and raised him up above the rest of the company.

On the top of the stairs.] They did not stay till they came down into the street, but forthwith, upon the very top of the stairs of the place where they were sitting, acknowledged him for their sovereign, by spreading their garments under his feet, to tread upon. So De Dieu understands the words. There is a late author who guesses these were winding-stairs in a turret, on the top of which tower they placed Jehu, that all the people might see him, and hear him proclaimed their king (Gousset, in his Comment. Lingue Hebraice, p. 173).

And blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu is king.] They

proclaimed him to be appointed by God to be king of Israel, which used to be done by the sound of the trumpet (1 Kings i. 32).

Ver. 14. *So Jehu—conspired against Joram.*] Contrived, with the rest of the captains that commanded the army, how to destroy Joram. For which they had the fairer opportunity, because he was gone from the army to Jezreel, as it here follows.

Now Joram had kept Ramoth-gilead, he and all Israel, because of Hazael] That is, kept a strong garrison there, upon the frontiers of his kingdom; and left his army also thereabout (for they are meant by all Israel), for fear Hazael should make any new attempt to recover it.

Ver. 15. *But king Joram was returned to be healed in Jezreel*] This was said before, but here repeated, to show how Jehu came to effect his design so easily. Which was because Joram was absent from his army: among whom, if he had continued, it is likely some of them, if not all, would have adhered to him, and fought for him.

If it be your minds,] If they were all agreed that he should be their king.

Then let none go forth nor escape out of the city] This shows that Ramoth-gilead was in the possession of the Israelites. From whence he would have none to be sent, nor suffered to go forth, but the gates be narrowly watched.

To go to tell it in Jezreel.] For he knew that secrecy and speed were necessary to the execution of such great designs as he had in hand.

Ver. 16.] This is repeated, to show that Joram continued at Jezreel, whither he went from Ramoth; and that Ahaziah, who came to visit him, continued also with him.

Ver. 17. *There stood a watchman on the tower in Jezreel.*] These watchmen seem to have been set on high places, in time of peace, as well as war, where-soever the king was, that he might not be surprised. For David at Jerusalem was admonished by the watchman that his sons were safe, when he feared they had been lost (2 Sam. xiii. 34), as afterward, that news was coming from the army that fought against Absalom (xviii. 24, 25).

I see a company.] A troop, or squadron of horse, as we now speak.

Joram said—send to meet them, and let him say, Is it peace?] He was afraid the Syrians had got the better of his army; or some more of his subjects had revolted.

Ver. 18. *Thus saith the king, Is it peace?* The messenger spake in the king's name, but he spake to

19 Then he sent out a second on horseback, which came to them, and said, Thus saith the king, *Is it peace?* And Jehu answered, What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me.

20 And the watchman told, saying, He came even unto them, and cometh not again: and the driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously.

21 And Joram said, Make ready. And his chariot was made ready. And Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah went out, each in his chariot, and they went out against Jehu, and met him in the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite.

22 And it came to pass, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, *Is it peace, Jehu?* And he answered, What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?

a greater king, who bade him not to trouble himself about peace or war, but follow him. Which he durst not refuse, seeing such a company of soldiers with Jehu.

The messenger came to them, but he cometh not again.] Which put them in doubt what to think.

Ver. 19.] To the same question the same answer was returned; that it did not concern him whether they were friends or enemies; but his safest way was to follow Jehu.

Ver. 20. *Jehu the son of Nimshi;* Who was his grandfather, but a more eminent person, it is likely, than Jehoshaphat his father; and so he was commonly called his son.

For he driveth furiously.] He was noted, it seems, for fierceness and eagerness in pursuing his designs. But the Chaldee paraphrast takes it quite otherwise, that "he drove slowly;" as if he would entice Joram to come out of the city and meet him, having no mind to engage in an assault or siege of Jezreel.

Ver. 21. *They went out against Jehu.]* Not to fight him, but to meet him before he came to the city, that if there was any sedition he might compose it by his authority; or, perhaps, in honour of Jehu, who he saw would deliver the news himself, and not entrust a messenger with it.

Met him in the portion of Naboth] By a special providence of God, which brought them together in that place.

Ver. 22. *Is it peace, Jehu?* Seeing him look sternly, I suppose, he began to suspect some danger.

What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many? He means her idolatries, wherewith she bewitched the people, still continued, and were multiplied. Some think, indeed, that she added corporal fornication to her spiritual, and used evil arts to provoke men to filthy lusts. And, indeed, all manner of lewdness was wont to accompany idolatry; and in Rev. ii. 20. they who are compared to Jezebel are said to entice Christians to fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols; unless by fornication we there understand idolatry, and by eating things sacrificed to idols, having communion with idolaters.

Ver. 23. *Joram turned his hands,]* The hand of him that drove the chariot.

And fled,] Towards Jezreel; where if he had kept, and inquired what Jehu came for, he might have defended himself for some time against him.

23 And Joram turned his hands, and fled, and said to Ahaziah, *There is treachery, O Ahaziah.*

24 And Jehu drew a bow with his full strength, and smote Jehoram between his arms, and the arrow went out at his heart, and he sunk down in his chariot.

25 Then said Jehu to Bidkar his captain, Take up, and cast him in the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite: for remember how that, when I and thou rode together after Ahab his father, the Lord laid this burden upon him;

26 Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons, saith the Lord; and I will requite thee in this plat, saith the Lord. Now therefore take and cast him into the plat of ground, according to the word of the Lord.

27 ¶ But when Ahaziah the king of Judah saw this, he fled by the way of the garden house. And Jehu followed after him, and said, Smit

There is treachery, O Ahaziah.] Which he discovered too late, having no forces to resist these of Jehu.

Ver. 24. *Smote Jehoram between his arms,]* Or shoulders; it being, I suppose, a chariot open behind.

The arrow went out at his heart, and he sunk down] God so ordered it, that he shot him quite through the heart, so that he died immediately.

Ver. 25. *Cast him in the portion of the field of Naboth]* Part of which Ahab had made a garden; but the rest remained a field.

For remember how that, when I and thou rode together after Ahab] With the rest of his guard, when he went to take possession of Naboth's vineyard. In the Hebrew the words are exactly thus: "Remember, thou and I were among those who rode two and two together after Ahab," &c. That is, he was attended by his guard, who were wont to ride in pairs, two and two, and Jehu and Bidkar rode at that time together, and heard Elijah's words.

The Lord laid this burden upon him;] This punishment, which is frequently by the prophets called a burden, Isa. xiii. 1, &c. was denounced against Ahab, and extended to his son, 1 Kings xxi. 19, where these very words are not recorded, but Elijah said more than is there set down, which Jehu well remembered.

Ver. 26. *I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons.]* Some think that Jezebel contrived the death of Naboth's sons, together with their father, that they might lay no claim to the possession of their father. But these words may signify no more (as Grotius and others have observed) than the poverty to which they were reduced. For all punishments and miseries are called blood, among the Hebrews (Lev. xvii. 4); and to take away their estate, upon which they should have lived, was in effect to take away their blood, in which is the life of every creature; as we say now of grievous oppressors, that they suck the blood of others, and commonly call them blood-suckers.

Take and cast him into the plat of ground,] Without any burial; that, according to the prophecy, he might be eaten by the fowls of the air (1 Kings xxi. 24).

Ver. 27. *Ahaziah—fled by the way of the garden house.]* Which was built upon part of Naboth's vineyard.

To Megiddo,] He could not get to his own country, and so sheltered himself at Megiddo, which was not far from Samaria, whither his servants carried him, as a safer place (for he was not mortally wounded), and

him also in the chariot. *And they did so* at the going up to Gur, which *is* by Ibleam. And he fled to Megiddo, and died there.

28 And his servants carried him in a chariot to Jerusalem, and buried him in his sepulchre with his fathers in the city of David.

29 And in the eleventh year of Joram the son of Ahab began Ahaziah to reign over Judah.

30 ¶ And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out at a window.

31 And as Jehu entered in at the gate, she said, *Had* Zimri peace, who slew his master?

32 And he lifted up his face to the window, and said, *Who is on my side?* who? And there looked out to him two or three eunuchs.

33 And he said, throw her down. So they threw her down: and *some* of her blood was

there he hid himself for fear of Jehu, as we read 2 Chron. xxii. 9.

And died there.] Not at Megiddo; but being searched for and taken in Samaria, he was brought to Jehu at Jezreel, where he commanded him to be slain. Which seems to be beyond his commission; but as he was an idolater, so he was of the bloody house of Ahab by his mother's side, who was Ahab's daughter (viii. 18): and his destruction was of God (as the author of the second book of Chronicles observes, xxii. 7), who prompted Jehu thus to understand his command. Thus Abarbanel understands those words, *he died there*. Not in Megiddo, mentioned before, but in that execution of God's judgments on the house of Ahab.

Ver. 28.] Which honour Jehu permitted to be done him, because he was descended from the good prince Jehoshaphat (see 2 Chron. xxii. 9).

Ver. 29.] See the foregoing chapter, ver. 25.

Ver. 30.] In the Hebrew it is, "she put her eyes in paint;" that is, in *stibium*, which made the eyes look black, and was accounted beautiful; and also dilated the eyebrows, and made the eyes appear big; which in some countries was also thought very amiable (see Grotius). This was not intended to tempt Jehu with her beauty, but to keep up her dignity and state to the very last, for she was extremely proud.

Ver. 31.] She thought, perhaps, he would not meddle with a woman; and therefore took upon her to rebuke and upbraid him with what he had done against her son; bidding him remember what became of Zimri, who was cut off by Omri, her father-in-law, the founder of Ahab's family.

Ver. 32.] Who, according to the custom of the eastern countries, were wont to attend upon queens in their chambers.

Ver. 33. *So they threw her down.*] See how suddenly courtiers change with the fortune of their master.

He trode her under foot.] With his horses. This some of the Jewish doctors, particularly Ralbag and Kimchi, look upon as a punishment, according to

sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he trode her under foot.

34 And when he was come in, he did eat and drink, and said, Go, see now this cursed woman, and bury her: for she is a king's daughter.

35 And they went to bury her: but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of *her* hands.

36 Wherefore they came again, and told him. And he said, *This is* the word of the Lord, which he spake by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel:

37 And the carcass of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel; so that they shall not say, *This is* Jezebel.

the *lex talionis*, "like for like." As she had done, so she suffered. For she caused Naboth to be stoned, and now she was condemned to be stoned herself; for there were two ways of stoning, either by throwing stones at malefactors till they had knocked them down and killed them, or by throwing them down upon the stones from a high place, and breaking them to pieces, as Amaziah did with the captives he took of mount Seir, 2 Chron. xxv. 12 (see Selden, lib. i. De Synedriis, cap. 5. p. 76, &c.)

Ver. 34. *Go, see now this cursed woman, and bury her:*] That is, go and take care of her body, to see it decently buried.

For she is a king's daughter.] And was also the wife and the mother of a king, which moved him to have this regard to her, as all men naturally have to royal dignity; forgetting, in the mean time, what Elijah had prophesied against her in his hearing. Which he might easily do when he was merry, it is like, with eating and drinking liberally.

Ver. 35.] All the rest being eaten by the dogs. For it is probable, when the horsemen were gone, who trod her under foot, the footmen stripped her, and left her naked in her own blood; exposed to the hungry dogs, that came out of the city and devoured her.

Ver. 36. *This is the word of the Lord, &c.*] Which he now called to mind, as he did his prophecy concerning Ahab and his sons.

In the portion of Jezreel] See 1 Kings xxi. 23.

Ver. 37.] No memory of her, nothing whereby to know there had been such a woman as Jezebel, should remain of her; suppose a picture, or effigies, to which men might point, and say, *This is* Jezebel. In our language, perhaps we should have said, "they shall not say, *Here lies* Jezebel:" for no monument was made for her, she having no sepulchre but in the belly of dogs. These words are not mentioned in 1 Kings xxi. being succinctly included in what is there recorded; but perfectly remembered by Jehu; who now more largely recites the words of Elijah

CHAPTER X.

1 *Jehu, by his letters, causeth seventy of Ahab's children to be behcaded.* 8 *He causeth the fact by the prophecy of Elijah.* 12 *At the shearing house he slayeth two and forty of Ahaziah's brethren.* 15 *He taketh Jehonadab into his company.* 18 *By subtilty he destroyeth all the worshippers of Baal.* 29 *Jehu followeth Jeroboam's sins.* 32 *Hazael oppresseth Israel.* 34 *Jehoahaz succeedeth Jehu.*

1 AND Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria. And Jehu wrote letters, and sent to Samaria, unto the rulers of Jezreel, to the elders, and to them that brought up Ahab's children, saying,

2 Now as soon as this letter cometh to you, seeing your master's sons are with you, and there are with you chariots and horses, a fenced city also, and armour;

3 Look even out the best and meekest of your master's sons, and set him on his father's throne, and fight for your master's house.

4 But they were exceedingly afraid, and said, Behold, two kings stood not before him: how then shall we stand?

5 And he that was over the house, and he that was over the city, the elders also, and the bringers up of the children, sent to Jehu, saying, We are thy servants, and will do all that thou shalt bid us; we will not make any king: do thou that which is good in thine eyes.

6 Then he wrote a letter the second time to them, saying, If ye be mine, and if ye will hearken

unto my voice, take ye the heads of the men your master's sons, and come to me to Jezreel by to morrow this time. Now the king's sons, being seventy persons, were with the great men of the city, which brought them up.

7 And it came to pass, when the letter came to them, that they took the king's sons, and slew seventy persons, and put their heads in baskets, and sent him them to Jezreel.

8 ¶ And there came a messenger, and told him, saying, They have brought the heads of the king's sons. And he said, Lay ye them in two heaps at the entering in of the gate until the morning.

9 And it came to pass in the morning, that he went out, and stood, and said to all the people, Ye be righteous: behold, I conspired against my master, and slew him: but who slew all these?

10 Know now that there shall fall unto the earth nothing of the word of the Lord, which the Lord spake concerning the house of Ahab: for

CHAPTER X.

Ver. 1. *Ahab had seventy sons*] It is likely that grandsons are comprehended under the name of sons as is usual in scripture; though, by several wives, he might have as many sons as Gideon had.

In Samaria.] Unto which place the ruler of Jezreel had carried them, when they heard how Jehu had killed Joram; for fear they should fall into his hands: or, perhaps, during the war with Syria, their father had sent them thither, as a place of security (it being a strong city), in case of any ill accident that might happen.

Jehu wrote letters—unto the rulers of Jezreel.] The chief noblemen of the kingdom, who, I suppose, were fled thither with the king's sons; and perhaps were met to deliberate what to do in this juncture whether or not to set up one of Ahab's sons to be their king.

To the elders.] The principal persons in Samaria. *To those who brought up Ahab's children.*] These are called *omanim* (nourishers), because they had the care of his children from their infancy, and were now their governors, as we call them; who were of his kindred (ver. 11).

Ver. 3.] This he said, because, perhaps, he heard they were consulting about a successor to Ahab. Or rather, he insults over them, and denounces war against them with scorn and derision, being secure of the event, that they were not able to oppose him.

Ver. 4.] They were timorous persons, bred up it is likely in ease and delicacy. For this argument had little in it: those two kings being unarmed, without any forces; which they were furnished withal to defend themselves, and their master's sons.

Ver. 5. *He that was over the house.*] The high steward, as we call him, of the king's household.

He that was over the city.] The governor of the city who had all the soldiers under his command.

The elders] All the senators, and the great men that were entrusted with the care of the king's children.

We are thy servants.] They basely submit to his pleasure, without making any composition: which it is likely they thought it to no purpose to endeavour, and did not expect such rigorous usage from him.

Ver. 6.] This is repeated, to show the vile spirit of these great men; that could destroy so many royal persons, of whom they had the care, and who had offended nobody.

Ver. 7.] They seem not to have deliberated about the matter, though in itself so horrid; but instantly obeyed him.

Sent him them to Jezreel.] Following after themselves, as appears from ver. 11, expecting, perhaps, to be thanked for what they had so readily done; but, quite contrary, came to the same miserable end.

Ver. 8.] The gate was the place of public concourse for judgment, and other business; so that the laying them there was to expose them to public view, that every one might know there was none of Ahab's posterity left to reign over them.

Ver. 9. *Said to all the people.*] Who were there gathered together, gazing upon this amazing sight.

Ye be righteous.] Be not troubled; for none of you are to blame in all this.

Behold, I conspired against my master, and slew him: but who slew all these?] If any were guilty, he acknowledges it was himself. But since they had slain so many, why should he be to blame for slaying one? since he had authority from God for what he did.

Ver. 10. *There shall fall unto the earth nothing— which the Lord spake concerning the house of Ahab:*] In these words he throws all the guilt from off himself, being only God's instrument to punish the house of Ahab, as he had foretold by Elijah, and therefore he resolved to proceed, till he had utterly extirpated all that depended on him.

the LORD hath done *that* which he spake by his servant Elijah.

11 So Jehu slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men, and his kinsfolks, and his priests, until he left him none remaining.

12 ¶ And he arose and departed, and came to Samaria. *And* as he *was* at the shearing house in the way,

13 Jehu met with the brethren of Ahaziah king of Judah, and said, Who *are* ye? And they answered, We *are* the brethren of Ahaziah; and we go down to salute the children of the king and the children of the queen.

14 And he said, Take them alive. And they took them alive, and slew them at the pit of the shearing house, *even* two and forty men; neither left he any of them.

For the Lord hath done] As if he had said, This is not my doing, but the Lord's: whose command I obey.

That which he spake by his servant Elijah.] He mentions what he denounced, rather than what Elisha commanded (ix. 8), because the words of Elijah were publicly known; whereas Elisha's were spoken in private, and not by himself, but by one of the sons of the prophets (ix. 7—9).

Ver. 11. *All his great men.*] Whom he had advanced to great offices, or dignities.

His kinsfolks.] All that had any relation to him.

His priests.] Who had served him in his idolatrous worship, and confirmed him in it.

He left him none remaining.] In that place: but there were still some left in Samaria (ver. 17).

Ver. 12. *Came to Samaria.*] Having finished his work in Jezreel, he went to prosecute it in the chief city of the kingdom; which most needed reformation.

At the shearing house in the way.] In the Hebrew the words are, "in the house of the shepherds' binding." For they bound the feet of their sheep when they sheared them; and this was the place where the shepherds of Samaria were wont to do it.

Ver. 13.] That is, the children of Joram, and the children of Jezebel. But the "brethren of Ahaziah" were carried captive before this, as we read 2 Chron. xxi. 17, therefore by *brethren* we must understand his brother's sons, as it is explained in 2 Chron. xxii. 8.

Ver. 14.] They were allied to the family of Ahab by the mother's side (viii. 18), and therefore he thought his commission (ix. 8, 9), extended thus far; being afraid, also, it is likely, that they might, if they lived, be avenged of him for the death of Joram, Ahaziah, Jezebel, and their children, whom they were going to see.

Ver. 15. *He lighted on Jehonadab*] A very pious and prudent person, as appears by his precepts to his sons, in the thirty-fifth of Jeremiah. Who hearing what Jehu had done, came I suppose to congratulate with him his happiness in fulfilling God's commands; and to encourage him in his proceedings to destroy idolatry. Scaliger, indeed, in his Elench. Triheres. cap. 24, against Serrarius, endeavours to prove that this Jehonadab was not he that gave those precepts to his sons; but another in the days of Jeremiah; for it is not likely, he thinks, that a man addicted to such a quiet life as he instituted would come to meet Jehu; and therefore this was some military person of great note, who Jehu thought might be serviceable to him. But this is a weak argument; for why might not Jehonadab, though he loved retirement,

15 ¶ And when he was departed thence, he lighted on Jehonadab the son of Rechab *coming* to meet him: and he saluted him, and said to him, Is thy heart right, as my heart is with thy heart? And Jehonadab answered, It is. If it be, give *me* thy hand. And he gave *him* his hand; and he took him up to him into the chariot.

16 And he said, Come with me, and see my zeal for the LORD. So they made him ride in his chariot.

17 And when he came to Samaria, he slew all that remained unto Ahab in Samaria, till he had destroyed him, according to the saying of the LORD, which he spake to Elijah.

18 ¶ And Jehu gathered all the people together, and said unto them, Ahab served Baal a little; *but* Jehu shall serve him much.

come to congratulate Jehu's zeal against idolatry, and Jehu be glad of such a man's company, whose known piety would gain him greater respect than the attendance of any great captain could procure him?

He saluted him.] Some think that Jehonadab saluted Jehu, and spake the words following. But it seems plain to me that they are the words of Jehu, who saluted him, as soon as he saw him, and inquired of his welfare.

Is thy heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?] The king professed great love to him, and asked him if he loved him as sincerely, and approved his actions, as he did Jehonadab's institutions.

It is.] The expression is double in the Hebrew *Yes, yes*; to signify a vehement affection. Or, as a late learned writer (Gousset, in his Comment. Hebr. Linguæ) will have it, the former is spoken by Jehonadab, who said *It is*: and the other by Jehu, who answered, "Is it? then give me thy hand," &c.

Give me thy hand.] In token of friendship (Gal. ii. 9), and of fidelity: as it was among the Romans, Æneid. iii.

"Ipsc pater dextram Anchises, haud multa moratus,
Dat juveni, atque animum præsentî pignore firmat."

He took him up to him into his chariot.] Which was a great honour, and token of high esteem, to ride with the king in the same chariot.

Ver. 16. *See my zeal for the Lord.*] To vindicate his honour, and fulfil his commands.

So they made him ride in his chariot.] He speaks in the plural number (*they made him*), because the servants, I suppose, opened the door, and helped him up in the chariot, when Jehu gave him his hand.

Ver. 17. *He slew all that remained unto Ahab*] Utterly rooted out his family.

According to the saying of the Lord.] This is mentioned again: both to show his warrant for what he did, and his exactness in fulfilling God's command.

Ver. 18. *Jehu gathered all the people together.*] That is, all the heads of them, who represented the rest.

Ahab served Baal a little: but Jehu shall serve him much.] His zeal for the Lord exceeded its bounds; for he ought not to have taken any indirect course to fulfil his will: as he did in counterfeiting as much zeal for Baal, as he professed to Jehonadab he had for the Lord. God doth not stand in need of any man's sin to compass his ends: but Jehu made bold to dissemble deeply for the service of God: in which he cannot be excused.

19 Now therefore call unto me all the prophets of Baal, all his servants, and all his priests; let none be wanting: for I have a great sacrifice to do to Baal; whosoever shall be wanting, he shall not live. But Jehu did it in subtilty, to the intent that he might destroy the worshippers of Baal.

20 And Jehu said, Proclaim a solemn assembly for Baal. And they proclaimed it.

21 And Jehu sent through all Israel: and all the worshippers of Baal came, so that there was not a man left that came not. And they came into the house of Baal; and the house of Baal was full from one end to another.

22 And he said unto him that was over the vestry, Bring forth vestments for all the worshippers of Baal. And he brought them forth vestments.

23 And Jehu went, and Jehonadab the son of

Rechab, into the house of Baal, and said unto the worshippers of Baal, Search, and look that there be here with you none of the servants of the Lord, But the worshippers of Baal only.

24 And when they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings, Jehu appointed fourscore men without, and said, If any of the men whom I have brought into your hands escape, he that letteth him go, his life shall be for the life of him.

25 And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, that Jehu said to the guard and to the captain, Go in, and slay them; let none come forth. And they smote them with the edge of the sword; and the guard and the captains cast them out, and went to the city of the house of Baal.

26 And they brought forth the images out of the house of Baal, and burned them.

27 And they brake down the image of Baal,

Ver. 19. *Call unto me all the prophets of Baal, all his servants, and all his priests;*] By servants he doth not here mean his worshippers; but, being joined with prophets and priests, they signified some that ministered with the priests in the worship of Baal: like the Levites among the people of God.

For I have a great sacrifice to do to Baal;] He might possibly mean a sacrifice not of beasts, but of men; even of all the worshippers of Baal; but he intended they should understand him otherwise, and therefore these words were spoken to deceive.

Whosoever shall be wanting, he shall not live.] He thought that some, who considered what slaughter he had made of the family of Ahab (who introduced the worship of Baal, whom he pretended more highly to honour than Ahab had done), might suspect his design; and therefore he terrifies them with the fear of death, if they did not come to this great sacrifice.

That he might destroy the worshippers of Baal.] By destroying his prophets, and ministers, and priests; who being all cut off, his worship would fall to the ground. But the next verses extend this further, to all the worshippers of Baal in the whole country.

Ver. 20.] The last day of the feast of tabernacles, the great day of the feast, is called by this name of *atzarah*; which we translate a "solemn assembly:" when it was not lawful to do any servile work, but wholly attend to the service of God (Lev. xxiii. 36). Such a day he now caused to be sanctified (as the word is in the Hebrew) for the service of Baal.

Ver. 21. *Jehu sent through all Israel*] To give notice of this great feast; and to require every one, upon pain of death, to be present at it.

All the worshippers of Baal came, so that there was not a man left that came not.] If this be meant of the whole number of Baalites throughout the kingdom, it seems scarce credible that the temple of Baal should be so large as to hold them all. But two things are to be considered; first, that this house or temple comprehended all the outward courts of it (as it did at the temple of Jerusalem), which were very spacious; and secondly, the number of his worshippers was much diminished since the death of Ahab: for Jehoram his successor had no great kindness for the worship of Baal (iii. 2), and men are apt to follow the example of their king. Besides, it is likely, Hazael king of Syria had destroyed many of them in his wars with Israel.

Ver. 22.] By "all the worshippers of Baal," are not meant all the people that came to worship him; but his ministers and priests, who alone wore vest-

ments of a different kind from the rest of the people; and so it was among the Jews, and all other nations.

Ver. 23.] He calls those that worshipped the golden calves the "servants of the Lord;" because they worshipped the Lord by them, and abhorred the worship of Baal: whose sacrifice he pretended to fear might be profaned, if any strangers should be present at it. According to the common saying among the heathen, *Procul, o procul este profani.*

Ver. 24. *When they went in to offer*] When they had begun their sacred offices.

Jehu appointed fourscore men without.] This was but a small number for such an execution. But, it is likely, though no more appeared, yet there were others ready at hand to support them, if need were, in the undertaking. Or rather, these were set at the several gates of the outward courts; that if any endeavoured to make their escape, they might kill them. But the next verse seems to signify there was a greater body of men that went for that purpose into the temple.

Ver. 25. *Jehu said to the guard and to the captain.*] Of those troops that he had set to keep the peace, as he pretended, and prevent all disturbance.

They smote them—and the guard and the captains cast them out.] There is nothing in the Hebrew that answers to the word *them*: nor is it likely that the captains and soldiers troubled themselves to cast their bodies out of the temple; where they were rather buried in its ruins. But the meaning is, having done this execution, the guard and captains rushed out of the temple in great haste and immediately ran to the city of the house of Baal, as it here follows.

And went to the city of the house of Baal.] That is, a place near to Samaria, where Baal had another temple; which gave name to the place: or rather, there were great buildings adjoining to the temple of Baal in Samaria, where the prophets, and priests, and their servants lived, called a *city*, because they were so large.

Ver. 26.] They worshipped several other lesser gods (whose images they had in this temple), together with the supreme god, whom they called Baal; as the others were called Baalim. So Servius writes upon the first of the Georgics, that, veteri ritu, "according to ancient custom," after the priests had invoked the special gods, to whom the sacrifice was intended, generaliter omnia numina invocabantur, "all the gods were invoked," lest any of them should think themselves neglected.

and brake down the house of Baal, and made it a draught house unto this day.

28 Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel.

29 ¶ Howbeit from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, Jehu departed not from after them, *to wit*, the golden calves that were in Beth-el, and that were in Dan.

30 And the LORD said unto Jehu, Because thou hast done well in executing *that which is right* in mine eyes, and hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that was in my heart, thy children of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel.

31 But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD God of Israel with all his heart: for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin.

Ver. 27. *They brake down the image of Baal.*] Demolished his temple, and the image of Baal in it: which was either the sun, or Belus.

Made it a draught house] It was turned into a jakes, as we now speak, a place where men went to ease nature; which was the highest contempt that could be put upon it.

Ver. 28.] So that he was never worshipped more in this country; but they were perfectly freed from this sort of idolatry. Which must be acknowledged to have been a very great work: all the eastern people, and particularly the Syrians and Zidonians, and other neighbouring nations, being addicted to this worship, and had been so from ancient time; as what I observed before shows (1 Kings xvi. 31), from the many cities, woods, mountains, and fountains, which before Joshua's time were known by the name of Baal: and there is mention of Baal-shalisha in this book, iv. 42.

Ver. 29.] Which he still worshipped: being afraid, as his predecessors were, that if he took them away, as he had done Baal, the people would return to the house of David. For which reason all the following kings of Israel continued this false worship till their captivity; when these calves were carried away with them. So they say in Seder Olam Rabba, cap. 22, "In the twentieth year of Pekah came Tiglath-pileser, and took away the golden calf that was in Dan, and departed;" which they endeavour to prove out of 2 Chron. xxviii. 20, 21. And a little after, "in the twelfth year of Ahaz, the Lord stirred up the spirit of the king of Assyria, and he carried away the golden calf in Beth-el, and departed: fulfilling what is written, Hosea x. 6."

32 ¶ In those days the LORD began to cut Israel short: and Hazael smote them in all the coasts of Israel;

33 From Jordan eastward, all the land of Gilead, the Gadites, and the Reubenites, and the Manassites, from Arero, which is by the river Arnon, even Gilead and Bashan.

34 Now the rest of the acts of Jehu, and all that he did, and all his might, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

35 And Jehu slept with his fathers: and they buried him in Samaria. And Jehoahaz his son reigned in his stead.

36 And the time that Jehu reigned over Israel in Samaria was twenty and eight years.

Ver. 30. *The Lord said unto Jehu.*] By some prophet; either Elisha, or the young man that was sent to anoint Jehu; or some other.

Thy children of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel.] His partial obedience was not without its reward: which had been greater if he had been as zealous in all things as he was in this one instance; the following history shows the truth of this prediction: the kingdom continuing in his posterity, till the days of Zachariah, who was the fourth from Jehu (xv. 8), and reigned only so long, as to make good this prophecy.

Ver. 31.] This admonition from God (which sufficiently showed he was not well pleased with him) did him no good; but policy prevailed against religion, and persuaded him to continue the old idolatry when he had destroyed the new.

Ver. 32.] He took several of their frontier towns, I suppose, and thereby opened a way to make great ravages in their country. For though Jehu was a valiant man, yet God did not prosper him, because he was not a sincere servant of his.

Ver. 33.] This fully explains what was said in the foregoing verse, that God cut them short. For Hazael took all their country beyond Jordan: the whole kingdom, which the Israelites took from Sihon and Og. Thus these countries which the Israelites first conquered were the first that they lost.

Ver. 34.] Which was extant in those days when this was written; and related his history more at large: of which this is a brief abridgment.

Ver. 36.] Longer than any of the kings of Israel his predecessors.

CHAPTER XI.

1 Jehoshaphat, being saved by Jehoshabea his aunt from Athaliah's massacre of the seed royal, is hid six years in the house of God. 4 Jehoiada, giving order to the captains, in the seventh year anointeth him king. 13 Athaliah is slain. 17 Jehoiada restoreth the worship of God.

1 AND when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal.

2 But Jehoshabea, the daughter of king Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's

CHAP. XI.

Ver. 1.] There were many of them cut off by Jehu, as we read in the foregoing chapter; and not a few by others, 2 Chron. xxi. 4. xxii. 1, but now their destruction was completed by Athaliah: who,

as she was ambitious of government, so she was enraged to see Ahab's family cut off; and therefore resolved to do as much by the house of David: and perhaps was afraid Jehu should come and kill her because she was of the house of Ahab; and therefore endeavoured to strengthen herself by getting

sons which were slain ; and they hid him, even him and his nurse, in the bedchamber from Athaliah, so that he was not slain.

3 And he was with her hid 'in the house of the LORD six years. And Athaliah did reign over the land.

4 ¶ And the seventh year Jehoiada sent and fetched the rulers over hundreds, with the captains and the guard, and brought them to him into the house of the LORD, and made a covenant

with them, and took an oath of them in the house of the LORD, and shewed them the king's son.

5 And he commanded them, saying, This is the thing that ye shall do ; A third part of you that enter in on the sabbath shall even be keepers of the watch of the king's house ;

6 And a third part shall be at the gate of Sur ; and a third part at the gate behind the guard : so shall ye keep the watch of the house, that it be not broken down.

into the throne, which she could not compass without the destruction of the royal family. For she was a wicked woman, as she is elsewhere called, and had played the harlot with another man, by whom she had children ; as the Jewish doctors gather from 2 Chron. xxiv. 7.

Ver. 2. *But Jehosheba, the daughter of king Joram,*] Not by Athaliah, but by another wife. For Athaliah would not have suffered her daughter to be married to the high-priest, nor would he (in all likelihood) have married the daughter of such a woman.

Sister of Ahaziah.] By the father's side.

Took Joash—and stole him from among the king's sons which were slain.] Some think that he was thrown among them, and thought to be dead ; but she snatched him away, and brought him to life : or, as P. Martyr understands it, his nurse threw him among the slain on purpose to save his life, and came afterward and stole him away. But the plain meaning seems to be, that they being all ordered to be slain, she secretly stole him away, and preserved him.

They hid him.] That is, she and her husband Jehoiada, the high-priest, to whom she was married (2 Chron. xxii. 11).

In the bedchamber] It appears, by the next verse, that this bedchamber was in the house of the Lord ; that is, the temple. Which doth not in the scripture always signify the sanctuary ; but, in a larger sense, comprehends all the courts belonging to it. So Kimchi observes, that "the whole mountain of the house is called the house of the Lord." And this chamber here spoken of was in the outward court of all, called, by Josephus, *πρῶτον ἱερόν*, "the first holy place." For in the inner court nobody lay, nor might any woman come into it (see L'Empereur, upon Codex Middoth. cap. 2, sect. 3).

Ver. 3. *He was with her hid in the house of the Lord six years.*] The ministers of God were so true to Jehoiada, that he lay thus long undiscovered.

Athaliah did reign over the land.] Not *de jure* (as the lawyers speak) but *de facto*. For if we may believe the Jews, it was not lawful for a woman to reign over them. So Maimonides, in the treatise Melachim : "They do not place a woman on the throne," because it is said, Deut. xvii. 15, "If thou wilt set a king over thee," and not a queen. "And so in all the prefectures in Israel, they place none but men." She being therefore a usurper, it may seem strange she held the throne so long as six years, against the constitution of the kingdom. But, in after-ages, there is an example of one that held it longer. For Alexandra, the widow of Jannæus, after the death of her husband, possessed herself of the throne, and reigned nine years, as Josephus relates, lib. xiii. Antiq. cap. 24 (see Schickard, in his Miscopat Hammelech, cap. 2. Theor. 3).

Ver. 4. *Jehoiada sent and fetched*] Jehoiada was not a mere private man, but a person of great authority in the kingdom, who, knowing Athaliah was a usurper, and that he had the right heir to the kingdom

in his possession (which if he had not, his own wife had a better right than Athaliah), thought he had sufficient warrant to dethrone her, and set up him that had the undoubted title to the crown. Which he did when he was seven years old ; because then he grew so big, that he could not well be longer concealed ; and it was fit also he should be educated in a royal manner ; which he could not be while he lay hid.

The rulers over hundreds.] The names of five of them are set down in 2 Chron. xxiii. 1, who were all, some think, of the tribe of Levi. For they of that tribe were the persons principally employed in this undertaking, as appears by the sequel. But we learn from that place in the Chronicles, ver. 2, that whosoever they were, they went about all Judah, and gathered not only the Levites, but "the chief of the fathers of Israel."

With the captains and the guard.] The chief commanders of the soldiery, and those that had been the former king's guard : for it is not likely he durst call those who were the guard of the present queen.

And brought them to him into the house of the Lord.] Into that part of it where Joash was kept, where Jehoiada discoursed with them.

And made a covenant with them,—and shewed them the king's son.] He discovered to them the true heir of the crown, and they entered into a covenant to restore him : which they bound with an oath of secrecy.

Ver. 5. *This is the thing that ye shall do ;*] These words, and those that follow, are certainly spoken to the priests and Levites (with whom those captains before mentioned were to join), as men whom Jehoiada had perfectly under his command, and whom he could trust : to whom he gives the following orders.

A third part of you that enter in on the sabbath shall even be keepers of the watch of the king's house ;] The priests and Levites took their turns in their attendance at the temple ; and their course was finished in the space of a week. Every week a course went out, and another came in. Now they who now entered upon their week of attendance (which was on the eve of every sabbath) were divided by Jehoiada into three parts ; one of which he here orders to guard the king's house : that is, that part of the temple on the north where he lodged, and was now educated.

Ver. 6. *A third part shall be at the gate of Sur ;*] That is, the east gate of the temple, towards the city ; which was the principal (and, at the first, the only) entrance into the house of the Lord. This is called "the gate of the foundation," 2 Chron. xxiii. 5 (and by five other names, if we may believe the Talmudists), where another part were ordered to guard it. Abarbinel thinks this eastern gate was called *Sur*, being as much as to say, *go back* : because no unclean person durst enter into this gate : and the "gate of the foundation," because it was, as he speaks, the "gate of the first sanctuary."

A third part at the gate behind the guard ;] The other third part he set at the south gate, which looked

7 And two parts of all you that go forth on the sabbath, even they shall keep the watch of the house of the LORD about the king.

8 And ye shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand : and he that cometh within the ranges, let him be slain : and he ye with the king as he goeth out and as he cometh in.

9 And the captains over the hundreds did according to all things that Jehoiada the priest commanded : and they took every man his men that were to come in on the sabbath, with them that should go out on the sabbath, and came to Jehoiada the priest.

10 And to the captains over hundreds did the towards the royal palace ; and through which Athalian was wont to come, and therefore had a guard near this place. Behind which these Levites were placed by Jehoiada, to observe their motions.

That it be not broken down.] They were to take special care, that the house of the Lord was not any way profaned ; suffering none to come nearer to it than they ought : and particularly watching those out of the palace, that they did not defile it. So De Dieu thinks the word *massach* (which we translate, “be not broken down”) ought to be understood, being as much as *be massach*, by pulling away those that shall dare to pollute the holy place, and would come in to hurt the king. Or, as other learned men have interpreted it, they were to keep “the watch of the house at the breach :” which the wicked sons of Athaliah (which she had by another man) had made, as we read 2 Chron. xxiv. 7. Dr. Lightfoot thinks, that, besides these three parts for the design which Jehoiada intended, there were three more (six in all) for the ordinary service of the temple. For he would not have that neglected, while he took care of the affairs of the kingdom (see his book of the Temple, ch. 20).

Ver. 7. Two parts of all you that go forth on the sabbath.] It is well known, that David divided the priests into twenty-four courses, to attend the service of the temple in their turns : every one of which courses ministered their week from sabbath to sabbath. So Josephus saith expressly, he ordained each should minister eight days, ἀπο Σαββάτου ἕως Σαββάτου, “from one sabbath to another” (lib. viii. Antiq. cap. 2). For that course which went out did not depart till the sabbath was over ; and that which came in entered when it began ; as the learned Mr. Whiston in his late Chronology expounds the words of Josephus, p. 156.

Even they shall keep the watch—about the king.] He adds two parts of those who had finished their course and went off to go home into the country, whom he would have to stay at Jerusalem, and assist the rest before named ; especially in strengthening that part of the temple that lay towards the palace ; or rather to be the king’s guard, when he came out of his lodgings (where he was at present) into the court of the Lord’s house.

Ver. 8. He that cometh within the ranges.] By “the ranges” is to be understood, if not the ranks of men that stood about the mountain of the house of the Lord, the rank of trees that grew on either side of the causeway, or the rails that were set on either side of it, for the stay and safety of those that passed upon it (See Dr. Lightfoot in the same place).

As he goeth out and as he cometh in.] When he went out to walk, or do any other thing ; and when he returned to his apartment.

priest give king David’s spears and shields, that were in the temple of the LORD.

11 And the guard stood, every man with his weapons in his hand, round about the king, from the right corner of the temple to the left corner of the temple, along by the altar and the temple.

12 And he brought forth the king’s son, and put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony ; and they made him king, and anointed him ; and they clapped their hands, and said, God save the king.

13 ¶ And when Athaliah heard the noise of the guard and of the people, she came to the people into the temple of the LORD.

14 And when she looked, behold, the king

Ver. 9.] To show they were all disposed according to his order.

Ver. 10.] They did not come armed into the temple, lest they should give any suspicion ; but Jehoiada furnished them with such weapons as the temple afforded ; particularly with the spears and shields, which king David had used, and dedicated after all his wars as monuments of God’s goodness to him : and perhaps several spears and shields of great men, which he had taken as spoils in his wars.

Ver. 11.] The guard within the court mentioned ver. 7, stood from the south part of the temple towards the palace, to the north part of it, where the king lay bid, about the great altar of burnt-offering (which was at the east gate) and the sanctuary ; and then the king was brought forth, and placed below the altar, that all might see him.

Ver. 12. He brought forth the king’s son, and put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony ;] Having produced Joash, he put the crown on his head (which I suppose was kept in the sanctuary), and then put the book of the law into his hand, according to Deut. xvii. 18, 19, which is called the *testimony*, because God therein testified what he would have the king and them all do. And thereupon he declared him to be king of Israel, and then anointed him : which it was not necessary to do (and therefore he is said to be *made king* before it was done), being the son of a king, had not Athaliah disturbed the succession, and pretended to the kingdom. Therefore, to settle all things, he was anointed as Solomon and Jehu were. But there is a doubt what is meant by *eduth*, which we translate *testimony* ; supposing it comes from the root, which signifies to *testify*. But there are those, particularly Forsterus, Avenarius, and others of greater note, who derive it from the Hebrew word *adah*, which signifies to *clothe, put on, and adorn* : and so take *eduth* for some royal ornament, which was a mark of kingly dignity : and that, it is probable, might be a bracelet which Jehoiada put upon the young king, together with the crown. This conjecture is countenanced by what we read of the Amalekite, who brought the bracelet on Saul’s arm to David, as well as the crown that was on his head (see Fortunatus Scacchus Myrothee. iii. cap. 41).

They clapped their hands,] The guards and the people (as the next verse explains it) testified their joy by clapping their hands and shouting, as they did at king Solomon’s coronation (1 Kings i. 34. 39). For “clapping of hands” was a token of joy, as appears by many places (Ps. xlvii. 1. Isa. lv. 12).

Ver. 13. When Athaliah heard the noise—of the people,] Who were now assembled to see their king.

She came to the people into the temple.] Into the outward court where they were met together. And she

stood by a pillar, as the manner *was*, and the princes and the trumpeters by the king, and all the people of the land rejoiced, and blew with trumpets: and Athaliah rent her clothes, and cried, Treason, Treason.

15 But Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of the hundreds, the officers of the host, and said unto them, Have her forth without the ranges: and him that followeth her kill with the sword. For the priest had said, Let her not be slain in the house of the Lord.

16 And they laid hands on her; and she went by the way by the which the horses came into the king's house: and there was she slain.

17 ¶ And Jehoiada made a covenant between

seems in a great fright to have come alone, or but few attendants with her.

Ver. 14. *The king stood by a pillar, as the manner was.*] Some of the Jews, and many great men among Christian writers, understand by this pillar the brazen scaffold which Solomon erected at the dedication of the temple (2 Chron. vi. 13). But the plainest meaning seems to me, that he stood by the posts of the east gate in the inner court, where the station of the king was. Which Vitringa hath made probable, in his *Synagoga Vet.* p. 31, &c. where he observes, that the king alone entered at the east gate on the sabbath and the new moons; but on the other days at the south or north gate, where the people entered; which he gathers from Ezek. xlvi. 1, 2. He *stood*, I suppose, only to be better seen by the people; otherwise sitting was a posture of authority.

And the princes and the trumpeters by the king.] This made her soon apprehend the danger she was in, as it here follows. For the people, when they saw their young king, expressed their joy, it is likely, in some such acclamations as the people of Rome made at the inauguration of Claudius, "Claudi Auguste, Principem te, aut qualis tu es semper Octavianus, te republica requirebat, tu frater, tu pater, tu amicus, tu bonus senator, tu vere princeps," as Trebel. Pollio relates in his life. For though Joash had done nothing praiseworthy, being but a child; yet they rejoiced in the felicity which they promised themselves in his reign, under the government of such a man as Jehoiada.

Treason, Treason.] Adding, as Josephus relates, Take that boy and kill him; meaning Joash, in whose behalf, this conspiracy, as she called it, was made against her. But she spake like a distracted woman, there being nobody on her side to execute any of her commands.

Ver. 15. *Have her forth without the ranges.*] Through which they had suffered her to come, being a queen, contrary to the order, ver. 8.

Him that followeth her kill.] If any body appeared to abet and rescue her, he commanded him to be slain.

Let her not be slain in the house of the Lord.] From whence they dragged her, until they had brought her down to the bottom of the causeway, and there they slew her.

Ver. 16. *By the way by the which the horses came into the king's house.*] That is, saith the same author (ch. 5. sect. 2, of the temple), they got her out of the mountain of the house, and brought her down the causeway; and when she came near the horse-gate, through which the horses went up out of the stables of Millo, when the king had occasion for them, there they slew her.

By the which the horses came into the king's house.] There was another horse-gate in the main wall of the city (Jer. xxxi. 39), but that was distinct from this;

the Lord and the king and the people, that they should be the Lord's people; between the king also and the people.

18 And all the people of the land went into the house of Baal, and brake it down; his altars and his images brake they in pieces thoroughly, and slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. And the priest appointed officers over the house of the Lord.

19 And he took the rulers over hundreds, and the captains, and the guard, and all the people of the land; and they brought down the king from the house of the Lord, and came by the way of the gate of the guard to the king's house. And he sat on the throne of the kings.

which was peculiar to the king's horses: and therefore a distinctive character is set upon it, that it was the horse-gate "towards the king's house" (2 Chron. xxiii. 15). So it should be rendered, rather than "by the king's house;" for neither of these gates was near his house, but at a distance from it; and we may call this gate here spoken of, the back-way to the king's house at the stable-gate.

Ver. 17. *Jehoiada made a covenant—that they should be the Lord's people.*] He first takes care about religion, and engaged them in a solemn covenant to root out idolatry, and to restore the true worship of God, and continue in it.

Between the king also and the people.] That they should be his obedient subjects, and he should govern them by the law. This was directly agreeable to the apostolic precept, "Fear God, and honour the king."

Ver. 18. *All the people of the land went into the house of Baal, and brake it down.*] Accordingly they began immediately to make good their covenant, in destroying the worship of Baal; which had been introduced among the people of Judah by Jehoram (viii. 18), and was continued by Ahaziah (ver. 27).

Slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars.] To which it is possible he fled, as a place of refuge; or they dragged him hither to make him a victim to his god.

The priest appointed officers over the house of the Lord.] Levites to keep the door, lest any one who was unclean should enter into it (see more, 2 Chron. xxiii. 18, 19).

Ver. 19. *He took the rulers over hundreds, &c.*] Brought them out of the temple, that they might conduct the king to his palace, as it here follows.

Came by the way of the gate of the guard to the king's house.] By that gate of the king's palace, where a guard was to be kept for his safety.

He sat on the throne of the kings.] Which was the accomplishment of his inauguration.

Ver. 20. *All the people of the land rejoiced.*] Applauding what Jehoiada had done.

The city was in quiet.] Nobody appeared in defence of Athaliah.

They slew Athaliah with the sword beside the king's house.] Not far from it: the people having so little kindness for her, that they suffered her to be slain without any opposition. In the Chronicles, indeed, the words are, "the city was in quiet after that they had slain Athaliah" (2 Chron. xxii. 21). Which may import there was some bustle before, when she was apprehended; but after her death there was no stir: nor do we read they were so much concerned for her as to bury her.

Ver. 21.] Being so very young, he was very unfit for so weighty a charge; but he was under the direction of so excellent a counsellor, that while Jehoi-

20 And all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was in quiet: and they slew Athaliah with the sword *beside* the king's house.

ada lived, all things went well, and the nation was very happy, as we read in the next chapter. But that good man being dead, he was seduced by some

21 Seven years old *was* Jehoash when he began to reign.

great men about him to idolatry (2 Chron. xxiv. 17, &c.) which shows him to have been a weak prince, who wanted judgment in things of greatest moment.

CHAPTER XII.

1 *Jehoash reigneth well all the days of Jehoiada.* 4 *He giveth order for the repair of the temple.* 17 *Hazael is diverted from Jerusalem by a present of the hallowed treasures.* 19 *Jehoash being slain by his servants, Amaziah succeedeth him.*

1 In the seventh year of Jehu Jehoash began to reign; and forty years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Zibiah of Beer-sheba.

2 And Jehoash did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD all his days wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him.

3 But the high places were not taken away: the people still sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places.

4 ¶ And Jehoash said to the priests, All the money of the dedicated things that is brought into the house of the LORD, *even* the money of every one that passeth *the account*, the money that every man is set at, *and* all the money that

cometh into any man's heart to bring into the house of the LORD,

5 Let the priests take *it* to them, every man of his acquaintance: and let them repair the breaches of the house, wheresoever any breach shall be found.

6 But it was *so, that* in the three and twentieth year of king Jehoash the priests had not repaired the breaches of the house.

7 Then king Jehoash called for Jehoiada the priest, and the *other* priests, and said unto them, Why repair ye not the breaches of the house? now therefore receive no *more* money of your acquaintance, but deliver it for the breaches of the house.

CHAP. XII.

Ver. 1, 2.] This history shows of what advantage it is to have good instructors and counsellors about a king. For Jehoiada preserved Joash in good ways while he lived: but when he was dead, Joash changed his manners, and was persuaded by the flatteries of some of his courtiers to fall into idolatry; and he killed the son of his pious Jehoiada, who reproved him for it (2 Chron. xxiv. 17, 21).

Ver. 3.] These private altars (on which they sacrificed to the true God), I observed before, were not removed by the best of their kings till the reign of Hezekiah. And this king was too young, and his authority too weak (though he had Jehoiada to assist him), to attempt to break such a long-continued custom, especially when some of the princes in their hearts were idolaters.

Ver. 4. *Jehoash said to the priest,*] The house of God being suffered to run to decay, in the time of Athaliah and her son; Joash, in gratitude to God, who had preserved him there, resolved to have it repaired; and, in order to it, commanded what money should be set apart for that purpose.

All the money of the dedicated things that is brought] That had been, or should hereafter be brought and dedicated to the service of God and of the temple.

Even the money of every one that passeth the account,] This and the following money he commanded the priests and Levites to go through the kingdom, and gather for the repair of the temple, as we are told, 2 Chron. xxiv. 5. They were not to expect till the people should bring it in, but go and gather it, every man of his acquaintance, where he knew it to be due. And so the foregoing words are to be translated, not "that is brought," but "to be brought" into the house of the Lord. Which money arose three ways; the first is here mentioned, "the money of every one that passeth" (for the words *the account* are not in the Hebrew), which some understand of the offering

which pious people of other nations made, who came to worship at Jerusalem (1 Kings viii. 41): or rather, of those who were come to twenty years of age, and being past that, were to pay half a shekel. This had been much neglected in the time of Athaliah (as the Jewish doctors think), but now being carefully gathered, there was enough to maintain the daily sacrifice (which was supported out of this money), and to carry on also the reparation of the temple. Though Abarinel thinks it was wholly applied to the reparation; and the people voluntarily offered for the maintaining of the daily morning and evening sacrifice.

The money that every man is set at,] This was the second way: by the money that every man who had vowed himself to God, was to pay, by the estimation that the priest should make for his redemption; according to that law, Lev. xxviii. 2, 3. For so the words are here in the Hebrew, "the money of a man whose taxation is the money of his soul:" that is, who is taxed such a sum of money, whereby his soul might be freed from the vow wherewith he had bound himself. For till this money was paid, his life was not his own, but God's.

All the money that cometh into any man's heart] This was the third sort of money for the reparation of the temple; that which any man would give freely for that service which they were to receive of them.

Ver. 5.] This money thus collected, he entrusted with the priests, and commanded them to see it employed to the use for which it was given.

Ver. 6.] They were both dilatory and careless in gathering the money (2 Chron. xxiv. 5), and did not bring in what they had gathered to begin the work. Whereupon the king revoked his former order, and entrusted other men (as it here follows) with this work. Thus are things seldom done well, that are committed to the care of many.

Ver. 7.] He ordered two things; first, that they should gather no more money of the people; and secondly, that they should not have the care of seeing

8 And the priests consented to receive no more money of the people, neither to repair the breaches of the house.

9 But Jehoiada the priest took a chest, and bored a hole in the lid of it, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one cometh into the house of the LORD: and the priests that kept the door put therein all the money that was brought into the house of the LORD.

10 And it was so, when they saw that there was much money in the chest, that the king's scribe and the high priest came up, and they put up in bags, and told the money that was found in the house of the LORD.

11 And they gave the money, being told, into the hands of them that did the work, that had the oversight of the house of the LORD: and they laid it out to the carpenters and builders, that wrought upon the house of the LORD,

12 And to masons, and hewers of stone, and

to buy timber and hewed stone to repair the breaches of the house of the LORD, and for all that was laid out for the house to repair it.

13 Howbeit there was not made for the house of the LORD bowls of silver, snuffers, basons, trumpets, any vessels of gold, or vessels of silver, of the money that was brought into the house of the LORD:

14 But they gave that to the workmen, and repaired therewith the house of the LORD.

15 Moreover they reckoned not with the men, into whose hand they delivered the money to be bestowed on workmen: for they dealt faithfully.

16 The trespass money and sin money was not brought into the house of the LORD: it was the priests'.

17 ¶ Then Hazael king of Syria went up, and fought against Gath, and took it: and Hazael set his face to go up to Jerusalem.

the temple repaired; but pay what had been gathered into other hands.

Ver. 8.] They submitted to the king's new orders, and wholly committed the business to those whom he thought fit to employ.

Ver. 9. *Jehoiada the priest took a chest,*] By the king's order (2 Chron. xxiv. 8).

Set it beside the altar, on the right side as one cometh into the house of the Lord:] On the right side of the gate that went into the court of the priests: not far from the altar which was within the court, as appears from 2 Chron. xxiv. 8. Dr. Lightfoot thinks these two texts do not relate to the same time. For at the first the chest was set in the very court of the priests near to the altar, as it is here said in this place: so that the money still passed through the priests' fingers; who took it of the people and put it into the chest which was in their court, where the people could not come at it. But the money not coming in so fast as was expected this way, he removed the chest, or made another, and set it without the court, at the entrance of it, where every one might have access unto it. And he proclaimed through all the country they should bring in their money thither: which came in so plentifully, that there was enough for the repair of the house, and for other uses also.

The priests that kept the door put therein all the money] There was a proclamation made, that all the people should bring in their half shekel, which Moses commanded every one of such an age to pay; and they brought it to the priests who stood at the door that let into their court, and saw them put it into the chest (2 Chron. xxiv. 9).

Ver. 10.] The high-priest would have a witness of his actions, lest he should be suspected of any fraud, as perhaps others had been; and would not open the chest without the assistance of the king's secretary of state; nor would he open it in the temple, but had it brought by the Levites into the king's office; and there the secretary and the high-priest, or any officer of his, emptied the chest, and told the money and then put it up in bags, which it is likely they sealed; and then they sent the chest into its place again. This they did every day, as we read 2 Chron. xxiv. 11.

Ver. 11. *They gave the money, being told, into the hands of them that did the work,]* These bags of money were delivered (by the king and Jehoiada, 2 Chron. xxiv. 12) not to the priests, whom the king had found tardy, and perhaps faulty, in converting

the money to their own uses; but to some select persons, who had this peculiar business committed to them, to see the reparation, and to employ good workmen, and to pay them their wages.

They laid it out to the carpenters and builders,] To buy materials for the work, as it follows in the next verse.

Ver. 12.] For all other things, of what kind soever they were, which they found necessary for the reparation.

Ver. 13.] Though these were wanting, yet the money was limited to the reparations of the house; and the king ordered that no vessel of any sort should be bought for the temple, till the temple itself was put into a good condition. So the LXX. render it, "there shall none be made for the house any vessels," &c. (that is, he commanded there should be none made), but all given to the forenamed workmen, as long as there needed any reparations. So it follows in the next verse.

Ver. 14.] The masons and carpenters, and such-like workmen, had all the money, to be laid out according to their discretion, upon the reparation of the temple alone, till the work was finished. And then they gave an account of what money remained in their hands, and that was laid out to purchase such vessels as are before mentioned, for the service of the temple (2 Chron. xxiv. 14).

Ver. 15.] They were so confident of the honesty of the overseers, that they took no account of the money they had paid the workmen; who were also men of such clear reputation, that what they laid out was not questioned. This was a rare example of fidelity in managing the public money; and there was one man in Greece, Aristides, who was so trusty in the opinion of all the people.

Ver. 16.] This money was not applied to the aforesaid use; but put into the hands of the priests, that sacrifices for trespasses and sins might be offered for those that gave it.

Ver. 17. *Then Hazael—fought against Gath, and took it:]* This was a city of the Philistines, but taken by king David, and added to the dominions of Israel (2 Sam. viii. 1. 1 Chron. xviii. 1) and now taken from them by Hazael. Having made himself master of this place, he plainly declared, by the disposition of his affairs, that he intended to make an attempt upon Jerusalem. This fell out after Jehoash had forsaken God, and fallen to idolatry; as appears by the book of the Chronicles; where a much different

18 And Jehoash king of Judah took all the hallowed things that Jehoshaphat, and Jehoram, and Ahaziah, his fathers, kings of Judah, had dedicated, and his own hallowed things, and all the gold that was found in the treasures of the house of the LORD, and in the king's house, and sent it to Hazael king of Syria: and he went away from Jerusalem.

19 ¶ And the rest of the acts of Joash, and all that he did, are they not written

relation is made of the expedition of the Syrians. Inasmuch that Abarbinel thinks (which is approved by several Christian writers) there were two expeditions. In the first of which Hazael came up in person against them, as is here related; but they purchased peace of him: and then in the end of the year, after they had killed Zachariah, the war was renewed; though Hazael did not come himself, but sent a small army, which they were not able to oppose, which destroyed a great many of the people, and sent great spoils to Damascus (2 Chron. xxiv. 23. 25).

Ver. 18.] The preservation of his kingdom, he thought, warranted this; but he had brought these dangers upon himself by his apostacy from God.

Ver. 20.] The Syrians had left him labouring under great diseases at this place called Millo, where his servants slew him in his bed, as we read 2 Chron. xxiv. 25. There was another place called Millo, hard by the king's palace at Jerusalem; therefore, to distinguish this from that, this is called "Millo that goeth down to Silla;" as Abarbinel thinks.

in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

20 And his servants arose, and made a conspiracy, and slew Joash in the house of Millo, which goeth down to Silla.

21 For Jozachar the son of Shimeath, and Jehozabad the son of Shomer, his servants, smote him, and he died; and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David: and Amaziah his son reigned in his stead.

Ver. 21. *Jozachar the son of Shimeath.*] He was called by another name also, viz. Zabad.

Jehozabad the son of Shomer.] This was his father's name, it is likely, and his mother was called Shimrith, who was a Moabitess; as Shimeath was an Ammonitess (2 Chron. xxiv. 26).

Smote him, and he died;] They were friends of Jehoiaha (as Josephus thinks), who took this revenge upon Joash for the death of Zachariah the son of Jehoiaha, as is expressly noted, 2 Chron. xxiv. 25.

They buried him with his fathers in the city of David;] But not in the sepulchre of the kings (2 Chron. xxiv. 25). For though they did him so much honour as to bury him in the royal city, yet not all the honour that was usual; because he had forsaken God, and slain one of his prophets.

Amaziah his son reigned in his stead.] His servants did not kill him with an intention to usurp the kingdom, but only to revenge the blood of Zachariah. For they suffered his son to succeed Joash peaceably, who slew those that had slain his father (2 Chron. xxv. 3).

CHAPTER XIII.

1 Jehoahaz's wicked reign. 3 Jehoahaz, oppressed by Hazael, is relieved by prayer. 8 Joash succeedeth him. 10 His wicked reign. 12 Jeroboam succeedeth him. 14 Elisha dying prophesieth to Joash three victories over the Syrians. 20 The Moabites invading the land, Elisha's bones raise up a dead man. 22 Hazael dying, Joash getteth three victories over Ben-hadad.

1 IN the three and twentieth year of Joash the son of Ahaziah king of Judah, Jehoahaz the son of Jehu began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned seventeen years.

2 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, and followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom.

3 ¶ And the anger of the LORD was kindled

against Israel, and he delivered them into the hand of Hazael king of Syria, and into the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael, all their days.

4 And Jehoahaz besought the LORD, and the LORD hearkened unto him: for he saw the oppression of Israel, because the king of Syria oppressed them.

5 (And the LORD gave Israel a saviour, so that they went out from under the hand of the

CHAP. XIII.

Ver. 1.] Some have raised a doubt about this account, because Joash began to reign in the seventh year of Jehu (xii. 1), who reigned but twenty-eight years (x. 36); from whence if seven years be deducted, there remains no more than one-and-twenty, not three-and-twenty, as is here said. To which Kimchi and Abarbinel answer, there were two incomplete years: for when it is said Joash reigned in the seventh year of Jehu, it must be understood of the beginning of his seventh year; and in like manner, when he speaks here of the three-and-twentieth year of Joash, it must be understood of the beginning of the same year. And so they are called three-and-twenty, when they were but one-and-twenty perfect years. But it is better to say (as my worthy friend Dr. Alix thinks) that there was an interregnum of a year between the death of Jehu and the first of Jehoahaz

Ver. 2.] Was not reclaimed by the severe punishments God inflicted on him.

Ver. 3. *All their days.*] The word *their* is not in the Hebrew, so that it may be translated all *his* days, as it is explained ver. 22.

Ver. 4. *The Lord hearkened unto him;*] Not for his sake, but for the sake of the pious ancestors of this people, with whom he had made a covenant of great mercy to be shown to their posterity; which in their great distress he now afforded them (see ver. 23).

The king of Syria oppressed them.] Intending their utter ruin, which God would not yet permit, but bare longer with them.

Ver. 5. *The Lord gave Israel a saviour,*] Some understand by this *saviour*, an extraordinary captain, whom God raised up to fight their battles with great success. But it being said, that while Hazael lived he oppressed them (ver. 22), it is more reasonable to understand by this *saviour* the son of Jehoahaz; who, when Hazael was dead, delivered them from their bondage

Syrians: and the children of Israel dwelt in their tents, as beforetime.

6 Nevertheless they departed not from the sins of the house of Jeroboam, who made Israel sin, but walked therein: and there remained the grove also in Samaria.]

7 Neither did he leave of the people to Jehoahaz but fifty horsemen, and ten chariots, and ten thousand footmen; for the king of Syria had destroyed them, and had made them like the dust by threshing.

8 ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Jehoahaz, and all that he did, and his might, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

9 And Jehoahaz slept with his fathers; and they buried him in Samaria: and Joash his son reigned in his stead.

10 ¶ In the thirty and seventh year of Joash king of Judah began Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned sixteen years.

11 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord; he departed not from all the

sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin: but he walked therein.

12 And the rest of the acts of Joash, and all that he did, and his might wherewith he fought against Amaziah king of Judah, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

13 And Joash slept with his fathers; and Jeroboam sat upon his throne: and Joash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel.

14 ¶ Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died. And Joash the king of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his face, and said, O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.

15 And Elisha said unto him, Take bow and arrows. And he took unto him bow and arrows.

16 And he said to the king of Israel, Put thy hand upon the bow. And he put his hand upon it: and Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands.

17 And he said, Open the window eastward. And he opened it. Then Elisha said, Shoot. And he shot. And he said, The arrow of the

(ver. 25). And perhaps he did this in his father's lifetime, who made him joint sovereign with himself.

Israel dwelt in their tents,] They lived quietly and securely, not only in their fortified towns, but in the villages and the fields.

Ver. 6. Nevertheless they departed not from the sins of Jeroboam.] Neither their miseries, nor God's mercies to them, made any alteration in them; but they continued in those sins which had ruined the house of Jeroboam, and many of his successors.

There remained the grove also in Samaria.] We read of a grove which Ahab planted in honour of Baal, 1 Kings xvi. 33. But his worship being utterly destroyed by Jehu, I cannot but think that he cut down that grove: and therefore the grove here mentioned had in it the image of some other god.

Ver. 7. Fifty horsemen, and ten chariots,] With the men belonging to them.

Ten thousand footmen;] This explains what he means by the people in the foregoing words; not all the people of Israel, but the soldiers, or men of war; of which there were no more left than this small number.

For the king of Syria had destroyed them,] God left them in his hand to make this destruction among them, killing some, and carrying others captive.

Had made them like the dust by threshing.] By perpetual wars and captivities; which made very great depopulations.

Ver. 8.] The judgments of God upon him were the most remarkable, because he was a "man of might:" and was so far from being able to stand before the Syrians, that they beat him to dust.

Ver. 9.] Called in the next verse Jehoash.

Ver. 10.] A difficulty seems to arise by comparing this verse with the first, where it is said Jehoahaz king of Israel began to reign in the twenty-third year of Joash king of Judah, and reigned seventeen years: from whence it follows, that Jehoash began to reign not in the thirty-seventh, but in the thirty-ninth or fortieth year of Joash king of Judah. But this only shows the truth of what I said upon ver. 5, that he reigned with his father three years; after God was so gracious as to raise up a deliverer to them, who was this son of his, by whom peace was restored to them.

This we note in the margin, he reigned in concert with his father (xiv. 1).

Ver. 12.] They were all recorded in the book so often mentioned (see 1 Kings xi. 41); and his fight with Amaziah is particularly related and set down at large in 2 Chron. xxv. 17, 18, &c.

Ver. 13. Jeroboam sat upon his throne:] From whence some of the Jewish doctors gather, that he reigned with his father at least one year; though Abarbinel denies it, but without reason. He doth not here conclude this history of Joash; for he afterward relates great things done by him. But being to speak of the death of Elisha, upon which those things depended, he interposes that before he proceeds further to relate his acts.

Ver. 14. Now Elisha was fallen sick] This was in the tenth year of Joash, as they say in Seder Olam Rabba, cap. 19, and from thence gather how long Elisha continued a prophet in Israel, viz. from the nineteenth year of Jehoshaphat till this time, which was sixty-five years.

Joash—wept over his face,] This was no sign of his hearty affection to him (for he would not hearken to his word), but he bewailed himself and his people, who were in danger shortly to lose so great a defender.

My father, my father,] They are the words of Elisha concerning Elijah, when he was taken up to heaven (ii. 12), signifying the great authority he had maintained among them (which is included in the word father), and that by his counsel and prayers they had obtained glorious victories over their enemies.

Ver. 15.] This was to represent the wars he was to have with the Syrians.

Ver. 16.] This was to represent that they were not to trust in their arms and their valour, but in God alone, who would give them the victory.

Ver. 17. Open the window eastward.] Part of Syria lay east or north-east from Judea: and the Syrians also had possessed themselves of all the land of Israel eastward (x. 33): from whence he signified, by what follows, Joash should expel them.

The arrow of deliverance from Syria:] A sign the Lord would wound the Syrians by the arms of the

LoRD's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria: for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek, till thou have consumed them.

18 And he said, Take the arrows. And he took them. And he said unto the king of Israel, Smite upon the ground. And he smote thrice, and stayed.

19 And the man of God was wroth with him, and said, Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it: whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice.

20 ¶ And Elisha died, and they buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year.

21 And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Eli-

Israelites, and give them a glorious deliverance from their tyranny.

Thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek,] In the territories belonging to it (of which, see 1 Sam. iv. 1. xxix. 1). The Syrians had taken Gath, and Aphek, I take it, was not far from it: so that it was as much as to say, they should drive them out of the country, as it follows.

Till thou have consumed them.] Not all the people of Syria, but all their forces wherewith they infested Israel.

Ver. 18.] That which he represented before by the shooting of an arrow, he represents again by smiting upon the ground with the arrows; viz. victory over the Syrians, whom he should overthrow and cast down to the ground in battle.

Ver. 19.] By the former sign the king of Israel might have understood that this was intended to signify the same thing; and I suppose the prophet spake so as to give him to understand he would have him smite a good many times. And he was angry at his sloth and unbelief, which made him stop at the third stroke; for if he had done it oftener, he should have utterly disabled them. He had before represented great victories which he should obtain, but not till now how often he should overcome; which he was admonished by God to let him know by this sign. And it is probable the prophet himself did not know, till he saw how often he smote on the ground.

Ver. 20.] Which was the usual time when people went out to war, as I have shown upon 2 Sam. xi. 1, (see there); but whether it was the next spring after his death, or some years after, is doubted: but the words seem plainly to import it was the next spring.

Ver. 21. *As they were burying a man.*] Carrying him to his grave.

They spied a band of men;] A party of the Moabites, who were coming towards the place where they were to lay the corpse.

They cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha:] Which being near to the place where they then were, they rolled away the stone, and laid the body by Elisha's; for fear, if they proceeded to the sepulchre prepared for this man, they should fall into the hands of the Moabites.

Touched the bones of Elisha,] From hence some con-

clude, that this invasion of the Moabites was some years after Elisha's death; when his flesh was consumed, and only his bones remained.

22 ¶ But Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz.

23 And the LoRD was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, and had respect unto them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, neither cast he them from his presence as yet.

24 So Hazael king of Syria died; And Ben-hadad his son reigned in his stead.

25 And Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz took again out of the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael the cities, which he had taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz his father by war. Three times did Joash beat him, and recovered the cities of Israel.

clude, that this invasion of the Moabites was some years after Elisha's death; when his flesh was consumed, and only his bones remained.

He revived,] By which miracle God did the highest honour to his prophet, and confirmed both the truth of what he had promised the king, and the belief of a future life. For this was something more than he had done in Elisha's lifetime, when he could not without many prayers, and stretching himself with great application upon the body of the child, raise it to life again; whereas now, upon touching of his dead body only, God restored a man, in an instant, to perfect health; for he stood upon his feet, and, it is likely, walked home with those that brought him to be buried. It is a poor conceit of Abarbinel and others, that he was a wicked man, whom God rather would raise to life again, than suffer his dead body to rest by such a holy person as Elisha. It had been enough, if this had been the reason, to have thrown this dead body out of Elisha's sepulchre, and let it lie upon the ground.

Ver. 22.] None of these things which Elisha promised were accomplished while Hazael lived; but after his death, Joash the son of Jehoahaz (as it here follows) vanquished Ben-hadad the son of Hazael.

Ver. 23. *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,*] For whose sake he spared them, and would not let the oppression of the Syrians continue so long as to ruin them.

Neither cast he them from his presence as yet.] But allowed them a longer space for repentance.

Ver. 24.] The name of Ben-hadad had for a long time been common to the kings of Syria, and now was renewed in another family.

Ver. 25. *Jehoash—took again out of the hand of Ben-hadad,—the cities, which he had taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz*] He took all the country on the other side of Jordan in the days of Jehu (x. 33); besides which he made further conquests on this side Jordan, in the days of Jehoahaz: whether Jehoash recovered all is not certain; but what his father lost, it is here said he regained.

Three times did Joash beat him.] It is not recorded where these three battles were fought; but the success of them was so great that he retook all that his father had lost.

CHAPTER XIV.

1 Amaziah's good reign. 5 His justice on the murderers of his father. 7 His victory over Edom. 8 Amaziah, provoking Jehoash, is overcome and spoiled. 15 Jeroboam succeedeth Jehoash. 17 Amaziah slain by a conspiracy. 21 Azariah succeedeth him. 23 Jeroboam's wicked reign. 28 Zachariah succeedeth him.

1 In the second year of Joash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel reigned Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah.

2 He was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem.

3 And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, yet not like David his father: he did according to all things as Joash his father did.

4 Howbeit the high places were not taken away: as yet the people did sacrifice and burnt incense on the high places.

5 ¶ And it came to pass, as soon as the kingdom was confirmed in his hand, that he slew his servants which had slain the king his father.

6 But the children of the murderers he slew not: according unto that which is written in the book of the law of Moses, wherein the Lord commanded, saying, The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children be put to death for the fathers; but every man shall be put to death for his own sin.

7 He slew of Edom in the valley of salt ten thousand, and took Selah by war, and called the name of it Joktheel unto this day.

8 ¶ Then Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash, the son of Jehoahaz son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, Come, let us look one another in the face.

9 And Jehoash the king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebu-

CHAP. XIV.

Ver. 1.] This was, as Dr. Lightfoot observes, the thirty-eighth year of his father Joash king of Judah; three years current before his death. For his father had thrown himself into such a miserable condition by his apostacy, and his murder of Zachariah (xii. 17, 18), that he was become unfit to manage the kingdom (see Harm. of the Evang. Proleg. cap. 6).

Ver. 2.] Joash king of Israel reigned sixteen years (xiii. 10), therefore Amaziah reigned fourteen years while he lived, and after his death fifteen years; which make twenty-nine (see ver. 17).

Ver. 3.] For both of them in the beginning of their reigns did very well; but both in their latter end fell into idolatry. Both of them also, as Abarinck observes, contemned God's prophets, who spake to them in the name of the Lord.

Ver. 4.] Even in the best part of his reign, before he fell to idolatry, this license continued, which had been long practised against the law of God. In this he imitated his father (xii. 3).

Ver. 5.] He durst not venture upon this piece of justice presently, till he was well settled in his authority, and had divested those of all power who were the friends of those murderers. Who seem to have continued still at court, for they are called *his servants*.

Ver. 6.] In this he acted like a good man, and was not moved to cut off the children, contrary to law, for fear they should make a faction against him, and take revenge for their father's death.

Ver. 7. *He slew of Edom*] He alone, and the men of Judah, made the following slaughter: having, at the command of a prophet, abandoned the help of the Israelites, though he had purchased it with a great sum of money (2 Chron. xxv. 7—10); the Edomites had revolted from Judah in the days of Joram (viii. 10), and now Amaziah endeavours to reduce them.

In the valley of salt] A place mentioned 2 Sam. viii. 13, where see what I have observed concerning the reason of this name.

Ten thousand.] And he took as many captives (see 2 Chron. xxv. 12).

And took Selah by war.] The metropolis of Arabia Petraea; which took its name from hence: for *Selah* is the same with the word *Petra*, a rock; upon

which the city stood. From this rock he seems to have thrown down the ten thousand whom he took alive, and broke in pieces, as is said in the forenamed place, 2 Chron. xxv. 12. *Hagar* signifies the same, as Bochartus observes, by which name the Arabians called it, from the rocky mountain which hung over this place, which St. Paul calls by the Arabic name *Hagar*.

Joktheel] Which name imports "obedience of God, or to God:" because, having taken it, he settled, as some imagine, the laws and statutes of Moses in this place; or rather, he acknowledged, by giving it this name, that the possession of this place was a reward of his obedience to the man of God, who required him to dismiss all the forces he had hired of the Israelites (2 Chron. xxv. 10).

Ver. 8.] Being flushed with his great victory over the Edomites, and increased by the damages the Israelites had done him (2 Chron. xxv. 13) he sent this challenge to the king of Israel, saying, Let us set our armies in battle-array one against the other, and try our strength. Which some think he did only to try their military skill and prowess; not to revenge injuries, or to get his own again. Which, if he had intended, he would have assaulted the Israelites on a sudden; and not given them such a fair warning to stand upon their defence. But it is more probable, that, being encouraged, as I said, by his late victory, he resolved to be revenged for the slaughter of his ancestors by Jehu (ch. ix.), and for the late spoil the Israelites had made in his country (2 Chron. xxv. 10, 13); but he resolved to have satisfaction in a fair and honourable way, and not by surprise. And the words may be thus understood: "Either give me satisfaction, or let us try it out in a battle." It is probable, also, he might think of conquering the kingdom of Israel, if he did not satisfy him, and bring it back to the house of David: for so Jehoash understood him, as Josephus thinks, and the sequel shows.

Ver. 9. *The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar*] He compares himself to a cedar, and Amaziah to a thistle; which is a poor shrub, not worthy of that name; but having drawn blood on some poor traveller, and sorely afflicted him (as Amaziah had done the Edomites), grew very proud, and would be no longer one of the shrubs, but equal to the most goodly trees.

non, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife : and there passed by a wild beast that *was* in Lebanon, and trode down the thistle.

10 Thou hast indeed smitten Edom, and thy heart hath lifted thee up : glory of *this*, and tarry at home : for why shouldst thou meddle to *thy* hurt, that thou shouldst fall, *even* thou, and Judah with thee ?

11 But Amaziah would not hear. Therefore Jehoash king of Israel went up ; and he and Amaziah king of Judah looked one another in the face at Beth-shemesh, which *belongeth* to Judah.

12 And Judah was put to the worse before Israel ; and they fled every man to their tents.

13 And Jehoash king of Israel took Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Jehoash the son of Ahaziah, at Beth-shemesh, and came to Jerusalem, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem from the gate of Ephraim unto the corner gate, four hundred cubits.

14 And he took all the gold and silver, and all the vessels that were found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the

king's house, and hostages, and returned to Samaria.

15 ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Jehoash which he did, and his might, and how he fought with Amaziah king of Judah, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel ?

16 And Jehoash slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel ; and Jeroboam his son reigned in his stead.

17 ¶ And Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah lived after the death of Jehoash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel fifteen years.

18 And the rest of the acts of Amaziah, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah ?

19 Now they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem : and he fled to Lachish ; but they sent after him to Lachish, and slew him there.

20 And they brought him on horses : and he was buried at Jerusalem with his fathers in the city of David.

21 And all the people of Judah took Aza-

Ver. 14. *And hostages.*] The sons, I suppose, of the principal persons of the city, for a security that they would be quiet, and give him no disturbance.

Returned to Samaria.] For he had enough to do to defend himself from the Syrians ; and therefore did not intend a conquest of the kingdom of Judah, nor set a garrison in Jerusalem ; but contented himself with the spoil of it ; and perhaps made them tributaries to him. This was a heavy punishment upon Amaziah for going after other gods (2 Chron. xxv. 20).

Ver. 15.] There were many other things which happened in this war, as Abarbinel observes, besides these here compendiously related ; for which he refers to a record which was very well known in those days, but now is lost.

Ver. 17.] But in no great credit with his people ; for Rasi thinks he lived most of his time in Lachish, whither he was forced to fly (as it follows), by reason of a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem.

Ver. 18.] He mentions nothing of *his might* which he showed ; being a weak prince, who lost the reputation of his country.

Ver. 19. *They made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem.*] Their city having been exposed to reproach by the great breach made in their wall, and spoiled of its best ornaments, and some of their children carried away as hostages for their good behaviour, he became very odious to the great men of the city ; all this being brought upon them by his pride, and rashness, and apostasy from God (xxv. 97).

He fled to Lachish ;] The conspiracy, it seems, grew so strong, that he could not resist it ; but was forced to seek for safety by flight, in a fortified city upon the borders of the Philistines.

They sent after him to Lachish, and slew him there.] They sent to have him privately murdered (as Josephus reports it), which some undertook and effected.

Ver. 20. *They brought him on horses :*] In a chariot. *He was buried at Jerusalem*] They did him some honour when he was dead, though they hated him when he was alive.

Ver. 21. *Azariah,*] Called *Uzziah* in the next chapter, ver. 30. and in 2 Chron. xxvi. 1. Both signify the same thing ; one being as much as "the help of God," the other "the strength of God."

Give thy daughter to my son to wife.] Make an affinity with me, and let us be one kingdom. So some understand it, that Jehoash thought he would have him join his great kingdom, which was ten tribes, unto his poor one of two tribes ; that, being united, there should be but one king over them all ; and they should try their fortune in a pitched battle, which of them two should be the king. But this seems to be too much strained. He only intimates, that if he should desire a friendly alliance with him, he despised it as below him, as much as a thistle is below a cedar.

There passed by a wild beast—and trode down the thistle.] This represents how easily his soldiers (who are compared to wild beasts) would repress his insolence.

Ver. 10. *Thy heart hath lifted thee up :*] This hath made thee proud.

Glory of this, and tarry at home :] Be content with the honour thou hast won, and be quiet.

For why shouldst thou meddle to thy hurt,] He admonishes him to desist from this needless provocation of his neighbours ; which might end in his ruin.

Ver. 11. *He and Amaziah—looked one another in the face*] Encountered one another in a fight.

At Beth-shemesh.] See 1 Sam. vi. 12.

Ver. 12.] So their houses were called, from their having no other habitations for a long time in the wilderness ; and in Canaan many continued in such dwellings. Josephus saith, the people of Judah did not strike a stroke ; but being possessed with a panic fear, when they saw a formidable army set in battle-array against them, ran away.

Ver. 13. *Jehoash—took Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Jehoash the son of Ahaziah,*] I suppose his ancestors are mentioned to show that this was the greater disgrace to him ; being descended from a race of kings, which Jehoash was not.

Came to Jerusalem,] Bringing Amaziah with him ; and letting the inhabitants know (as Josephus saith) that he would slay him before their eyes, if they did not immediately open their gates unto him ; which was accordingly done.

Brake down the wall of Jerusalem] That the city might lie open to his invasion, if they should break the conditions he imposed upon them.

riah, which was sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah.

22 He built Elath, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers.

23 ¶ In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel began to reign in Samaria, and reigned forty and one years.

24 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.

25 He restored the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, according to the word of the LORD God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, which was of Gath-hepher.

Made him king instead of his father Amaziah.] But this was twelve years after Amaziah's death; for he was made king in the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam (see upon xv. 1), who began to reign in the fifteenth of Amaziah (ver. 23).

Ver. 22. *He built Elath,] Repaired it.*

Restored it to Judah,] It was a city belonging to Edom (Dent. ii. 8. 2 Chron. viii. 17), which king David, I suppose, took when he conquered this country; but in the days of Joram the Edomites revolted, and recovered Elath.

After that the king slept with his fathers,] It is a probable opinion of Abarbanel, that the king his father, after the great slaughter of the Edomites, mentioned in the foregoing chapter, took this place; but did not annex it to the kingdom of Judah, by reason of his succeeding troubles. Which Azariah did by building a wall about it, and fortifying it; whereby he secured the possession of it.

Ver. 23.] Which was much longer than any of the kings of Israel: Jehu himself, the first of his family, reigning but twenty-eight years, which was longer than any before him, as I observed, x. 36.

Ver. 24.] As he had the name, so he trod in the steps of him who first corrupted Israel with idolatry.

Ver. 25. *He restored the coast of Israel,] As Joash his father had restored many cities which Ben-hadad had taken; so Jeroboam restored a large territory which other kings had taken from them; viz. all the country from Libanus on the north, to the lake Asphalities on the south.*

According to the word of the Lord God of Israel, which he spake by—Jonah,] The prophet Jonah encouraged them to this war, promising them success in it. Whose words are not here set down; but this place shows that God was very merciful to them, though a very wicked people, still in continuing prophets among them, when Elisha was dead. And this prophet, the Jews fancy, was the son of the woman

26 For the LORD saw the affliction of Israel, that it was very bitter: for there was not any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for Israel.

27 And the LORD said not that he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven: but he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash.

28 ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, and all that he did, and his might, how he warred, and how he recovered Damascus, and Hamath, which belonged to Judah, for Israel, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

29 And Jeroboam slept with his fathers, even with the kings of Israel; and Zachariah his son reigned in his stead.

of Sarepta, whom Elijah raised from the dead. For which I cannot find they have any ground, but this poor conceit, that he is called the son of *Amittai*, i. e. of truth, say they: because his mother said to the prophet when he restored her son to her, "Now I know the word of God in thy mouth is truth" (1 Kings xvii. 24). But this is fully confuted from this single observation, that he is said to be of Gath-hepher, which was far from Sarepta, towards Tiberias in the tribe of Zebulun, as St. Jerome tells us.

Ver. 26. *The Lord saw the affliction of Israel, that it was very bitter,] He showed them this favour, not for any goodness that was in them; but in compassion to their misery, which was greater than could be expressed.*

For there was not any shut up, nor any left,] Men of all sorts were destroyed: or as some interpret it, they had lost all they had in their houses, and all that was in the field. But see of this phrase, 1 Kings xiv. 10. xxi. 21.

Nor any helper,] None to relieve them, much less to deliver them.

Ver. 27.] But since the Lord had not yet decreed to root them out of their own land; therefore he saved them, even by this wicked prince, for the present, from their enemies; who would otherwise have made an utter end of them.

Ver. 28. *For Israel,] Or rather by Israel, as Abarbanel expounds it; by the hand or power of Israel they were restored. For when David fought against the Syrians and brought them in subjection to him, he put garrisons into Damascus and Hamath (2 Sam. viii. 6, &c.). Which the Syrians afterward recovered when they rebelled against Judah: but Jeroboam possessed himself of them again, and by his valour made them as subject to Israel as they had been to Judah.*

Ver. 29.] He was the third king of Israel of Jehu's race, and so might be said to sleep with his fathers of Israel.

CHAPTER XV.

1 Azariah's good reign. 5 He dying a leper, Jotham succeedeth. 8 Zachariah, the last of Jehu's generation, reigning ill, is slain by Shallum. 13 Shallum, reigning a month, is slain by Menahem. 16 Menahem strengtheneth himself by Pul. 21 Pekahiah succeedeth him. 23 Pekahiah is slain by Pekah. 27 Pekah is oppressed by Tiglath-pileser, and slain by Hoshea. 32 Jotham's good reign. 36 Aha's succeedeth him.

1 In the twenty and seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel began Azariah son of Amaziah king of Judah to reign.

2 Sixteen years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned two and fifty years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jecholiah of Jerusalem.

CHAP. XV.

Ver. 1.] Here is a great difficulty, in the solving of

which interpreters much vary: for Amaziah the father of Azariah lived but fifteen years after the begin-

3 And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done;

4 Save that the high places were not removed: the people sacrificed and burnt incense still on the high places.

5 ¶ And the LORD smote the king, so that he was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house. And Jotham the king's son *was* over the house, judging the people of the land.

6 And the rest of the acts of Azariah, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

7 So Azariah slept with his fathers; and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David: and Jotham his son reigned in his stead.

8 ¶ In the thirty and eighth year of Azariah king of Judah did Zachariah the son of Jeroboam reign over Israel in Samaria six months.

9 And he did that *which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, as his fathers had done: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.

10 And Shallum the son of Jabesh conspired against him, and smote him before the people, and slew him, and reigned in his stead.

11 And the rest of the acts of Zachariah, behold, they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

12 This *was* the word of the LORD which he spake unto Jehu, saying, Thy sons shall sit on the throne of Israel unto the fourth generation. And so it came to pass.

ning of Jeroboam's reign (xiv. 17), therefore Azariah began his reign, not in the twenty-seventh, but in the beginning of the seventeenth of Jeroboam. Some think Jeroboam reigned with his father eleven years: others that there was an interregnum; that is, the throne was vacant eleven, or rather twelve years, between the death of Amaziah and the inauguration of Azariah. Dr. Lightfoot makes no doubt of the truth of this: that Azariah being but sixteen years old in the seven-and-twentieth of Jeroboam, he was but four years old at his father's death; and the throne being empty for eleven or twelve years, the government was managed by some of the grandees in his minority. But Ralbag will have these twenty-seven years of Jeroboam not to be those which were past, but those which were to come; and the meaning is, Azariah was made king when Jeroboam had yet twenty-seven years to reign; before the family of Jehu came to an end. For after this Jeroboam reigned twenty-six years, and his son six months; which make twenty-seven imperfect years. This Abarbinel thinks is the literal sense: but the other is more agreeable to the constant account of the reigns of other kings (see Mr. Whiston, in his late view of the Chronology of the Old Testament, p 91).

Ver. 2.] In which time, which was longer than any king of Judah or Israel reigned, he did many great things; which are recorded in 2 Chron. xxvi. from ver. 5 to 16.

Ver. 3.] He governed well in the former part of his reign, and was prospered by God (2 Chron. xxvi. 5); but offended in the latter end of it, as Amaziah his father had done.

Ver. 4.] Which was a common error (as I have often observed) which continued through the reign of the best of their kings, till the time of Hezekiah.

Ver. 5. *The Lord smote the king, so that he was a leper—and dwelt in a several house.*] The cause of this stroke is related at large in 2 Chron. xxvi. 16, &c. And by a *several house* the Jews understand a house in the country, which was *domus libera*: where he might have liberty to take his pleasure, but not to meddle with public affairs.

Jotham—was over the house.] Over the king's house, as it is in 2 Chron. xxvi. 23. That is, he lived in the palace, and managed all the affairs of the court, and of the kingdom. This was in the seven-and-twentieth year of Azariah, when he was smitten with the leprosy (as Rasi makes account), and he continued a leper twenty-five years, during which time Jotham took upon him the administration of the government, his father being incapable of it.

Ver. 7.] He was not buried in the very city

of David, but in the "field of the burial which belonged to the kings" (2 Chron. xxvi. 23). In which field, it is probable, the sepulchre of the kings was; wherein they would not bury Azariah, because he was a leper; but yet very near to the sepulchre, where his ancestors lay interred.

Ver. 8.] Some are confident the throne was vacant two-and-twenty years between the death of Jeroboam and the inauguration of his son; either through wars from abroad (which Jeroboam might have provoked against his house, by the conquest of Hamath and Damascus), or through war at home, which appears, they think, from this disastrous end of Zachariah, ver. 10 (see Dr. Lightfoot, in his Prolegomena to his Harmony of the Evangelists, sect. 6). But there are few that follow this opinion, though one most learned in these, as well as other things (Dr. Alix), thinks there was an interregnum of twenty-four years. If there be any difficulty in this account, most think it is sufficiently solved, by saying, that it was the thirty-eighth year, from the time that Azariah began to reign with his father.

Ver. 9.] Therefore God cut him off speedily; the time approaching, when he intended to put an end to the kingdom of Israel.

Ver. 10.] It is uncertain who this Shallum was, or what was the pretence of his conspiracy, and of his possessing himself of the throne; but it is pretty plain, I think, that he laid his treason privately and secret (ver. 15), and then made an open assault upon the king's person in the face of all the people.

Ver. 11.] We read of nothing that he did; therefore the meaning is, that his behaviour in the six months' time, wherein he reigned, how he managed things, and provoked this conspiracy, are recorded elsewhere; the author of this book intending only to give a brief account of the remaining kings of Israel.

Ver. 12.] How unfaithful soever they proved to God, he faithfully kept his promise which he made to Jehu: whose sons Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam, and Zachariah, succeeded him in the throne of Israel. But this Shallum put an end to that family, and fulfilled the prophecy of Hosea, i. 4, "I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel." For though Jehu had a command from God to destroy the house of Ahab, yet he did it with such ill affections, and for such wrong ends, that God avenged that blood by this man, who slew Zachariah, and the rest of his posterity, if there were any: at least, he made the kingdom to cease in this family, and not long after in all Israel; who were rooted out, and never restored to their country, as Judah was.

13 ¶ Shallum the son of Jabesh began to reign in the nine and thirtieth year of Uzziah king of Judah; and he reigned a full month in Samaria.

14 For Menahem the son of Gadi went up from Tirzah, and came to Samaria, and smote Shallum the son of Jabesh in Samaria, and slew him, and reigned in his stead.

15 And the rest of the acts of Shalum, and his conspiracy which he made, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

16 ¶ Then Menahem smote Tiphshah, and all that were therein, and the coasts thereof from Tirzah: because they opened not to him, therefore he smote it; and all the women therein that were with child he ripped up.

17 In the nine and thirtieth year of Azariah king of Judah began Menahem the son of Gadi to reign over Israel, and reigned ten years in Samaria.

18 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not all his days from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.

Ver. 13.] We are not told how he reigned, but it is likely he followed the steps of Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin.

Ver. 14.] Josephus thinks Menahem was general of the army of Israel, which besieged Tirzah when Zachariah was slain: and he hearing what Shallum had done, came and served him in his kind, and made himself king.

Ver. 15.] A larger account was given of his conspiracy, and the occasion of it, and his success in it, in that book; where some other memorable acts, which it seems he did in a month's time were recorded.

Ver. 16. *Menahem smote Tiphshah.*] Some take this Tiphshah to be the same with that mentioned in 1 Kings iv. 24. But that lay upon the river Euphrates, whereas this was near to Tirzah; which was once the royal city of Israel: to the siege of which Josephus thinks Menahem returned after the slaughter of Shallum; not as general of the host, but as their king: but they knowing he had no title to the kingdom, would not open their gates to him. Therefore he took it by force, and spoiled it, and all the territory about it, until he came to Tiphshah, which he used more cruelly.

All the women therein that were with child he ripped up.] By which barbarity he thought to terrify the whole kingdom, that none might dare to withstand him.

Ver. 17.] He seems to have reigned with such fury that none durst oppose him; but he possessed the throne ten years before God cut him off.

Ver. 19. *Pul the king of Assyria came against the land.*] That is, the land of Israel. He was governor of Babylon, who, together with Arbaeas the Mede, slew Sardanapalus, the last of the Assyrian kings, and translated the empire to the Chaldeans. For he reigned over Babylon and Nineveh, and Arbaeas over the Medes and Persians. He was the first king of Assyria that invaded Israel, and began their transportation out of their own country; as Abarbanel gathers from 1 Chron. v. 26. And this is the first time that we find any mention of the kingdom of Assyria, since the days of Nimrod, who erected a small kingdom here (Gen. x. 11). And they were no great people,

19 And Pul the king of Assyria came against the land: and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, that his hand might be with him to confirm the kingdom in his hand.

20 And Menahem exacted the money of Israel, even of all the mighty men of wealth, of each man fifty shekels of silver, to give to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria turned back, and stayed not there in the land.

21 ¶ And the rest of the acts of Menahem, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

22 And Menahem slept with his fathers; and Pekahiah his son reigned in his stead.

23 ¶ In the fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah Pekahiah the son of Menahem began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned two years.

24 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.

25 But Pekah the son of Remaliah, a captain of his, conspired against him, and smote him in

one would think, when the seventy-second psalm was penned, where they are reckoned as auxiliaries to the children of Lot, against the Israelites, together with other small nations; but now they had a great and powerful empire.

Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver.] By this great present he not only turned away the army of Pul from him, but purchased his friendship; so that he helped to establish his authority. Which was very tottering, by reason he was not only a usurper, but had exercised extreme great cruelty upon his people, which no doubt made him extremely hated (ver. 10).

Ver. 20. *Menahem exacted the money of Israel, even of all the mighty men of wealth, &c.*] By this means, I suppose, he thought to ingratiate himself with the common people; upon whom he had laid no tax, but charged only the rich, according to the proportion of their wealth. For the Hebrew words do not import that he made every rich man in Israel pay fifty shekels; but that he gave to the king of Assyria so many shekels for every man; that is, for every one in his army. So they run exactly, "to give to the king of Assyria fifty shekels of silver for each man."

So the king of Assyria turned back.] At that time he departed; but it is likely he afterwards returned, in the reign of Pekah, and made the deportation before mentioned.

Ver. 21.] This shows him to have been a mighty man, that, notwithstanding his violence and cruelty, he left the kingdom in his family: which the two foregoing kings could not do. But it is evident, there was an interregnum of a year between the reign of Menahem and Pekahiah; for Pekahiah did not begin his reign till the fiftieth year of Azariah (as it here follows), and Menahem died the year before; for he began to reign in the thirty-ninth of Azariah (ver. 17) and reigned but ten years.

Ver. 23.] His reign was short; both because he himself was wicked, and his father also was an usurper.

Ver. 24.] He was the wicked son of a wicked father; and so perished (as it here follows) by such a conspiracy as his father made against Shallum.

Ver. 25. *Argob and Arich.*] These were two valiant men, who some think were in the conspiracy with him

Samaria, in the palace of the king's house, with Argob and Arieah, and with him fifty men of the Gileadites: and he killed him, and reigned in his room.

26 And the rest of the acts of Pekahiah, and all that he did, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

27 ¶ In the two and fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah Pekah the son of Remaliah began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned twenty years.

28 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.

29 In the days of Pekah king of Israel came Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and took Ijon, and Abel-beth-maachah, and Janoah, and Kedesh,

and Gilead. But Abarinel rather thinks they were two eminent courtiers, who were always about the king.

With him fifty men of the Gileadites:] Who were his guards, and perhaps, assisted him in his treason.

He killed him, and reigned in his room.] He was a great commander under Pekahiah; for the Hebrew word *shalish* signifies more than a bare captain. Therefore Josephus calls him a *chiliarch*, or an officer over a thousand men. And the word carrying in it the notion of three, some later writers have therefore thought him to be the third person in the kingdom, next the king. No question he was some considerable person, who had soldiers at his command to execute his designs.

Ver. 27.] This is the fifth king that reigned over Israel during the reign of Azariah king of Judah.

Ver. 29. In the days of Pekah] In the last year of his reign, as the Jews say in Seder Olam Rabba.

Came Tiglath-pileser.] He was the son of Pul, and is called by other authors Phul, or Paul-assur, and here Tiglath-pul-assur: the former part of this name being taken from the river Tigris, which is called by the inhabitants Diglito; from whose borders this king came.

Ijon, and Abel-beth-maachah,] Two strong towns mentioned 1 Kings xv. 20 (see there).

Janoah.] A city in the tribe of Ephraim (see Josh. xvi. 6).

Kedesh, and Hazor,] Which were in the tribe of Naphtali (Josh. xii. 22. xix. 36).

Gilead,] Which was on the other side Jordan.

Galilee, all the land of Naphtali,] The upper Galilee; which was possessed by this tribe, and by Zebulun.

Carried them captive to Assyria.] This was the second deportation of the ten tribes; the first being made by Pul, as I said before, who carried away the two tribes and half beyond Jordan; and this second was made by his son, who carried away two other tribes: then, nine years after, followed a third, in the days of the next king (xviii. 9), when the remainder of the ten tribes were carried away from their own land. The tribe of Judah still remained; but about eight years after the former, part of that was carried away by Sennacherib, when he took all their fenced cities (xviii. 13), which, with respect to the whole country, the Jews called the fourth deportation. Then a fifth followed (xxiv. 15), and a sixth (xxv. 1, &c.); the last is mentioned xxv. 25. Thus they are reckoned up by Abarinel; and in this second (the Jews say, in Seder Olam Rabba) Tiglath-pileser carried

and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria.

30 And Hoshea the son of Elah made a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah, and smote him, and slew him, and reigned in his stead, in the twentieth year of Jotham the son of Uzziah.

31 And the rest of the acts of Pekah, and all that he did, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

32 ¶ In the second year of Pekah the son of Remaliah king of Israel began Jotham the son of Uzziah king of Judah to reign.

33 Five and twenty years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jerusha, the daughter of Zadok.

away the golden calf which was in Dan. But see a more exact account of Judah's captivity in Mr. Whiston's learned Chronology of the Old Testament, p. 52.

Ver. 30. Hoshea—made a conspiracy against Pekah] Who Hoshea was, or what was the ground of his conspiracy, is not recorded; but we may suppose it to have been because he governed ill, and, by his cruel war with Judah, had brought the king of Assyria upon his own kingdom (2 Chron. xxviii. 16) and thereby lost a great part of it.

Slew him,] As Pekah had served Pekahiah.

And reigned in his stead, in the twentieth year of Jotham] These words create a difficulty; for it is said, ver. 33, that Jotham reigned but sixteen years. Which Seder Olam Rabba thus reconciles (for none can think any writer whatsoever would so soon contradict himself), that this conspiracy was begun in the latter end of Jotham's reign, but not put in execution till four years after his death. So that these words are to be understood as if he had said, "Twenty years after Jotham began to reign over Judah Pekah was slain." Dr. Lightfoot gives another account of it; that the wickedness of Ahaz was so great, that the holy writer would not mention him on this occasion, but rather speaks of his good father, as if he were yet alive, in which he follows R. Solomon Jarchi. But this hath no show of truth in it; since so much is said of Ahaz in the following part of this history. A late very learned writer (in his short view of the Chronology of the Old Testament, p. 47) hath given a better account of it, in these words: "Because there had been yet no mention made of Ahaz's reign, therefore the old epocha of his predecessor Jotham is still made use of." But the plain truth is, that Jotham reigned four years with his father Azariah.

Ver. 31.] In that book which is now called by the name of Chronicles his war with Judah is recorded (2 Chron. xxviii).

Ver. 32.] Why he should be all along called Azariah, and here only Uzziah, and ver. 34, no account can be given; unless it were to show he had two names, as I have observed, 2 Chron. xxvi. 1. And it appears by the book of Chronicles, that Uzziah was as much used when that book was written as the other.

Ver. 33. Five and twenty years old was he when he began to reign.] Alone by himself; for he reigned some time with his father during his leprosy (see Dr. Lightfoot in his Prolegom. to the Harm. of the Evang. sect. 6).

His mother's name was Jerusha, the daughter of Zadok.] It is not said of what place, as is usual: this

34 And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD : he did according to all that his father Uzziah had done.

35 ¶ Howbeit the high places were not removed : the people sacrificed and burned incense still in the high places. He built the higher gate of the house of the LORD.

36 ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and

Zadok being so well known, that there was no need to set down his dwelling.

Ver. 34. *He did that which was right*] Οὐδεμίαν ἀρετῆς ἀπέδειξετο he wanted no virtue belonging to a good prince, as Josephus writes (lib. ix. Antiq. cap. 11), being (saith he) "pious towards God, just towards men, and studious of the public good."

He did according to all that his father Uzziah had done. That is, according to all the good he had done; but did not imitate him in invading the priests' office.

all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

37 In those days the LORD began to send against Judah Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah.

38 And Jotham slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father : and Ahaz his son reigned in his stead

Ver. 35. *He built the higher gate of the house of the Lord.*] Which was between the house of the king and the house of the Lord (xviii. 20). It was built by Solomon; but this king added a noble structure to it.

Ver. 36.] See 2 Chron. xxvii.

Ver. 37.] These two kings entered into a confederacy against Judah, and made preparations for war before Jotham died; but he was so happy as to be laid in his grave in peace; their design being not executed until the reign of the next king.

CHAPTER XVI.

1 Ahaz's wicked reign. 5 Ahaz, assailed by Rezin and Pekah, hireth Tiglath-pileser against them. 10 Ahaz, sending a pattern of an altar from Damascus to Uryjah, diverteth the brazen altar to his own devotion. 17 He spoileth the temple. 19 Hezekiah succeedeth him.

1 IN the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah Ahaz the son of Jotham king of Judah began to reign.

2 Twenty years old was Ahaz when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, and did not that which was right in the sight of the LORD his God, like David his father.

3 But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel.

CHAP. XVI.

Ver. 2. *Twenty years old was Ahaz when he began to reign.*] He was a little more than twenty years old (see upon xviii. 2).

And did not that which was right] As might have been expected from the good education which, no doubt, so pious a man as Jotham his father gave him; who left him an excellent example.

Ver. 3.] He was far worse than any of the preceding kings of Israel; for he imitated those abominable idolaters whom God rooted out of the land of Canaan: who it is most certain sometimes burnt their children in the fire, as sacrifices to their gods (Deut. xii. 31), and the children of Israel it is as certain imitated them (Ezek. xvi. 20, 21. xxxiii. 37. 39). But whether Ahaz did that, or only made his son pass through the fire by way of lustration (as they called it), cannot be determined. It is no argument that he did not offer him as a burnt-sacrifice, because Hezekiah outlived him; for he had more sons, it is likely, than him. See, concerning this horrible impiety, what I have noted upon Lev. xviii. 21 and upon Deut. xviii. 10.

Ver. 4.] He added this to all his other sins (of consecrating his son to Moloch by passing him through the fire, if not offering him in sacrifice), that he himself sacrificed in high places, and on hills, and under every green tree; by his example encourag-

ing this practice, which other kings had only tolerated. So we read, that people sacrificed in high places even in good kings' reigns, xii. 3. xiv. 4. xv. 4, &c. but as they sacrificed to God in those reigns, so we never read till now that any of those kings sacrificed there themselves, as this king did; who not merely suffered this, but gave countenance to it by his own practice, and thereby strengthened this license of private sacrificing, contrary to the law of God; and, which was worst of all, sacrificing to other gods: it being very probable that he fancied some deity to inhabit under every well-spread flourishing tree.

5 ¶ Then Rezin king of Syria and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel came up to Jerusalem to war: and they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome him.

6 At that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drove the Jews from Elath: and the Syrians came to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day.

7 So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser

ing this practice, which other kings had only tolerated. So we read, that people sacrificed in high places even in good kings' reigns, xii. 3. xiv. 4. xv. 4, &c. but as they sacrificed to God in those reigns, so we never read till now that any of those kings sacrificed there themselves, as this king did; who not merely suffered this, but gave countenance to it by his own practice, and thereby strengthened this license of private sacrificing, contrary to the law of God; and, which was worst of all, sacrificing to other gods: it being very probable that he fancied some deity to inhabit under every well-spread flourishing tree.

Ver. 5.] This seems not to agree with 2 Chron. xxviii. 5, &c. where these two princes are represented as getting great victories over him. To which Abarbinel answers, that these things happened at different times. For the wars mentioned in the book of Chronicles were made severally by these two kings, wherein they prospered, being the ministers of divine providence. But when now they joined their forces together, and not only came against other cities, but against Jerusalem, God was pleased to make them miscarry.

Ver. 6. *At that time Rezin*] When he broke up the siege of Jerusalem, upon intelligence he received that Tiglath-pileser was coming to its relief.

Recovered Elath to Syria.] This was a considerable port upon the Red sea.

king of Assyria, saying, *I am thy servant and thy son*: come up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, which rise up against me.

8 And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house, and sent it for a present to the king of Assyria.

9 And the king of Assyria hearkened unto him: for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus, and took it, and carried the people of it captive to Kir, and slew Rezin.

10 ¶ And king Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and saw an altar that was at Damascus: and king Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar, and the pattern of it, according to all the workmanship thereof.

Drave the Jews from Elath:] This city had been recovered to the dominion of Judah by Azariah (xiv. 22), who took it from the Syrians; who now took it from them again, that they might not quite lose the fruit of their expedition against Jerusalem.

Ver. 7. *Tiglath-pileser*] There is a learned man of our own, who hath lately given another account of the name of Pileser, than that above mentioned (xv. 29). For he thinks it is compounded of the names of two of their gods, Fil being the same with Bel, and Azer or Azar was the name of a planet worshipped by the Persians, viz. Mars: and they much affected to have the names of their gods in their own names; which was a common thing also among the Jews: for which reason the name of Tiglath was added, which was the name of Tigris (as I observed before), which, as all great beneficial rivers, mountains, and trees, was accounted sacred among the heathen (see Dr. Hyde, *Histor. Relig. Vet. Persar.* cap. 3).

I am thy servant and thy son:] He not only put himself and all he had into his protection, but made himself his subject, to hold all he had of him by his favour. For that is the meaning of "I am thy servant and thy son;" that is, he was content to be his vassal, if he would be his protector.

Ver. 8.] These treasures had been sent some years ago by Jehoash to the king of Syria (xii. 18); but it seems they were well replenished again by the piety of his successors, Amaziah, Azariah, but especially Jotham.

Ver. 9. *The king of Assyria hearkened unto him*:] It is very uncertain when king Ahaz sent to desire this help. If it was when they were preparing to besiege Jerusalem, it was the effect of his great infidelity; for God had been so gracious to him, as to promise by the prophet Isaiah that those kings should do him no hurt (Isa. vii. 4), giving him a sign also to strengthen his faith. Others think it was after the king of Syria and the king of Israel had miserably harassed Ahaz's country, though they could not take Jerusalem, as we read 2 Chron. xxviii. 5, 6, &c. Whosoever it was, the king of Assyria gave a powerful diversion to the king of Syria, invading his country, and besieging the chief city of it, of which he made himself master.

Carried the people of it captive to Kir:] A place in the country of the upper Media, as Josephus tell us, from whence he brought some people to plant in Damascus.

Slew Rezin:] Who was the last of their kings; for the Syrians never got up again, as the Jews observe

11 And Urijah the priest built an altar according to all that king Ahaz had sent from Damascus: so Urijah the priest made it against king Ahaz came from Damascus.

12 And when the king was come from Damascus, the king saw the altar: and the king approached to the altar, and offered thereon.

13 And he burnt his burnt offering and his meat offering, and poured his drink offering, and sprinkled the blood of his peace offerings, upon the altar.

14 And he brought also the brazen altar, which was before the LORD, from the forefront of the house, from between the altar and the house of the LORD, and put it on the north side of the altar.

15 And king Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying, Upon the great altar burn the

in Seder Olam Rabba, cap. 20. Whether he was legal successor to Ben-hadad the son of Hazael, or an usurper, is not certain.

Ver. 10. *Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser*] To compliment him upon his success; and perhaps to do him homage, and to request him to do as much against Pekah as he had done against Rezin. For some think that after this he went and took all those places from Israel which are mentioned in the foregoing chapter, ver. 29. And after all he fell upon Judah itself, and made great spoil there also, as is suggested in 2 Chron. xxviii. 20, 21.

Saw an altar that was at Damascus:] A beautiful altar both for the matter and form of it.

Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar:] Not only the height, and breadth, and shape of it: but all the carvings, I suppose, with the figures and images wherewith it was adorned.

Ver. 11.] He took care to have it done exactly according to the pattern; directly contrary to the command of God, who had appointed what kind of altar he would have (Exod. xxvii. 1, 2, &c.), and that no other should be made of any matter or figure whatsoever. But there are always some men to be found, that will comply with the most wicked commands.

Ver. 12. *The king saw the altar*:] That is, liked it, and approved of it, as made perfectly agreeable to his mind.

Offered thereon:] The morning sacrifice: which he was so presumptuous, perhaps, as to offer himself. But not to God; for we are told expressly, 2 Chron. xxviii. 23, that he sacrificed to the gods of Damascus. A wonderful blindness! to worship those gods, and expect help from them, who could not preserve their own country from ruin.

Ver. 13. *He burnt his burnt offering*] Some understand it that he burnt it with spices.

And his meat offering, &c.] These were all prescribed by the law of Moses: but he offered them in a wrong place, and unto other gods.

Ver. 14.] By these words, it is plain that Urijah had little more modesty than Ahaz: for he had placed Ahaz's altar behind the altar of the Lord, between it and the east gate of the court of the priests. But when Ahaz came, he removed Solomon's altar out of its place, which was before the sanctuary, and set it towards the north side of the court; that he might bring up his own, and set it there, where the altar of the Lord had stood (see Dr. Lightfoot of the temple, chap. 34, latter end).

Ver. 15. *Upon the great altar*] Which he had now

morning burnt offering, and the evening meat offering, and the king's burnt sacrifice, and his meat offering, with the burnt offering of all the people of the land, and their meat offering, and their drink offerings; and sprinkle upon it all the blood of the burnt offering, and all the blood of the sacrifice: and the brazen altar shall be for me to inquire by.

16 Thus did Urijah the priest, according to all that king Ahaz commanded.

17 ¶ And king Ahaz cut off the borders of the bases, and removed the laver from off them; and took down the sea from off the brazen oxen

erected in the place of God's altar. He makes a solemn injunction, that all the public sacrifices, of what sort soever they were, whether made by himself or by the people, should be constantly offered upon his altar. Which he calls the *great altar*, because it was much bigger, I suppose, than the altar of God.

The brazen altar shall be for me to inquire by.] He would not have it thought that he intended wholly to lay aside the altar made by Solomon; but rather to do it great honour, by reserving it for his own private use, when he pleased to inquire of God by it. But there being no mention of the name of the Lord, some think the meaning is no more but that he would have it stand where he did set it, till he considered what to do with it: and they fancy that he made the famous dial of Ahaz with the brass of it. So they understand the Hebrew words *li lebaker*—I will take care of it, and order what shall be done with it. And therefore, according to this interpretation, he laid it quite aside. But the other seems more agreeable to the Hebrew phrase, "it shall be to me to inquire, or seek, or pray:" a private altar for his proper use; whereby he pretended to have still some regard to it, though he had degraded it.

Ver. 16.] Whatsoever good inclinations he had, they were all overruled by the commands of the king, with which he entirely complied.

Ver. 17. *Borders of the bases,*] See 1 Kings vii. 28, 29.

And removed the laver from off them, &c.] This was done out of contempt, that the sea might not appear so great and stately, nor be so useful to the priests as it was before. For he intended quite to abolish, not only to deface, the service of God at the temple. So we read in 2 Chron. xxviii. 24, that he "shut up the

doors of the house of God," that none should worship there.

18 And the covert for the sabbath that they had built in the house, and the king's entry without, turned he from the house of the Lord for the king of Assyria.

19 ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Ahaz which he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

20 And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead.

doors of the house of God," that none should worship there.

Ver. 18. *And the covert for the sabbath*] There is a vast variety of opinions concerning this *musach* (which we translate *covert*), and why it is called the *covert for the sabbath*. The most probable is, that it was a covered place, where the king sat in the porch of the temple, or at the entrance of it, upon the *sabbath*, or other great solemnities which were called by that name. Thus Procopius Gazæus: This Ahaz took away, intending not to trouble himself to come to the temple, but to sacrifice any where; in every corner of Jerusalem, and in the several cities of Judah, which he would have been thought as holy as Jerusalem (2 Chron. xxviii. 24, 25). And it is a probable conjecture of a very learned man of our own, that Ahaz did this to express his hatred and contempt of the *sabbath*: for the worship of idols and violation of the *sabbath* are frequently joined together in scripture, especially in Ezek. xx. 16, xxii. 8, 9. xxiv. 37, 38, and in a remarkable place in the Maccabees, i. 44 (see Spencer, *De Leg. Hebræor. lib. i. cap. 12*).

The king's entry without, turned he from the house of the Lord] The passage through which the king came from his own house to the temple, he turned another way.

For the king of Assyria.] That he might ingratiate himself with him, by contemning his own country religion, and approaching nearer to his. But Procopius takes it the quite contrary way; that he did this "for fear of the king of Assyria." Which moved him to make a shorter passage into the house of the Lord, that he might flee thither instantly for safety, in case of any danger: which is not probable, because he profaned it, and shut up the doors of it.

CHAPTER XVII.

1 *Hoshea's wicked reign.* 3 *Being subdued by Salmanser, he conspireth against him with So king of Egypt.* 5 *Samaria for their sins is captivated.* 24 *The strange nations, which were transplanted in Samaria, being plagued with lions, make a mixture of religions.*

1 In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah began Hoshea the son of Elah to reign in Samaria over Israel nine years.

CHAP. XVII.

Ver. 1. *In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah began Hoshea the son of Elah to reign*] This doth not agree with xv. 30, where it is said he began to reign in the twentieth year of Jotham, which was the fourth of Ahaz. To this Ralbag thinks it is sufficient to say, that till the twelfth year of Ahaz he was but a servant of the king of Assyria; nor was reputed a king, but only a governor under him. And so Abarinel. And

2 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, but not as the kings of Israel that were before him.

it is no improbable conjecture of Dr. Lightfoot's that Ahaz gave him a great deal of trouble after the death of Pekah, in revenge of the slaughter he had made in Judah: so that he kept Hoshea out of the throne a great while, and upon this account is called the king of Israel (2 Chron. xxviii. 19), as well as because he walked in the ways of those kings. Our learned chronologer Mr. Whiston thinks there was an interregnum, for the space of full twelve years, from the death of Jeroboam the second. Which he takes to

3 ¶ Against him came up Shalmaneser king of Assyria; and Hoshea became his servant, and gave him presents.

4 And the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea: for he had sent messengers to So king of Egypt, and brought no present to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year: therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison.

5 ¶ Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years.

6 ¶ In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

be most probable, and almost certain, from those words of Hosea, who prophesied in that king's time: "Now (or ere long) they shall say, We have no king, because we feared not the Lord; what then should a king do to us?" Hos. x. 3 (see his short View of the Chronology of the Old Testament, p. 48).

To reign in Samaria over Israel nine years.] viz. After his peaceable possession of the throne: for, from the time that he pretended to it, upon the slaughter of Pekah, he reigned seventeen or eighteen years; viz. twelve in the time of Ahaz, who reigned sixteen years, and six in the time of Hezekiah (xviii. 10).

Ver. 2.] For he did not hinder his people from going to worship at Jerusalem: but, as the Hebrew doctors say, took away the guard that Jeroboam set in the passage, to keep men from going to the solemn feasts there. And one of the golden calves being carried away captive, his devotion, it is likely, was not great for the other remaining. And yet, notwithstanding, God exterminated Israel in his days: to show (saith Seder Olam Rabba, cap. 22), that it was not merely for the sake of their kings, upon whom the Israelites cast all the blame of their depravation, that they were carried captive (see ver. 17—19, &c.).

Ver. 3. *Against him came up Shalmaneser.]* Some take this to be but another name for Tiglath-pileser. For which I find no ground, and rather think Shalmaneser was his son, and successor in the kingdom of Assyria.

Hoshea became his servant, and gave him presents.] Made himself a tributary to him; and presented him with gifts in token of his subjection to him, and as an earnest of his future obedience.

Ver. 4. *The king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea: for he had sent messengers to So king of Egypt, and brought no present.]* He designed to shake off his yoke, and be no longer his subject, as he found by two undeniable evidences. First, that he had sent to treat with the king of Egypt; and, secondly, had denied him the usual tribute, which he was bound to pay him every year. St. Jerome calls this king of Egypt Sua, and Josephus calls him Soan, and the LXX. Segor, who is the same with the famous Sabacon, an Ethiopian mentioned by Diodorus Siculus and Herodotus (see Sir J. Marsham, Can. Chron. sect. 16, and our famous Usher, in his Annals, vid. A. 3989).

The king of Assyria shut him up,] He first besieged Samaria, and when he had taken it made him a close prisoner: the history of which follows.

Ver. 5. *Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land,]* He first possessed himself of the country of Moab (as the same great primate observes), that he might leave no enemies at his back; and destroyed their two chief cities, Ar and Kir-hares,

7 For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods.

8 And walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made.

9 And the children of Israel did secretly those things that were not right against the LORD their God, and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.

10 And they set them up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree:

11 And there they burnt incense in all the

according to the prediction of Isaiah, xvi. ver. 1, and the last: and then he invaded the kingdom of Israel, and possessed himself of it.

And went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years.] Josephus rightly observes two expeditions of this king against the land of Israel: first, when he made Hoshea tributary to him; and now, when he made himself master of the whole country, and besieged the capital city (lib. ix. Antiq. cap. 13).

Ver. 6.] There is no reason that any should imagine these Israelites were carried into Colchis, Iberia, Armenia the less, and the farthest Scythia, when the scripture saith so expressly that they were carried into Assyria, and the cities of the Medes: and when the very places are to be found into which they are said here to be carried in those countries, viz. Chalach, and Chabor, and Gozan; for what was Chalach (as Bochartus observes) but Ptolemy's Chalachena, or the north of Assyria? and Chabor is plainly enough the same with his Χαβρας, a mountain between Media and Assyria. Between which mountain and the Caspian sea there is the city Gauzania, that is Gozan, between the two channels of the river Cyrus.

And in the cities of the Medes.] Whither Tiglath-pileser had carried others of them out of Galilee.

Ver. 7.] This they had done a long time: for, from the beginning of Jeroboam's schism to the carrying Israel captive was two hundred and sixty-three years.

Ver. 8. *And walked in the statutes of the heathen,]* Of the Amorites and other impious people, whom he expelled from the land of Canaan to make room for them.

And of the kings of Israel, which they had made.] viz. The golden calves, whose worship the kings of Israel had ordained, to keep them from going up to worship God at Jerusalem.

Ver. 9. *The children of Israel did secretly those things that were not right]* Besides the public impiety authorized by their kings, they privately exercised idolatry, according to their own fancy.

They built them high places in all their cities,] They were not content to worship upon hills and mountains, but they raised high places in all cities to offer sacrifice.

From the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.] In all those places, both those that were desert, and those that were inhabited; or both in the country and in the city. For the towers of the watchmen are thought to be those little houses which the country people built, wherein to watch their flocks and their fruits, and preserve them from wild beasts or robbers.

Ver. 10. *They set them up images and groves]* The

high places, as *did* the heathen whom the LORD carried away before them; and wrought wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger:

12 For they served idols, whereof the LORD had said unto them, ye shall not do this thing.

13 Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets.

14 Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God.

15 And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them,

Hebrew word *asherim*, which we translate *groves*, should be rendered idols of that name, as Selden hath observed, Syntag. De Diis Syris, ii. cap. 2; where he plainly demonstrates this word doth not signify the grove, but the *numen* or *deity* placed in the grove. For how should groves "be set under every green tree!" as it is here said the *asherim* were. And thus Kimchi saith in the root *ashur*, that every wooden thing that was worshipped was called *asherah*. And Procopius Gazæus observes, that this word, which the LXX. here translate *ἄσκη*, *groves*, others everywhere translate *Ἀστάρω*, which word, saith he, *ἄστροι τῆν Ἀστάρην*, *Ἀφροδίτην*, denotes *Astarte*, that is, *Venus*.

Ver. 11. *They burnt incense, &c.*] For as the son of Sirach expresses it, "they sought out all wickedness, till the vengeance came upon them" (see Ecclus. xlvii. ult).

Ver. 12. *For they served idols.*] They worshipped many other gods, which were mere idols, against the express command of God (Exod. xx. 23. Deut. iv. 15, 16, &c.).

Ver. 13. *The Lord testified—by all the prophets, and by all the seers,*] I have before noted, that Abarbinel, in his commentary on these books, hath observed that one or more prophets were in every king's reign, both in Israel and Judah, from the time of Saul to Zedekiah, in whose time Jerusalem was laid desolate. These admonished them of their duty, as it here follows, and endeavoured to preserve them in God's true religion, or to recover them when they apostatized from it; particularly in the days of this very king, when Israel was carried captive, they had the prophets Hosea, Amos, Isaiah, and Micah: and in the days of the last king when Judah was carried captive, they had Jeremiah and Ezekiel. As he had given them his laws by Moses; so he continued a succession of prophets after him, whom he sent to call upon them to observe these laws.

Ver. 14. *Hardened their necks.*] A metaphor taken from refractory oxen, that will not bow down their necks to the yoke. Even so the Israelites refused to submit to the yoke of God's laws.

Did not believe] This was the original of all the sins they committed; they did not believe God's prophets, but hearkened to deceivers.

Ver. 15.] By his servants the prophets.
Vanity.] So idols are called, which, as the apostle
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concerning whom the LORD had charged them, that they should not do like them.

16 And they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal.

17 And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

18 Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only.

19 Also Judah kept not the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made.

20 And the LORD rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight.

speaks, are *nothing*; having no power to do either hurt or good.

Became vain.] Like the idols they worshipped; senseless, sottish, and good for nothing.

Went after the heathen, &c.] See Exod. xxiii. 24. 32, and many other places.

Ver. 16. *And made a grove.*] The making a grove was a greater impiety than is commonly imagined. For in their groves they worshipped Baalim, as appears from Judg. iii. 7; that is, heroes, to whom those groves were consecrated, being their sepulchre. And here many filthy rites were practised, in honour of Venus, Bacchus, and such-like deities.

Worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal.] They grew worse and worse, not contenting themselves with the worship of the two calves, &c. but worshipped the stars of heaven (against which Moses had given them a particular caution, Deut. iv. 19), Saturn, Jupiter, Venus, and the moon, but especially Baal, which was the sun.

Ver. 17. *To pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments,*] Which were the most abominable sins of the heathen (see Lev. xviii. 21. xix. 26. xx. 2, 3, &c. Deut. xviii. 10, and upon ver. 3, of the foregoing chapter).

Sold themselves to do evil] They were so industrious to do wickedly, and so incessant in it, as if they had been slaves that were sold to that drudgery.

Ver. 18. *Removed them*] From the holy land, where his temple was, in which he dwelt among them.

There was none left but—Judah] Unto whom adhered part of Benjamin and the Levites; who, as it here follows, imitated the wickedness of Israel; but yet had some mixture of good kings among them. Whereas all the kings of Israel persisted in the sins of Jeroboam; and therefore, before their removal out of their land, they suffered great calamities, no less than nine of their kings being killed (as Abarbinel notes) before their last king was carried captive.

Ver. 19. *Also Judah—walked in the statutes of Israel*] Followed the idolatrous devices of the ten tribes; as they did most notoriously in the last reign of Ahaz: whose son Hezekiah indeed made a noble reformation; but it lasted no longer than his time, so extremely was this nation corrupted.

Ver. 20. *The Lord rejected*] With loathing and abhorrence, as the word imports.

21 For he rent Israel from the house of David; and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king; and Jeroboam drave Israel from following the Lord, and made them sin a great sin.

22 For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them.

23 Until the Lord removed Israel out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day.

24 ¶ And the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof.

[All the seed of Israel, &c.] The whole ten tribes. See x. 32, 33. xiii. 3, 7.

Ver. 21. *For he rent Israel from the house of David;*] Here was the foundation of their ruin.

Jeroboam—made them sin a great sin.] Of which he was the author; but they were too forward to comply with him.

Ver. 22.] They were so inclined to idolatry, that a long succession of God's judgments upon them could not reclaim them.

Ver. 23. *Until the Lord removed Israel out of his sight;*] Unto whose admonitions and threatenings they had no regard.

So was Israel carried away—to Assyria] As they "sold themselves to do evil" (ver. 17), so God delivered them up to be slaves to those whose gods they had worshipped (ver. 16, 17).

Ver. 24. *The king of Assyria brought men*] This was not done by Shalmaneser, but by his son Esarhaddon (Ezra iv. 2).

From Babylon;] Which was then subject to the king of Assyria; but not long after revolted.

Cuthah;] A city of Chaldaea, as Abarbinel expounds it; and so doth our Dr. Hyde out of several Persian writers (Hist. Relig. Vet. Pers. cap. 2). But it rather here signifies a country called Cush also (which perhaps, had its name from the forenamed city), from whence the greatest part of this colony being brought, the people in aftertimes were called Cuthæi. For the same author truly observes, that the country called Cush was, in the Babylonish dialect (afterward called the Chaldean), called Cuth. For they were wont to change the letter *shin* into *thau*. In this country, in the land of Shinar, Cush first settled; and his posterity spread itself into Arabia.

Ava;] The Avites were a very ancient people, who were driven by the Caphtorim out of Hazerim; and went and settled beyond Euphrates (see upon Dent. ii. 23).

Hamath;] This was a city of Syria, on the borders of Canaan; which was now subject to the king of Assyria, by a late conquest of it (xvi. 9).

Sepharvaim;] There is a city called Siphara, on the side of which the river Euphrates runs, not far from the sea. From this mixture of nations it was, that afterward there happened such a confusion of laws, and manners, and rites of religion, as was in this country.

They possessed Samaria;] That is, the whole country, wherein the ten tribes formerly dwelt.

Dwelt in the cities thereof.] Which were not destroyed, I suppose, but left standing, with a design to send new inhabitants into them.

25 And so it was at the beginning of their dwelling there, that they feared not the Lord: therefore the Lord sent lions among them, which slew some of them.

26 Wherefore they spake to the king of Assyria, saying, The nations which thou hast removed, and placed in the cities of Samaria, know not the manner of the God of the land: therefore he hath sent lions among them, and, behold, they slay them, because they know not the manner of the God of the land.

27 Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, Carry thither one of the priests whom ye brought from thence; and let them go and dwell there, and let him teach them the manner of the God of the land.

28 Then one of the priests whom they had car-

Ver. 25.] And did not the Israelites also want the fear of the Lord, as Abarbinel here notes, and yet were not devoured by lions! To which he answers, that though the Israelites also served idols, yet they did not deny the divine power and providence; but imagined these idols to be the intermediate causes by which the divine influences might be conveyed unto them: for it is plain Jeroboam did not deny the Lord (1 Kings xiii. 6), but acknowledged his power. But these new inhabitants believed the idols which they worshipped to be true gods; and therefore were destroyed by lions, because they did not acknowledge the power and providence of God over all inferior beings, whose land this was; and hereby he vindicated his ancient inheritance and possession to himself.

Ver. 26.] They took the God of Israel to be of the same kind with their own, who affected a particular country and people, and would be honoured with peculiar rites, which were acceptable to him, and none else. The Syrians had the same conceit of *topical* gods, as I observed upon 1 Kings xx. 23, and see below, xviii. 35.

Ver. 27.] The Jews in Pirke Eliezer, cap. 38, tell the story thus: that the king of Assyria called the elders of Israel together, and said, All the while you dwelt in the land of Samaria, it was not infested with lions; what is the reason that my people are devoured by them? To which they answered, Our lord the king, this land will not receive any uncircumcised nation. Let two of you go then (replied the king) and circumcise them, and teach them the book of the law. So R. Dosithæus and R. Zachariah were sent, who did the business. Here they make bold to go beyond the scripture, in making two great doctors to have been sent, when there was but one. Though it is very probable there were some associates who accompanied this principal priest: for the text saith, when the king bade them "carry one of the priests" thither, he added, and let them dwell there. Which signifies he did not go alone: though he alone was to teach them, as it follows "the manner of the God of the land."

Ver. 28. *One of the priests—taught them how they should fear the Lord.*] That is, how they should worship and serve him. From whence many learned men conclude, that he brought the book of the law with him, without which he could not fully instruct them how to worship God, and govern themselves: which book they supposed was written in the Baby-lonish character, because it was to teach a colony of that nation. This is opposed by a late learned man, who earnestly contends, that the book of the law was not brought to them till the time of Sanballat; and

ricd away from Samaria came and dwelt in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear the Lord.

29 Howbeit every nation made gods of their own, and put *them* in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt.

30 And the men of Babylon made Succoth-benoth, and the men of Cuth made Nergal, and the men of Hamath made Ashima,

therefore this priest instructed them without the book, only by tradition. Which is not probable; for they would have had little regard to him, if he had not produced the authority of that holy book, delivered to them by that great lawgiver Moses, the man of God: for, that he taught them the right way of worshipping God according to the law, as it was practised in Judah, is very likely; being sensible that God abhorred the other worship which Israel practised; for which he had thrown them out of their land.

Ver. 29.] It seemed the people of Israel, who are here called Samaritans, had built little temples in the high places; wherein these new inhabitants worshipped the gods of the country from which they came (that is, the *gods of Assyria*, Ezek. xxvii. 7), together with the God of Israel.

Ver. 30. *Succoth-benoth*.] The Jewish doctors do but trifle in their exposition of this word, which they say signifies "a hen and chickens." The word plainly imports, "the tabernacles of daughters," or of "young maidens:" who were consecrated to Venus, whose name Mr. Selden probably conjectures was derived from *Benoth*. The old idolaters, it is evident, did prostitute their daughters in honour of Venus, as not only Strabo, Herodotus, and other profane writers testify; but some think is suggested in holy scripture, Lev. xix. 29. And therefore they of Babylon are said to make the "tabernacles of daughters;" that is, chapels wherein their daughters were prostituted to every one that came to worship Venus, as the manner was in Babylon, from whence the forenamed authors testify this filthiness had its original (see Selden, *De Diis Syris* Syntag. ii. cap. 7, and Vossius, *De Idolol.* lib. ii. cap. 22).

Nergal.] Which the Jews would have to signify a cock. But their conjecture is better, who think it signified fire. For the men of Cuth are those that were afterward called Persians: who, it is certain, anciently worshipped the fire (see Selden, *cap. 8*). But the famous Bochartus ingenuously confesses he doth not know what *nergal* was; but that there is a sort of palm-tree called *nergil* by the Persians, Arabians, and Indians, of which they report strange things. From whence, perhaps, the Persians gave the name of *Nergal* to this idol, as in Syria their god was called *Rimmon*, from the pomegranate (*Hierozoicon*, par. ii. lib. i. cap. 16).

Ashima.] I know no ground the Jews have to say, this word *Ashima* signifies a smooth goat. Our great Selden modestly acknowledges he doth not know what god it was (ib. cap. 9). But a late author takes *Ashima* to be the same with Mars; because among the ancients *AS* signified the same with *Ἄρης* among the Greeks; and *shemah* is as much as hearing or obedient (Jo. Gensius *De Victimis Humanis*, par. i. p. 92). And this *AS*, he conjectures, is the same whom the Romans called *Hesus*, whom Lucan mentions in his *Pharsalia*, lib. i. ver. 413.

— "Horretque feris altaribus Hesus."

But, after all, my learned friend Dr. Alix hath made the most probable conjecture, that *Ashima* is the name of God, whom the Hebrews call *Hashem*, the name

31 And the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites burnt their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim.

32 So they feared the Lord, and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high places, which sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places.

33 They feared the Lord, and served their

from whence *Ashima*, I doubt not, is derived. Accordingly, *Aben Ezra* saith, in his preface to the book of *Esther*, that he saw in a Samaritan Pentateuch, Gen. i. 1, *bara Ashima*, instead of *bara Elohim*. Which Bochart censures as a falsity, because no such word is to be found in the whole Samaritan Pentateuch; but it might be then in some paraphrase upon it.

Ver. 31. *Nibhaz and Tartak*.] Nobody knows what these were; for no credit is to be given to the Jews, who say, the former was in the shape of a dog, and the other of an ass. Selden thinks they were the same idol called by different names, but was not able to give an account of them.

Adrammelech and Anammelech.] These were the same gods with Moloch: unto whom the same sacrifices were offered. The Jews, after their vain fancies, make one of them to have been in the form of a peacock, and the other of a pheasant: but in all probability they were but different names of Moloch, which was the sun, as is evident from xxiii. 10, 11; and the addition of *addir*, which signifies magnificent or potent, makes *Adrammelech* as much as the mighty Moloch; and of *ana*, which signifies to answer, makes *Anammelech* as much as oracular Moloch. For Moloch, and Melech, and Milecom, are all the very same in the language of different people, signifying a king: the sun being by them accounted the king, as the moon the queen of heaven. And there is nothing more known than that the gentiles burnt their children in sacrifice to him. But whether these people did so, or only made them pass through the fire to purify them, may be questioned; though the words seem to import the former: which was the practice of the Phœnicians, Syrians, Tyrians, Carthaginians, Cretans, Arabians, and many other nations; and is still practised by the Americans, and other gentiles.

A learned writer of our own, Dr. Hyde, in the book before mentioned, had a quite different apprehension of these words: for he will have *Adrammelech* to signify the king of the flock, *adre* being as much as *greges*; and *Anammelech* he thinks is much of the same signification, *ana* being as much as *pecus*, in the Persian language: always signifying collectively in the plural number, the lesser cattle, sheep and goats. Of which he imagines these gods had the care, and were therefore worshipped; the riches of those people consisting much in cattle. They were also celestial constellations (as he there observes), which they imagined promoted the breeding and growth of cattle.

Ver. 32. *So they feared the Lord*.] Worshipped the Lord God of Israel.

And made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high places, &c.] I suppose these sacrifices were offered to the God of Israel, but in high places and by the priests of their own making. As for their sacrificing to the gods of their several countries, no doubt they brought priests along with them, to perform the service belonging to them.

Ver. 33. *They feared the Lord, &c.*] That is, after the manner of the ten tribes, who worshipped the

own gods, after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence.

34 Unto this day they do after the former manners: they fear not the LORD, neither do they after their statutes, or after their ordinances, or after the law and commandment which the LORD commanded the children of Jacob, whom he named Israel;

35 With whom the LORD had made a covenant, and charged them, saying, ye shall not fear other gods, nor bow yourselves to them, nor serve them, nor sacrifice to them:

36 But the LORD, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt with great power and a stretched out arm, him shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship, and to him shall ye do sacrifice.

Lord and the golden calves together with him, and sometimes Baal, and other gods (ver. 16).

Ver. 34.] These and the following words, give an account of the children of Israel; who, being carried captive out of their own land (as hath been related,) were not at all amended thereby; but still neglected all the laws which God had given them, and did not worship him alone; and therefore in truth "they feared not the LORD."

Ver. 35.] Whose sins he aggravates (and thereby justifies his severe proceedings against them), by representing them as a select people, who were in a strict and gracious covenant with him, obliging them not to show the least respect to any other god but himself.

Ver. 36. *But the Lord, who brought you up out of—Egypt*] This was a benefit, one would think, that should never have been forgotten; but eternally engaged them to his service, who delivered them from so vile a slavery.

Ver. 37.] This is repeated again, being so very often mentioned in the book of the law, that they should worship no other god.

Ver. 38. *Neither shall ye fear other gods.*] Which was the principal thing in the covenant.

Ver. 39. *And he shall deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies.*] As he did whensoever they renounced idolatry, and promised to worship him alone, as we read throughout their whole history in these holy books.

Ver. 40. *Howbeit they did not hearken.*] They soon revolted, when they solemnly protested to repent; and did just as they had done before, as the same books testify.

Ver. 41.] Just thus did the nations who came in

37 And the statutes, and the ordinances, and the law, and the commandment, which he wrote for you, ye shall observe to do for evermore; and ye shall not fear other gods.

38 And the covenant that I have made with you ye shall not forget; neither shall ye fear other gods.

39 But the LORD your God ye shall fear; and he shall deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies.

40 Howbeit they did not hearken, but they did after their former manner.

41 So these nations feared the LORD, and served their graven images, both their children, and their children's children: as did their fathers, so do they unto this day.

their room into the country of Samaria; they joined their own gods with the Lord God of Israel, and continued so to do, they and their posterity, unto the time this book was written, and long after. For, as Mr. Mede hath observed, this medley of religions lasted above three hundred years, till towards the end of the Persian monarchy. At which time Manasseh, brother to Jadda the high-priest of the Jews (that were returned to their own land), married the daughter of Sanballat, governor of Samaria. And after his example, other Jews of the best rank having married strange wives, contrary to the law, and being loath to leave them, betook themselves thither also; whom Sanballat entertained, and made his son-in-law their priest. And when Alexander the great subdued the Persian monarchy, he obtained leave of him to build a temple upon mount Gerizim, where Manasseh exercised the office of high-priest. This was very prejudicial to the Jews, and the occasion of a schism; whilst those who were discontented or excommunicated at Jerusalem were wont to run hither. Yet by this means the Samaritans (having gotten one of the sons of Aaron for their priest, and so many Jews being mingled among them) were brought to throw away all their false gods, and worship the God of Israel only. Yet so, that though they seemed to themselves to be the true worshippers of God, they retained a smack of idolatry; worshipping God under a visible representation, viz. that of a *dove*. Just as their predecessors, the ten tribes, worshipped the same God under the similitude of a calf (book i. discourse 13). And indeed this inclination to have some sensible representation of God was so universal, that they who had none, were thought by the gentile world to worship nothing.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1 Hezekiah's good reign. 4 He destroyeth idolatry, and prospereth. 9 Samaria is carried captive for their sins. 13 Sennacherib invading Judah is pacified by a tribute. 17 Rab-shaketh, sent by Sennacherib again, revileth Hezekiah, and by blasphemous persuasions soliciteth the people to revolt.

1 Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, that Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign.

2 Twenty and five years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Abi, the daughter of Zachariah.

CHAP. XVIII.

Ver. 1. *In the third year*] The third year of those nine which are mentioned before, xvii. 1 (see there).

Ver. 2. *Twenty and five years old was he when he began to reign, &c.*] Unto this it is objected, that Ahaz

lived but thirty and six years (xvi. 2); and therefore according to this account, begat Hezekiah when he was but eleven years old, which seems incredible. To which Capellus in his Chronologia answers, that he reigned two or three years with his father; which

3 And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father did.

4 ¶ He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made :

is not likely, for the text saith he was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, after his father's death, which is before mentioned. And the solution of the Jews, mentioned by St. Jerome, is not much better, who say, he did not begin to reign presently after his father's death, but there was an interregnum for some years, because of a sedition that was in Jerusalem. But as there is no proof of this, so it is improbable that Hezekiah, who was a grown man, and beloved of the people, should not presently succeed his father. Calvisius's account is still worse, who will have Hezekiah to have been only the adopted son of Ahaz: which spoils the descent of our Saviour from David, as Bochartus observes: who therefore plainly admits that he did beget Hezekiah, when he was eleven or twelve years old. For so it may be understood, that he was but just entered upon the twenty-fifth year of his age, when he began his reign; and so but twenty-four complete. Therefore his father begat him about the twelfth year of his age. For if, from thirty-six years, four-and-twenty be taken, there remain twelve. And if we suppose, as we may very well, that Ahaz was near one-and-twenty years old when he began to reign, and near seventeen years older before he died (for the scriptures, no more than other writers, do not take notice whether the year be perfect or imperfect), then he might be near fourteen years old when he begat Hezekiah. But take it according to the first account, that he was but eleven or twelve years old, Bochartus hath given a vast number of instances of persons that procreated children at that age. For ripeness for procreation is not to be precisely determined, either by physicians, philosophers, or lawyers (who have been pleased to fix the time); but consideration is to be had of the climate wherein men live, of the temper and constitution of their bodies, of their diet, and many other things; as he observes in an epistle to Nicol. Carbonellus, in his additions to the last edition of his Phaleg. p. 920.

Ver. 3. *He did that which was right*] A character which is not given, I think, to any of the kings of Judah, since the reign of Asa (1 Kings xv. 11).

Ver. 4. *He removed the high places,*] Which none of his predecessors had the courage to attempt. But the carrying of the ten tribes captive, I suppose, mightily awakened both him and all the people, for the present (while it was fresh before their eyes), to observe the law of God very strictly.

Brake the images, and cut down the groves,] Which his father Ahaz had multiplied (xvi. 14. 2 Chron. xxviii. 2. 24, 25).

Brake in pieces the brazen serpent] Which had been piously preserved as a monument of God's wonderful mercy to them in the wilderness; as Gideon intended his *ephod* should be of another deliverance (Judg. viii. 27). But as they wenta whoring after that, so they did after this, as the Jews phrase it in *Avoda Zara*: and therefore Hezekiah broke it in pieces; that is, as the Talmudists there explain it, ground it to powder, and then scattered it into the air, that nothing of it might remain to be worshipped as a relic by superstitious people. And yet there is a fable that some fragments of it did remain until Josiah's time; and at this day, as Sigonius relates in his history of the kingdom of Italy, they show this brazen serpent entire at the church of St Ambrose, in Milan. But the

for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it *Nehushtan*.

5 He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him.

6 For he clave to the LORD, and departed not

wiser Romanists are ashamed of it, and acknowledge it is not the serpent made by Moses (which being broken in pieces by Hezekiah, was never restored), but another made in imitation of it (see Buxtorf. *Histor. Serpentis Anei*. cap. 6).

For unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it:] When this superstition began, we are not told; but nobody gives a better account of it than David Kimchi, whose words are these:—From the time that the kings of Israel did evil, and the children of Israel followed idolatry, until the reign of Hezekiah, they offered incense to it. For it being written in the law of Moses, "whosoever looks upon it shall live," they fancied they might obtain blessings by its mediation, and therefore thought it worthy to be worshipped. It had been kept from Moses's days in memory of a miracle, just as the pot of manna also was; and Asa and Jehoshaphat did not extirpate it when they rooted out idolatry, because in their reign they did not observe that the people worshipped this serpent, or burnt incense to it, and therefore they left it as a memorial. But Hezekiah thought fit to take it quite away, when he abolished other idolatry, because in the time of his father they worshipped it as an idol. And though pious people among them accounted it only to be a memorial of a wonderful work, yet he judged it better to abolish it, though the memory of the miracle were lost together with it, than suffer it to remain, and leave the Israelites in danger to commit idolatry hereafter with it.

Nehushtan.] Some think that Hezekiah called it by this name; others that the Israelites called it so; the words signifying indifferently "it was called *Nehushtan*" viz. by way of contempt and scorn. For the letter *nun* at the end of a word, the Jews say, is added by way of diminution. And *nechosheth* signifying brass, this is as much as to say, this serpent was mere brass or copper, and had no power in it, no profit, no ability to help, no divinity; and therefore not to be worshipped with divine honour. Thus Kimchi; It being called by this name signified as much as if Hezekiah had said, "How could it come into any man's heart to think that this serpent could do any thing, which is mere brass?" Or, as Ralbag expounds it, "This serpent hath no more virtue in it than the common brass in their houses." For he takes *an*, in the end of the word, to be the same with *am, ipsorum*. But there is a great and good man of our own, who, having endeavoured to show that the destruction of the old serpent the devil was foreshadowed by the lifting up the brazen serpent in the wilderness, concludes that Hezekiah was moved with the greater indignation against the worship of it, because in truth it never was the type of our Saviour and Redeemer, but a figure of his grand enemy. This made him express such detestation of it, as is imported, he thinks, in the word *Nehushtan*. The signification of which is not to be found in our lexicons: for though *nechosheth* signify no more than brass, yet *nehushtan* imports no less than our English words, *foul fiend*, *the old dragon*, or *Satan* (see Dr. Jackson, *Humiliation of the Son of God*, ch. 31. par. 6).

Ver. 5. *He trusted in the Lord God of Israel*] And not in the help of foreign forces, as his father Ahaz did (xvi. 7), nay, which that good king Asa called in to his assistance (1 Kings xv. 18, 19).

from following him, but kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses.

7 And the LORD was with him; and he prospered whithersoever he went forth: and he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not.

8 He smote the Philistines, *even* unto Gaza, and the borders thereof, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.

9 ¶ And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, that Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria, and besieged it.

10 And at the end of three years they took it: *even* in the sixth year of Hezekiah, that is the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken.

11 And the king of Assyria did carry away Israel unto Assyria, and put them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Modes:

Was none like him] Since the time that the kingdoms of Judah and Israel were divided.

Ver. 6. *For he clave to the Lord, &c.*] He continued to observe God's laws through the whole course of his reign, to the conclusion of it; and did not, like some of his predecessors, who began well, but fell off in the end of their days, as Joash and Amaziah did, (xii. 2. xiv. 3. 2 Chron. xxiv. 2. 19. xxv. 14).

Ver. 7. *The Lord was with him;—he rebelled against the king of Assyria.*] His prosperous success in all his enterprises, which was a visible token of God's presence with him, emboldened him to throw off the yoke of the king of Assyria, to which Ahaz had basely submitted (xvi. 7); which was not properly rebellion in Hezekiah, for Ahaz could not subject his kingdom to the Assyrian monarch, but only for his own time: his son was not bound to be his slave. Therefore the meaning is, he owned not the authority of the Assyrian king over him, but looked upon himself as a free sovereign in his own kingdom, independent upon him. In this, perhaps, he was a little too forward, being very much lifted up by his victories; but it is plain he was not able to maintain himself free from all subjection to the king of Assyria (ver 14).

Ver. 8. *From the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.*] We had this phrase before, xvii. 9 (see there). And these words seem to signify that he smote them all the country over, and recovered from them more than his father had lost (2 Chron. xxviii. 18). According to the prophecy of Isaiah, xiv. 18, where he bids the Philistines not to rejoice, because the rod that smote them was broken (that is, Uzziah was dead, who had sorely afflicted them, 2 Chron. xxvi. 6, 7). For out of his rod should come another, that would more grievously gall them, which was Hezekiah.

Ver. 9.] We had an account of the taking of Samaria before, and therefore the mentioning of it here again may seem needless. But as now the year of Hezekiah's reign is set down wherein it was taken, so Abarbanel thinks the intention of the divine writer was to connect these two histories together; the taking of Samaria, and the ascent of Sennacherib against Jerusalem; who, eight years after the destruction of the former, with great pride and confidence imagined he should do as much by the latter.

Ver. 10, 11.] As was before related (ch. xvii. 6), but could not be too often repeated, to make posterity dread the judgments of God, that were fallen upon

12 Because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD their God, but transgressed his covenant, and all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded, and would not hear *them*, nor do *them*.

13 ¶ Now in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did Sennacherib king of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them.

14 And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish, saying, I have offended; return from me: that which thou puttest on me will I bear. And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold.

15 And Hezekiah gave *him* all the silver that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house.

16 At that time did Hezekiah cut off *the gold* from the doors of the temple of the LORD, and from the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria.

them for their sins; as it follows again in the next words.

Ver. 12.] See xvii. 34, 35.

Ver. 13. *Sennacherib*] He was the son of Shalmaneser, and succeeded him in his kingdom after his death; as we read in the book of Tobit, i. 15.

Come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them.] That is, took a great many of them (2 Chron. xxxii. 1).

Ver. 14. *Hezekiah—sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish.*] This shows he had not taken all the fenced cities, for Lachish was a city of Judah (Josh. xv. 39) which is mentioned before in this book (xiv. 19), and was not yet taken, though siege was laid to it. Which, when he had taken, he intended to go up against Jerusalem (2 Chron. xxxii. 2); which moved Hezekiah to divert him from his purpose, by begging his pardon, as it here follows, for what he had done in shaking off his yoke.

Saying, I have offended;] In denying to be subject to him, which no doubt was the reason of this invasion.

Return from me: that which thou puttest on me will I bear.] Though he had made great provision against him, as we read 2 Chron. xxxii. 3, 4, &c. yet he durst not venture to abide a siege; but chose rather to divert him, by submitting to such conditions as he would impose upon him.

The king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah—three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold.] This was a great burden, though it was not a yearly tribute, but only a present payment; which his weakness forced him to submit unto.

Ver. 15. *Hezekiah gave him all the silver, &c.*] Which in public necessities they thought it was lawful to make use of, for their preservation. Yet the Talmudists reckon this one of the three ill things that Hezekiah did, in cutting off the golden plates, mentioned in the next verse (see Selden, De Synedr. lib. ii. cap. 1. n. 4).

And in the treasures of the king's house.] Which had been so exhausted before, that he was forced to raise the money by other means, as it follows, ver. 16.

Ver. 16.] It is very probable that when Ahaz defaced the temple, and shut up the doors of it (xvi. 17. 2 Chron. xxxiii. 2. 4), he cut off this gold; which Hezekiah took care to repair; but was now constrained to cut it off himself. Upon which words Procopius Gazæus seems to me to have very well ob-

17 ¶ And the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rabsaris and Rab-shakeh from Lachish to king Hezekiah with a great host against Jerusalem. And they went up and came to Jerusalem. And when they were come up, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which is in the highway of the fuller's field.

18 And when they had called to the king, there came out to them Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder.

19 And Rab-shakeh said unto them, Speak ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest ?

20 Thou sayest, (but they are but vain words,) I have counsel and strength for the war. Now

served; that Hezekiah, finding he had not sufficient treasure of his own, to answer the imposition laid upon him, was driven by necessity to make use of things sacred, lest the enemy should burn the city and the temple. But what was thus employed, pious kings were wont to restore, as soon as they were able, out of the spoils of war, when it was ended.

Ver. 17.] Some of the Jews think that Sennacherib, having received the tribute from Hezekiah, went to his own land; but because Hezekiah did not continue to send it every year, after some time returned to Judea again, and besieged Jerusalem. But there is not a word of this, either in this book, or the Chronicles, or in the prophet Isaiah: therefore it is more probable, that, having received the money he demanded, he made his expedition into Egypt, of which Herodotus and others, and some think Isaiah also, speak, as Sir John Marsham observes (Isa. x. 26. 28). But as he was the first king of Assyria that invaded Egypt, so he went no further than to the entrance of it, to Pelusium, which he could not take, and so at his return broke his faith with Hezekiah; and notwithstanding his present, wherewith he pretended to be satisfied, laid siege to Jerusalem.

They came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool,] They took up their head-quarters, as we now speak, by the conduit or canal, into which water was derived from the upper fish-pond or pool; which was in the highway to the field, where the fullers, after they had washed their clothes in that pool, were wont to spread them.

Ver. 18.] They were so bold as to demand audience of the king himself, that they might treat with him in person for a surrender. Though he would not vouchsafe to go himself, yet he sent his *major-domo*, as they now speak, and his *secretary*, or a principal doctor of the law, and the *master of the requests*. For since the king of Assyria sent three messengers, he thought fit to send as many. Isaiah, indeed, mentions only Rab-shakeh, as sent by the king of Assyria: which Seder Olam Rabba thinks is meant of the first legation; but in the second, when he besieged Libuah (xix. 8), he joined Tartan and Rabsaris with him. It is very uncertain what officer Shebna was; for he is said, Isa. xxiii. 15, to be *over the house*, and the LXX. sometimes make him *treasurer*, sometimes *scribe*, and Mr. Selden thinks he might be *praefectus pratorio* (Lib. De Succes. in Pontif. p. 142).

Ver. 19. Rab-shakeh said unto them,] He was the chief speaker, being an eloquent man; and, as the Hebrew doctors will have it (whom Procopius follows), an apostate Jew. Which is not altogether improbable; both because he could speak readily in

on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me ?

21 Now, behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt unto all that trust on him.

22 But if ye say unto me, We trust in the Lord our God: is not that he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath said to Judah and Jerusalem, ye shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem ?

23 Now therefore, I pray thee, give pledges to my lord the king of Assyria, and I will deliver thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them.

24 How then wilt thou turn away the face of

the Hebrew tongue, and when he blasphemed the divine majesty, the king and his nobles rent their clothes; which was not usual, unless he that uttered such blasphemous words was an Israelite. Some think his name imports that he was the principal *cup-bearer* to the king of Assyria.

Thus saith the great king,] He assumed to himself the style of the *great king*, because of his great conquests and large dominions.

What confidence is this wherein thou trustest ?] As much as to say, it was the greatest folly to think any body could defend him from so great a king.

Ver. 20.] In reason he thought Hezekiah should not stand out against his master, unless he had all things necessary for his defence: but he did delude his people, if he told them that he wanted neither skill to manage war, nor power to execute good counsels. He derides him, as full of vain hopes: and upbraids him with his rebellion. Of which he was thought formerly to be guilty, but could not now be justly accused of it, when he had submitted to him with such a present. These are therefore words of the highest pride and insolence.

Ver. 21.] He thought it probable he would seek for succour from Egypt, being a neighbouring country; which would be ready to assist him, that they might be revenged of the king of Assyria for his late invasion. But he represents Egypt as very weak, and utterly unable to help him; being sorely crushed, though not destroyed by Sennacherib. He represents the power of Egypt to be as brittle as the cane or reeds that grow on the banks of the Nile (to which he seems to allude), on which if a man leaned, they brake, and the splinters run into his hand. Such is Pharaoh, saith he, a man gets no help, but mischief, by relying upon him; as he doth who takes one of those canes for his staff to support him.

Ver. 22.] This weak arguing proceeded from his ignorance of that God and his law, in whom Hezekiah trusted. Which made him call those crimes, which were his greatest virtues; in prohibiting their offering sacrifice in any other place but that which God appointed.

Ver. 23.] He seems to challenge him to come out, and fight with his master; and, if he could give security to make that use of them, he would furnish him with two thousand horses, provided he was able to find so many men to sit upon them. Which are words of the highest contempt, and undervaluing of his power. Or, the meaning may be, he would lay a wager with him, he could not find men to sit upon so many horses; for few were good horsemen in Judea, where horses were scarce.

one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen?

25 Am I now come up without the LORD against this place to destroy it? The LORD said to me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.

26 Then said Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, and Shebna, and Joah, unto Rab-shakeh, Speak, I pray thee, to thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand it: and talk not with us in the Jews' language in the ears of the people that are on the wall.

27 But Rab-shakeh said unto them, Hath my master sent me to thy master, and to thee, to speak these words? hath he not sent me to the men which sit on the wall, that they may eat their own dung, and drink their own piss with you?

28 Then Rab-shakeh stood and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and spake, saying, Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria:

29 Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you out of his hand:

30 Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, The LORD will surely deliver

us, and this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria.

31 Hearken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, Make an agreement with me by a present, and come out to me, and then eat ye every man of his own vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his cistern:

32 Until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of oil olive and of honey, that ye may live, and not die: and hearken not unto Hezekiah, when he persuadeth you, saying, The LORD will deliver us.

33 Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria?

34 Where are the gods of Hamath, and of Arpad? where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah? have they delivered Samaria out of my hand?

35 Who are they among all the gods of the countries, that have delivered their country out of my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?

36 But the people held their peace, and an-

Ver. 24. *How then wilt thou turn away the face, &c.]* Much less stand before his whole army.

Chariots and for horsemen?] With which Egypt abounded above most other countries; who sometimes furnished the Israelites with horses, but none like Egypt. For which reason Moses forbids them to multiply horses, lest it should cause them to return to Egypt (Deut. xvii. 16); and the prophet reproves them severely for going to Egypt for help, and staying upon horses, &c. (Isa. xxxi. 1. 3).

Ver. 25.] If he had not been a Jew, yet he had learned the name of their God; and pretended his master was come up against Jerusalem, by a commission from him. Which were vain words (as he calls Hezekiah's, ver. 20); for there were none of his prophets among the Assyrians. But, perhaps, he concluded from what the Assyrian king had done to Samaria, God intended he should do so to Jerusalem.

Ver. 26.] I suppose Eliakim perceived the people to be frightened with his big words, and therefore entreated him, in the name of the other commissioners sent to treat with him, to speak no longer in the Jews' language, but in his own: for he was not sent to treat with the people, but with them who understood the Syrian tongue very well.

Ver. 27.] To make them know that he will reduce them to the greatest extremity, if they do not submit unto him; for it is a hyperbolical speech, importing such straits as were never known.

Ver. 28, 29.] He seems to have raised both himself and his voice higher, that he might be better heard by all. He repeats with the greatest assurance, the power of his king, and the weakness of Hezekiah: representing from thence how they were deluded with empty promises, if he persuaded them he should be able to preserve them.

Ver. 30. *Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord.]* This was the highest presumption to persuade them not to place their hope in God, as if his master was stronger than he.

Ver. 31.] Having represented to them the miseries unto which a siege would reduce them, he invites them to a surrender upon advantageous conditions.

Ver. 32.] If they would seek the favour of the king of Assyria, by making him a present, and delivering themselves up to his mercy, he promises they should be transported to a better country than that to which the Israelites were carried: and in the meantime, every one enjoy his own possessions. But he was afraid Hezekiah's avowed confidence in God would prevail with them, to trust to him for deliverance, which makes him so often desire them not to depend upon that.

Ver. 33. *Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria?]* He argues very popularly and strongly, if his supposition had been true, that the God of Israel, the God of the whole earth (yea, of heaven and earth), was like those of all other nations, who presided only over one country or city.

Ver. 34. *Hamath, and of Arpad?]* Those were cities or countries which the king of Assyria had conquered.

Sepharvaim,] Mentioned before, xvii. 31.

Hena, and Ivah?] Some think these were the gods of Sepharvaim; which is confuted by the place before named. They were rather cities, whose gods could not protect them.

Have they delivered Samaria out of my hand?] That is, have the gods of Samaria been able to do more than the rest?

Ver. 35.] He desires an instance of one god that had been able to save his country when his master invaded it; and therefore it was best for them to yield their city up to him, since God himself could not preserve it, unless he could do more than any other had done, which he concluded was unlikely. It must be acknowledged that Rab-shakeh was an excellent orator, as well as a soldier, not inferior in eloquence to Julius Cæsar.

Ver. 36. *Answer him not.]* This was a very wise order, because he might have made some advantage by a sudden answer; and it was no less pious; for Hezekiah believed God would answer for himself, not in words, but in such deeds as would demonstrate he was above all gods.

swered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not.

37 Then came Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which was over the household, and Shebna the

Ver. 37. *With their clothes rent,*] It was the custom of the Jews to rend their clothes when they heard a man blaspheme God's name; and if we will believe them, when the witnesses of a blasphemy did but repeat the words before the judges, they rent their clothes. Accordingly Hezekiah, when his commissioners gave an account of Rab-shakeh's words to

scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder, to Hezekiah with their clothes rent, and told him the words of Rab-shakeh.

him, did so (xix. 1). But they have determined that they were not bound to rend their clothes, unless he was an Israelite that blasphemed. Therefore they have resolved, as I said before, that Rab-shakeh was an apostate Israelite. And this custom was common to all nations (as appears from Homer, Herodotus, and Virgil), who expressed great grief in this manner.

CHAPTER XIX.

1 Hezekiah mourning sendeth to Isaiah to pray for them. 6 Isaiah comforteth them. 8 Sennacherib, going to encounter Tirhakah, sendeth a blasphemous letter to Hezekiah. 14 Hezekiah's prayer. 20 Isaiah's prophecy of the pride and destruction of Sennacherib, and the good of Zion. 35 An angel slayeth the Assyrians. 36 Sennacherib is slain at Nineveh by his own sons.

1 AND it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD.

2 And he sent Eliakim, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz.

3 And they said unto him, thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and there is no strength to bring forth.

4 It may be the LORD thy God will hear all the words of Rab-shakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living

God; and will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that are left.

5 So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah.

6 ¶ And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me.

7 Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.

8 ¶ So Rab-shakeh returned, and found the

CHAP. XIX.

Ver. 1.] See the last verse of the foregoing chapter. *Covered himself with sackcloth,*] He fasted and mourned, and went into the temple to pray. Sometimes they put on sackcloth next to their skin, instead of a shirt; but here it seems to signify only, that he was clothed in this vile habit in token of his great trouble and sorrow.

Ver. 2. *He sent Eliakim,*] See xviii. 18.

The elders of the priests,] The principal persons among the priests.

Covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet] In the same mournful habit, to beg his prayers to God for them.

Ver. 3. *This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and blasphemy;*] They represent to him the great straits in which they were, and the reproaches cast upon them; and (which was worst of all) the blasphemy they had heard against God.

For the children are come to the birth, and there is no strength to bring forth.] And the present danger wherein they were of perishing, unless speedily relieved: like that of a woman, whose child being fallen down, after many throes, to the place of birth, she was so spent that she had no strength left to bring it forth. Or, as Procopius Gazæus expounds it, "We are in pain to hear such blasphemous words, and have no power to punish those wicked wretches as they deserve."

Ver. 4. *It may be the Lord—will hear*] So as to take notice of them, and punish him.

Reprove the words which the Lord thy God hath heard:] Reprove him for the words (as the Targum

expounds it), the which he had spoken against God. But Lud. De Dieu, following R. Solomon Jarchi, thinks that the word we translate *reprove*, signifies to prove, and, by arguments, to demonstrate. And so refers it to Rab-shakeh in this manner: "It may be the Lord will hear all the words of Rab-shakeh, whom the king of Assyria hath sent to reproach the living God: and that openly, with a bold face, fearing nothing, because all things succeed according to their hearts' desire." And he saith, he shall wonder if this sense displease any body.

Lift up thy prayer] That Judah might not be carried captive, as Israel had been.

Ver. 5. *So the servants—came to Isaiah.*] And delivered the foregoing message to him.

Ver. 6, 7. *Behold, I will send a blast upon him,*] A pestilential blast, which destroyed his army in one night (ver. 35): others translate it a *spirit*; which is the same. For God sent an angel, who smote them with that pestilence.

And he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land;] The report perhaps, was renewed after that stroke, that Tirhakah (of whom he had heard before, ver. 9) was coming against him; which made him haste away, with the small remains of his army, to his own country.

And I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.] Which was fulfilled, ver. 37.

Ver. 8. *Rab-shakeh returned,*] Not with the host that he brought with him (xviii. 17), but he himself returned to give his master an account of what he had done; and left Rabaris to carry on the siege and straiten the city, till he could come with the whole army against it.

king of Assyria warring against Libnah : for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish.

9 And when he heard say of Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, Behold, he is come out to fight against thee : he sent messengers again unto Hezekiah, saying,

10 Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria.

11 Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly : and shalt thou be delivered ?

12 Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed ; as Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden which were in Thelasar ?

13 Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and Ivah ?

14 ¶ And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it : and Hezekiah went up into the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD.

15 And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD,

Found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah : for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish.] Being unable, I suppose, to make himself master of it.

Ver. 9.] Whether he fought with Tirhakah or not, and what the success was, doth not appear. But it is to be noted, that there were two countries called Cush (which we translate Ethiopia) ; one in Africa beyond Egypt, the other in Arabia, which is the Ethiopia here meant. For the king of the other was far off, and must have marched through Egypt before he could come to fight with Sennacherib. But this was near, and was able to raise a powerful army, as appears by the vast forces which Zerah brought against Asa (2 Chron. xiv. 9). And thus 2 Chron. xxi. 16, as Bochartus observes, must necessarily be understood, where the Arabians, whom God stirred up against Jehoram, are said to be near to the Ethiopians, which cannot be true of those beyond Egypt (see his Phaleg. lib. iv. cap. 2).

He sent messengers again unto Hezekiah.] Among which Rab-shakeh was the chief.

Ver. 10.] They could not come to the speech of him ; but sent him a letter containing the words following (ver. 14). He had heard, I suppose, that Hezekiah declared he trusted in the Lord, and had assurance from him, that he the king of Assyria should not prevail against him.

Ver. 11.] This letter is of the same import with the former message, presuming the God of Israel was like the gods of other countries, and had no more power than they to preserve his worshippers.

Shalt thou be delivered ?] Such questions imply a strong denial ; and therefore it is as much as to say, thou shalt be delivered no more than they were.

Ver. 12.] He argues from the long successes his ancestors had enjoyed : none of the gods whose countries they had destroyed making opposition to them for some ages. These were places well known in those days ; there was a Gozan and Hara in Media, as Bochartus observes, lib. iii. Phaleg. cap. 14. Where Rezeph was is uncertain ; but Ptolemy mentions such a city in Syria, where St. Jerome places Thelasar : and there were more cities than one in those countries called Adana, which is the same with Eden.

and said, O LORD God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth ; thou hast made heaven and earth.

16 LORD, bow down thine ear, and hear : open, LORD, thine eyes, and see : and hear the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent him to reproach the living God.

17 Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands,

18 And have cast their gods into the fire : for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone : therefore they have destroyed them.

19 Now therefore, O LORD our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD God, even thou only.

20 ¶ Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, That which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard.

21 This is the word that the LORD hath spoken concerning him ; The virgin the daughter of Zion hath despised thee, and laughed thee to

Ver. 13.] Places before mentioned, xviii. 34. Nothing is to be further observed of this, but that the fury of Rab-shakeh increased : so that what he had uttered in words, he now more deliberately set down in writing : affirming boldly that their God was a deceiver, if he promised them deliverance.

Ver. 14. *Hezekiah received the letter—and spread it before the Lord.]* He could approach no nearer than to the outward court of the temple ; where, at the entrance of the priests' court, he looked towards the sanctuary, God's dwelling-place, and laid this letter before him.

Ver. 15. *And Hezekiah prayed before the Lord, &c.]* Here he directly thwarts the blasphemous opinion of the Assyrians before mentioned (xvii. 27. xviii. 35), that the God of Israel was but the particular Lord of that country ; not the universal sovereign, which Hezekiah acknowledged him to be, because the creator of the whole world.

Ver. 16.] That is, sent Rab-shakeh. He speaks in such language as men use when they earnestly beseech others not to neglect their supplication, but vouchsafe to attend, and to give a gracious answer to them.

Ver. 17. *Of a truth, &c.]* Do not boast of more than they have done.

Ver. 18.] They had prevailed, he acknowledges, over their gods, as well as over men ; but it was because they were not so good as men, being mere wood and stone.

Ver. 19. He beseeches him to distinguish himself upon those idols, by giving them such a deliverance as might demonstrate to all the world that he was the living God (as he is often called), superior to all others, who were not able to save their worshippers.

Ver. 20.] He knew by the spirit of prophecy that Hezekiah had represented his case to God in the temple, who bade Isaiah assure him his petition was granted.

Ver. 21.] These words comprehend the whole city. For by "the daughter of Zion" he means the people that inhabited the upper part of the city, where the king's palace stood ; and by "the daughter of Jerusalem," the people of the lower part of the city ; and

scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.

22 Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? *even against the Holy One of Israel.*

23 By thy messengers thou hast reproached the Lord, and hast said, With the multitude of my chariots I am come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon, and will cut down the tall cedar trees thereof, and the choice fir trees thereof: and I will enter into the lodgings of his borders, and into the forest of his Carmel.

24 I have digged and drunk strange waters, and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of besieged places.

all that was not comprehended under the name of Zion. They "shaked their heads at him;" which is the same with despising and laughing him to scorn. For shaking the head is the posture of those that mock at others (Ps. xxii. 7. Matt. xxvii. 39). He calls Zion a *virgin*, because this fortress, since David conquered it, had remained inviolable, and had never been taken by any enemy. Joash, indeed, king of Israel, took Jerusalem, and brake down the wall of it (xiv. 13, 14); but I think the fort of Zion had never been taken.

Ver. 22.] So Rab-shakeh did, xviii. 28.

And lifted up thine eyes on high? As those do who have haughty thoughts of themselves; and overlook others with contempt and scorn (Prov. xxi. 4).

The Holy One of Israel.] God is called "the Holy One," with respect to his peerless perfections; and "the Holy One of Israel," as having a peculiar respect to them above all people, who therefore should be defended by his almighty power.

Ver. 23.] This is an admirable description of the boastings of a king puffed up with great success, and is as much as if he had said, What place is there into which I cannot make my way? when I have gone, even with my chariots in great number, to the top of high mountains; to Lebanon itself, through the most difficult passages, which I have opened and planned for them? Who shall hinder me from cutting down its tallest cedars and fir-trees (perhaps he means their princes and great men), and, when I have done, from marching and taking up my quarters in the extremest borders of the land, climbing up to the top of Carmel (which was towards the Mediterranean sea), or entering into all the fruitful places of the country, by making an entire conquest of it? For so Carmel often signifies, not a mountain, but a fruitful field, in the language of this prophet, Isa. x. 18. xvi. 10.

Ver. 24. *I have digged and drunk strange waters.*] He brags that he had marched with his vast army through strange countries, and in the driest places, where it was thought his army would die with thirst; but he digged till he found water.

And with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of besieged places.] This is commonly thought to signify, that he had gone dry-shod with his whole army over great rivers, whose streams he turned another way; and so had taken the strongest fortresses, surrounded with deep waters and great ramparts. But Bochartus hath made a plainer paraphrase upon these words, which he thus translates: "I have dried up the rivers of Egypt." As much as to say, "I will enter as easily into Egypt, in which you confide, as if, when I come thither, all the rivers wherewith it is en-

25 Hast thou not heard long ago how I have done it, and of ancient times that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldst be to lay waste fenced cities into ruinous heaps.

26 Therefore their inhabitants were of small power, they were dismayed and confounded; they were as the grass of the field, and as the green herb, as the grass on the house tops, and as corn blasted before it be grown up.

27 But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me.

28 Because thy rage against me and thy tumult is come up into mine ears, therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.

virioned, should be dried up" (see his Hierozoicon, par. ii. lib. v. cap. 15). For the Hebrew word *masor* (which we translate everywhere *besieged places* or *defences*, or *fortresses*) should rather be taken for the singular of *Mesoraim*, which by contraction is called *Mizraim*, that is, *Egypt*. And if this be allowed, the sense then here is, as I said before, "I have dried up all the rivers of Egypt;" which was the highest vaunt he could make of his power, and numerous forces. Thus Isa. xix. 6, "The brooks of defences shall be dried up," is interpreted by Kimeli, "The rivers of Egypt shall be emptied and dried up." And more plainly, Micah vii. 12, where "from the fortress to the river" is so obscure, that it is not to be understood; but "from Egypt to Euphrates" is such clear sense, that one cannot but think it should be so translated; for those were the bounds of the land of Canaan.

Ver. 25. *Hast thou not heard long ago, &c.*] These are the words of God, in answer to those empty boasts:—But what is this to what I have done? Hast thou not heard how I brought my people dry-shod through the Red sea? How in ancient times, I say, long before thou and thy ancestors were born, I did this by my own strength alone, without the help of nature or art? For so the word *jatzar*, which we translate *formed*, is used Gen. ii. 8, and other places. And it is I that have now brought thee to do all these things of which thou braggedst. Thou couldest not have done one of them without my leave, who therefore permitted it, that I might punish those cities by thy hand, which I had devoted to destruction (see Isa. x. 5, 6. 13—15).

Ver. 26.] This was the reason, that the people of those cities wherof thou spakest (ver. 12, 13), were so very feeble, and unable to oppose thee; because I delivered them into thy hand.

Ver. 27. *But I know thy abode, &c.*] As much as to say. There are none of thy motions hidden from me. For before thou camest from thy own country, I knew with what design thou marchedst out, and what thou hast done since, wheresoever thou hast entered; and understand with what rage and fury thou art come up to destroy my dwelling-place.

Ver. 28. *Thy tumult is come up into mine ears.*] I have heard the noise thou makest with thy furious threatenings, and with thy great army which hath entered Judea.

Therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, &c.] He compares his absolute power over him to that of a fisherman, who, let a fish tumble ever so much in the water, hath it fast by a hook he hath fixed in his nose: or to a man upon a horse or a mule, whom he can turn which way he pleases, when he hath a curb in

29 And this shall be a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves, and in the second year that which springeth of the same; and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruits thereof.

30 And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall yet again take root downward, and bear fruit upward.

31 For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the LORD of hosts shall do this.

32 Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this

their mouths. Even so, saith God, will I do with thee, draw thee back, press thou ever so much to compass thy designs, into thy own country, without any success.

Ver. 29. *This shall be a sign unto thee,*] This is spoken to Hezekiah.

Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves, &c.] This was not a sign of the truth of his prophecy, because it was to come after that was fulfilled; but a token of God's extraordinary favour and love to them, when Sennacherib was gone; and they were in fear of another enemy, viz. a grievous famine. For though he had trodden down or eaten up all the corn with his army, yet they should find sufficient left to maintain them this year, which was the fourteenth of Hezekiah. And though the next was the sabbatical year, in which they were to let the land rest, and neither sow nor reap, yet he promises enough should grow up of itself to sustain them, without any culture, out of the corn scattered in the former year. And then, in the sixteenth year, God assures them of liberty to till their land as they were wont, and that they should sow and reap as in a time of peace, when no enemy appeared, nor there was any fear of any. But until the corn sprung up and was ripe that year, they lived upon what grew of itself in the sabbatical year without tillage. Which demonstrates the wonderful providence of God over this people, in taking care they should want nothing in those years, without any care of their own, if they believed in his word. See Lev. xxv. where the precept about this sabbatical year is delivered: and observed by this people, from the first conquest and division of the land of Canaan, forty-seven years after the coming out of Egypt (see Dr. Alix, Reflections on the Old Testament, par. ii. ch. 1).

Ver. 30.] He pursues the metaphor from corn that is sown in the ground; signifying, that they should have firm possession of their own country; and therein increase, and multiply, and flourish exceedingly.

Ver. 31. *For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, &c.*] For they who were now shut up in Jerusalem should be at liberty: and they who escaped the enemy's fury in the country, and fled thither for refuge, should go out of mount Zion to their own possessions.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts shall do this.] His great love to his own honour, and to his people, shall do these wonders; to vindicate his glory from that contempt which was cast upon it by Sennacherib.

Ver. 32.] He promises the king of Assyria should be so far from possessing himself of the city at this time, that he should not assault it, by shooting so much as an arrow into it: no, nor appear with his army against it, or raise bulwarks to besiege it. Or, as the Hebrews understand it, they should not cast a stone

city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it.

33 By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the LORD.

34 For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

35 ¶ And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.

36 So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh.

out of their engines against it. Rabсарis, I observed ver. 8, continued the siege; but whatsoever he did before, after this message of Isaiah he made no attempt upon them.

Ver. 33.] He confirms what he said before (ver. 28).

Ver. 34. *I will defend this city, to save it*] To preserve it from destruction.

For mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.] Upon which account he had formerly spared them, when they deserved to be punished (1 Kings xi. 12, 13).

Ver. 35. *It came to pass that night,*] The Jews in the Gemara Sanhedrin (cap. 11. n. 20), say, that in the very night after they set down before Jerusalem and were so weary that they made no attempt upon the city, this which follows fell out. Others think it was the same night that Hezekiah received Sennacherib's railing letter; which is more probable than the opinion of our Dr. Jackson, who will have it that it was the same night, about two years after (see upon the attributes, sect. 3. ch. 26). However it was, the blow was the more remarkable, because it was given in that very night, wherein he had lifted up himself against the God of heaven: as Belshazzar afterward did, and had his fatal stroke given him in like manner (see Dan. v. 30).

That the angel of the Lord went out, &c.] By a pestilential disease, as Josephus calls it, *κατακλιών νόσος*, such a vast number were suddenly cut off. It is a question, whether this destruction was made in the army that besieged Libnah, or in that host which Rab-shakeh brought up against Jerusalem. Josephus thinks the latter; for it is probable Rab-shakeh was come with his whole host against Jerusalem, which before was straitened by Rabсарis; and *κατά τὴν πρώτην τῆς πολιορκίας νύκτα*, "the first night after they had begirt the city" (as the Jews say, I observed, in Sanhedrin), the angel of the Lord made this great slaughter among them: lib. x. Antiq. cap. 2, where a little before, in the end of the first chapter, he takes notice of a horrible lie which Herodotus reports from the Egyptians; who say their king, being also a priest, by his prayers to his god, brought this destruction upon the Assyrians, as they lay before Pelusium: a great army of rats coming in the night, and gnawing all their bowstrings in pieces, so that they could not fight. So studious they were to pervert the truth and corrupt the sacred story.

Ver. 36. *So Sennacherib—departed,*] Being afraid that Tirhakah should come and destroy the remainders of his broken army (ver. 9).

Ver. 37. *Nisrach*] The LXX. here calls this god Nesorach; and upon Isaiah, where this story is again told, Asarach. But what any of these names signify, Mr. Selden acknowledges he cannot tell, having in all his reading never met with any thing that might explain

37 And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the

it. But Kircher adventures to say it was the image of a *ship* representing the ark of Noah : the relics of which, Josephus tells us, some reported were, in his time, in the neighbouring mountains of Armenia. And a later writer, Beyerus (in his additions to Selden, *De Diis Syris*), thinks it signifies as much as the *bird of Noah*, that is, a dove, which was worshipped by the Assyrians : or, as others conjecture (for they can do no more), this word is derived from *nos*, which in Chaldee signifies a province, and *rac*, which signifies a king ; that is, Jupiter the king, and conservator of that province.

Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him] Which they might the more easily do, when he suspected no danger. The reason of it was, because (in his danger, we may suppose) he had vowed that he would offer them up unto his god : therefore they

sword : and they escaped into the land of Armenia. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.

sacrificed him, to prevent being sacrificed themselves. One of them seems to have been called after the name of a god worshipped in those countries (xv. 11. 31).

Land of Armenia.] Which was not far off ; and where there were mountains of very difficult ascent, and inhabited by a warlike people.

Esarhaddon his son reigned] Who was the king that sent a colony to people the country of Samaria (as I observed before from Ezra iv. 2) and the rather, because he feared Hezekiah might have taken possession of it, after such a defeat as his father Sennacherib had received. His name is curtailed several ways : for in the book of Tobit he is called Sarchedon (i. 21) the first syllable of his name being cut off ; and the LXX. cut off the next, calling him Aser-dan ; and Isaiah cuts off both, calling him Sargon (xx. 1).

CHAPTER XX.

1 Hezekiah, having received a message of death, by prayer hath his life lengthened. 8 The sun goeth ten degrees backward for a sign of that promise. 13 Berodach-baladan sending to visit Hezekiah, because of the wonder, hath notice of his treasures. 14 Isaiah understanding thereof foretelleth the Babylonian captivity. 28 Manasseh succeedeth Hezekiah.

1 In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order ; for thou shalt die, and not live.

2 Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, saying,

3 I beseech thee, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.

CHAP. XX.

Ver. 1. *In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death.*] This is set down after the death of Sennacherib ; but with this general note only of the time, wherein this sickness fell out, *in those days*. Which, as primate Usher observes in his annals, doth not relate to what went just before (to the time when the king of Assyria invaded the land), as is evident from ver. 6 of this chapter ; where he promises to add fifteen years to his life, and also to deliver him from the king of Assyria. Which deliverance, therefore, was after this sickness, which was in the latter end of his fourteenth year ; to which if we add fifteen, they make up the whole twenty-nine years of his reign.

Set thy house in order, &c.] That is, his disease was in its own nature mortal, and could not be cured by any human remedy : therefore he wished him to settle his estate, and as we speak, to make his will : how all things in his house should be disposed when he was dead.

Ver. 2. *He turned his face to the wall, and prayed*] That is, towards the wall of the sanctuary, as the Targum expounds it (see Dr. Hammond upon Acts x. annot. b). He thought, as it was not beyond the power of God to restore him, so he had not peremptorily decreed that he should die ; but there was a tacit condition in the message (as in other cases, Jonah iii. 4) otherwise he would not have prayed to be spared.

4 And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying,

5 Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears : behold, I will heal thee : on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD.

6 And I will add unto thy days fifteen years ; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the

Ver. 3.] He was not conscious to himself that he had omitted any thing which was to be done for the restoring the true worship of God. In which he had been so exact, as to take away the high places, which had continued ever since the time of David, and none durst remove them ; and therefore he presumed to beg that he might live, to settle and establish what he had begun to do.

Hezekiah wept sore.] One reason was, as many think, that he had not yet a son to succeed him on the throne. For he lived after this fifteen years ; and when he died Manasseh was but twelve years old, who therefore was born after this sickness.

Ver. 4. *Middle court.*] It is doubtful whether we are to understand the middle of the court of the king's house, or the middle of the city : for the one is in the text, the other in the margin of the Hebrew Bibles. But it is not material which we follow ; for the meaning is, that he was not gone far before he was ordered to go back, and carry a new message that his prayer was heard.

Ver. 5. *Behold, I will heal thee : on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the Lord.*] Recover his strength so fast, as to be able in three days' time to go to the temple, and give God thanks for his cure ; which appears by this to have been miraculous.

Ver. 6. *I will add unto thy days fifteen years ;*] More than he could have lived according to the course of nature.

hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

7 And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil and he recovered.

8 ¶ And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, What shall be the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the LORD the third day?

9 And Isaiah said, This sign shalt thou have of the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees?

And I will deliver—this city, &c.] For this sickness was that year when he threatened to destroy it (see upon ver. 1). It was a great encouragement to faithful obedience, that God so often mentions David's services with such a kind remembrance of them.

Ver. 7. *And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered.]* There might be some natural virtue in this cataplasm, to soften and ripen a hard humour, as this seems to have been (some think a plague sore), but it was a supernatural power which made so speedy a cure; of which God used this as a sign.

Ver. 8.] He did believe, no doubt, what the prophet said, otherwise he would have been sharply reproved. But he made bold to desire a confirmation of his faith, as good men had done in other cases: particularly Gideon, who threw down the altar of Baal, and cut down the grove at God's command, and blew the trumpet, and gathered an army, which were arguments of a strong faith; and yet, after all this, desired a sign from God, that God would deliver Israel by his hand (Judg. vi. 25. 34. 36, 37, &c.).

Ver. 9.] Sometimes God, who is a free agent, intending to convince men by great wonders that he is to be believed, is so graciously condescending, as to give them leave to choose what they would have him do, or when, that his power may be the more notorious, and no room left for doubting. So he did with Pharaoh, Exod. viii. 9, 10, and with Ahaz, Isa. vii. 11, and here with his son Hezekiah.

Ver. 10. *Let the shadow return backward ten degrees.]* It was comparatively small, because to go forward was the natural course of it; but to return back was a miracle, both in the thing and in the manner of it.

Ver. 11.] It is observed by many modern interpreters, that there is not a word here spoken concerning the sun's going back; but only of the shadow upon the dial, which might by the power of God go either forward or backward, the sun still holding its course, as it was wont to do. And the *degrees* or *lines* in the dial may signify either hours, or half hours, or, as some think, quarters (see Vossius, De Orig. et Progressu Idol. lib. ii. cap. 9). Now the going back being three times mentioned in this chapter, and always spoken of the shadow, therefore they conclude the miracle was wrought upon the dial only, not upon the very body of the sun. It is said, indeed, in Isa. xxxviii. 8, "So the sun returned ten degrees;" but they think that may be meant of the *shadow* of the sun (as it goes before), God so disposing the rays of the sun, and ordering the light, that no shadow should be projected, but where the prophet foretold. This I thought fit to represent; but must add, that the ancient Jews and Christians too, took the words of Isaiah to signify that the sun itself went back, and not merely the shadow. Whom primate Usher in his annals follows, whose words are these: "The sun

10 And Hezekiah answered, It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees: nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees.

11 And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the LORD: and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz.

12 ¶ At that time Berodach-baladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present unto Hezekiah: for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick.

13 And Hezekiah hearkened unto them, and

and all the heavenly bodies went back; and as much was detracted from the next night as was added to this day" (A. M. 4001). Which was done, I suppose, on a sudden, by the power of God, and lasted not long before all was restored again to their usual place, so that no change was made in the state of the heavenly bodies. But, that there was some change for the present, was observed both in the northern part of the world at Babylon (from whence Merodach-baladan sent to inquire about this wonder, 2 Chron. xxxii. 31) and also in the southern, in the land of Egypt. As we may gather from a remarkable passage in Herodotus, who tells us in his Euterpe, cap. i. 42, that the Egyptians had observed strange alterations in the motions of the sun; so that it had risen four times ἐξ ἡδίστου, "out of its usual course," ἐντεῖθεν νῦν δις καταδύεται, ἐντεῖθεν δις ἐπαντεῖλαι, &c. "it rising twice where it now sets, and setting twice where it now rises; and yet, οὐδὲν τῶν κατ' Αἰγυπτίων ὑπὸ ταῦτα ἐτεροειδῆσαι; "and yet no change at all made among the Egyptians by these things," neither in the earth, nor the river, nor any thing else. This is a plain evidence that their neighbours (and many others, it is like) had heard of the unusual motions of the sun (though without any alteration in the heavenly bodies, which were soon returned to their former station), but had not a perfect knowledge of them, or had corrupted their knowledge; for to those two mentioned in scripture, in the time of Joshua and Hezekiah, the Egyptians added two more, and make them to have been near the same time. But the Jews themselves have been thus fabulous, who say in the chapter *Chelek*, that the day on which Ahaz died was but two hours long; but now when Hezekiah's life was prolonged, God restored those ten hours which were then wanting, and so brought time even (see Schickard, in his Bechinah Happeruschim, p. 123). They also believe this miracle was wrought a little before sunset; but that excellent person whom I have often mentioned, Dr. Alix, thinks it evident it was before noon, about our ten of the clock.

Ver. 12. *Berodach-baladan,]* Who is called Merodach-baladan in Isa. xxxix. 1. Merodach was the name of an idol among the Babylonians, as Baal or Bel was another; together with Adan or Adonis, as Sir J. Marsham observes. Josephus calls him Βαράδαξ, and so doth Berosus. He was but a tributary to the king of Assyria, till, Nebuchadnezzar came to reign, who cast off the yoke of Assyria, and made that monarchy subject to him.

Sent letters] Some think to make a league with him against the king of Assyria: and it is likely, to inquire about the wonder done in the land (2 Chron. xxxii. 31.)

And a present unto Hezekiah:] As the manner was when they sought any one's friendship.

For he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick.] And

shewed them all the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and *all* the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not.

14 ¶ Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country, *even* from Babylon.

15 And he said, What have they seen in thy house? And Hezekiah answered, *All the things that are* in my house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them.

therefore in these letters, I suppose, he also congratulated his happy recovery to health.

Ver. 13. *And Hezekiah hearkened unto them, &c.*] He gave them a friendly and benign audience (as Abarbanel explains it), being glad at their coming, as Isaiah tells us (xxxix. 2), because he knew them to be enemies to Sennacherib. And the words seem to import that they came about some weighty business, to which he consented. He was so pleased, or rather transported with joy, at the honour the king of Babylon had done him, that he not only gave them a gracious audience, as was said before, but ordered his officers to show them all the rarities he had in his treasures. For though his country had been lamentably harassed by the king of Assyria, and he had endeavoured to appease him with great gifts (xviii. 14, 15) yet there were many good things remaining in Jerusalem; and great presents had been made to Hezekiah, since the stroke from heaven upon Sennacherib's army (2 Chron. xxxii. 23). The precious ointment here mentioned, is called, by Kimehi and other Hebrew doctors, *apharsemon*; which they say was the tree balsam; not to be found anywhere but near to Jericho.

There was nothing—in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not.] There were other valuable things in other parts of the realm, besides those in his palace at Jerusalem, which he thought worth their seeing, and therefore ordered his officers to show them to these ambassadors.

Ver. 14.] He answers to the last part of Isaiah's question, but not a word of the first, what their business with him was? and he calls that a far country from whence they came (though it was not very remote), to express the great honour that was done him by a prince at such a distance from him.

Ver. 15. *What have they seen?*] He knew well enough what they had seen; but had a mind to hear whether Hezekiah would confess the truth, or excuse his folly.

And Hezekiah answered, All the things that are in my house have they seen:] He honestly relates the truth; being insensible of how dangerous a piece of vanity he had been guilty; in showing strangers those treasures, which he might well think would invite them to endeavour to make themselves masters of them.

Ver. 16. *And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the Lord.*] How he resents this action. Which was the more blameable, because he had lately received such great benefits from God, and seen such an astonishing wonder as he wrought for the confirmation of his faith; whereby he should have been moved not to glory in any thing but the goodness of God to him, nor confide in the friendship of great princes, but only in the power of the Almighty.

Ver. 17. *Behold, the days come, that all that is in*

16 And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the Lord.

17 Behold, the days come, that all that is in thy house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the Lord.

18 And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.

19 Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken. And he said, *Is it not good*, if peace and truth be in my days?

20 ¶ And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his might, and how he made a pool, and

thy house, &c.] There had been several great kings in Judah who had overcome many enemies, and got great spoils, some remainders of which were still in their stores: but Isaiah foretells all should be carried away to that very place from whence he had been complimented by those ambassadors. The most pertinent observation that I can make upon these words is that of Dr. Jackson (in his Answer to John's Question), where he saith, that whosoever will consider the state of things in this time, and the small power which the Babylonians now had, in respect to their mighty neighbour the king of Assyria (whom the Jews had reason to fear above all other princes); the accomplishment of this prophecy of Isaiah was, according to human conjecture, far more unlikely and improbable, than if a man should in the last age have taken upon him to foretell that the duke of Saxony, or some such prince in Germany, should conquer France and Spain, and lead them captive to Dresden. But the word of the Lord stands fast for ever; and Isaiah was proved a hundred and twenty-five years after to be a true prophet.

Ver. 18. *Thy sons that shall issue from thee,*] That is, his posterity descended from him.

And they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.] Wait upon him as his servants (xxiv. 15). This was partly fulfilled in Daniel and his companions (Dan. i. 1).

Ver. 19. *Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken.*] As if he had said, Thanks be to God it is no worse; let him do his pleasure. Have I not reason to be thankful, if, according to his promise, he deliver me from the king of Assyria (ver. 6), and not only prolong my days, but let me enjoy firm peace and true religion as long as I live? Some take this to be a careless speech, as if he did not concern himself what became of his posterity, so he himself did live happily. But this is inconsistent with such a pious mind as he had; which, no doubt, was sensible of the vanity and pride for which the prophet reproved him, and submitted to the punishment of it, which might have been immediately inflicted, if God had not been very merciful unto him.

Ver. 20. *The rest of the acts of Hezekiah—how he made a pool, &c.*] If he brought water into the city by private passages, whereby the enemy was deprived of the benefit of it, while the city enjoyed it (as Grotius understands it), it was certainly a work of admirable contrivance (see 2 Chron. xxxii. 3).

The book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?] The same great person here observes, that the book of the chronicles spoken of here and in other places, were journals, as these books were annals. Out of which journals Ezra took many more passages in his

a conduit, and brought water into the city, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah ?

book of the Chronicles, not omitting what he had written in these annals.

Ver. 21. *Hezekiah slept with his fathers.*] Here is no mention of his burial with his fathers in the city

21 And Hezekiah slept with his fathers: and Manasseh his son reigned in his stead.

of David, but Ezra, in 2 Chron. xxxii. 33, tells us they buried him "in the chiefest of the sepulchres of the sons of David," and that all the people "did him honour at his death."

CHAPTER XXI.

1 *Manasseh's reign.* 3 *His great idolatry.* 10 *His wickedness causeth prophecies against Judah.* 17 *Amon succeedeth him.* 19 *Amon's wicked reign.* 23 *He being slain by his servants, and those murderers slain by the people, Josiah is made king.*

1 MANASSEH was twelve years old when he began to reign, and reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Mephi-zibah.

2 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.

3 For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel; and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them.

4 And he built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD said, In Jerusalem will I put my name.

5 And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD.

6 And he made his son pass through the fire,

and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

7 And he set a graven image of the grove that he had made in the house, of which the LORD said to David, and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever:

8 Neither will I make the feet of Israel move any more out of the land which I gave their fathers; only if they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them.

9 But they hearkened not: and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the children of Israel.

CHAPTER XXI.

Ver. 1. *Manasseh—reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem.*] The years wherein he was captive in Babylon (2 Chron. xxxiii. 11) must be comprehended in this number.

Ver. 2. *He did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord.*] He set up the gentile worship again: for being young, he was easily drawn aside by the princes and nobles, who never heartily joined in Hezekiah's reformation, but were in all probability displeased at it, and so revolted as soon as he was dead. For one cannot conceive how such a sudden change should be made in religion, and such gross idolatry restored, but from the general corruption of the great men who had the management of this young king.

Ver. 3. *He—worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them.*] The sun, the moon, and the stars, as Procopius Gazæus explains it.

Ver. 4. *He built altars*] To the gods of the neighbouring nations.

In the house of the Lord, &c.] In the very sanctuary itself; for the outward courts are mentioned in the next verse. Where God appointed that he himself alone should be worshipped (2 Sam. vii. 13).

Ver. 5. *He built altars—in the two courts of the house of the Lord.*] The inner court, which was that of the priests, and the outward, which was that of the people, were profaned, together with the sanctuary.

Ver. 6. *And he made his son pass through the fire,*] In 2 Chron. xxxiii. 6, it is said he caused his children to pass through the fire; which was a most abomin-

able practice, strictly forbidden by Moses upon pain of death (Lev. xviii. 21. xx. 2, 3).

Observed times, and used enchantments,] See Lev. xix. 21. Deut. xviii. 10, 11.

Dealt with familiar spirits and wizards:] See Lev. xix. 31.

He wrought much wickedness, &c.] For there were none before him who committed such things as these, which were the highest provocations of God's displeasure.

Ver. 7. *He set a graven image—in the house.*] The Hebrew words in this place are *pesel haasherah*, which our Selden hath well resolved (by comparing this with other texts) signify a wooden image of Ashtaroth, or Astarte (Syntagm. ii. De Diis Syris, cap. 2). For Baal and Astarte were chief gods of the Sidonians, whose worship was introduced by Ahab, whom Manasseh imitated (ver. 3). I observed before what God said to David, and what he said to Solomon is recorded 1 Kings viii. 29. ix. 3. But Manasseh endeavoured to make the name of the God of Israel to be forgotten, by placing other gods in his house.

Ver. 8.] This promise was included in the choice God made of Jerusalem to fix his dwelling-place there, which was a security to them against all their enemies, if they proved obedient to him.

Ver. 9. *They hearkened not*:] They had always been a rebellious people.

Manasseh seduced them, &c.] But in his reign their wickedness was grown to such a height, that it exceeded all that the people of Canaan had done; whom God expelled to make room for the Israelites. For he broke all the laws of Moses, and worshipped more

10 ¶ And the LORD spake by his servants the prophets, saying,

11 Because Manasseh king of Judah hath done these abominations, and hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did, which were before him, and hath made Judah also to sin with his idols:

12 Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle.

13 And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab; and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down.

14 And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies;

idols than they did. We never read of horses consecrated to the sun till his time (see xxiii. 11), who in all probability brought in that idolatry.

Ver. 10. *And the Lord spake by—the prophets,*] Abarhinel makes account that Hosea, Joel, Nahum, and Habakkuk all prophesied in his days. And some think Obadiah also, and Isaiah: who, as the Jews say, was sawn asunder by him.

Ver. 11. *Because Manasseh—hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did,*] The whole people of Canaan are comprehended under the name of Amorites; who were most eminent of all the seven nations (see Gen. xv. 16).

And hath made Judah also to sin with his idols:] They were too much inclined to idolatry, by the long corruptions that had been among them; but he made them far worse than otherwise they would have been. For, as Jeremiah charges them, in the next reign but one, “according to the number of their cities were their gods, and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem they set up altars to that shameful thing, to burn incense to Baal” (Jer. xi. 13).

Ver. 12. *Whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle.*] The report of it shall strike terror and horror into men, as Procopius Gazæus expounds it (see 1 Sam. iii. 11).

Ver. 13. *I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria,*] A metaphor from those who set out men’s lots and portions, by drawing a line to divide them: and is as much as to say, he would give to Jerusalem the same measure that he had done to Samaria; that is, pull it down to the ground; consume some of them by famine, others by the sword, and carry the rest into captivity, as the same Procopius glosses.

And the plummet of the house of Ahab:] As they imitated his sin, so they should have his punishment; whose house was utterly destroyed. It seems to be a metaphor from builders, who measure with a line and a plummet what part of a building shall stand, and what be demolished.

I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish,] That is, leave no more people in it than you see any thing in a dish after it is emptied, and wiped, and turned upside down; as the manner is when it is perfectly cleaned. So the meaning is, I will cleanse her of all her inhabitants, and leave none remaining. The Hebrew word we translate *dish*, the LXX. translate ἡ ἀλάβαστρος, “an alabaster box” of precious ointment, as the Chaldee translates it *selucta*, in which the Greek word λικνυδός lurks (as the illustrious Span-

15 Because they have done *that which was evil* in my sight, and have provoked me to anger, since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even unto this day.

16 Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing *that which was evil* in the sight of the LORD.

17 ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and all that he did, and his sin that he sinned, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

18 And Manasseh slept with his fathers, and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza: and Amon his son reigned in his stead.

19 ¶ Amon was twenty and two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. And his mother’s name was

hemius observes upon Callimachus’s hymn in Palad. ver. 13), signifying that Jerusalem was once in high esteem with God, like a precious ointment; but having lost its savour, he would reject her as a man doth such ointment when it is nothing worth.

Ver. 14. *The remnant of mine inheritance,*] That is, Judah, who alone was left when the ten tribes were gone.

They shall become a prey and a spoil] As their brethren, the children of Israel, had been.

Ver. 15. *Because they have done that which was evil]* God now intended to punish them for all their former rebellions, ever since they were a people; which Manasseh had completed, whose sin was so great, that it is sometimes mentioned as the sole cause of their captivity (see Jer. xv. 4).

Ver. 16. *Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much,*] Upon which words Procopius Gazæus thus glosses: “He chiefly destroyed those who opposed themselves to his impiety, and denounced the divine anger against him (that is, the prophets). They say he caused the prophet Isaiah to be sawed in sunder.” So the Jews say in the Babylonian Talmud, in the Treatise Jebamoth, and Justin Martyr in his dialogue with Trypho the Jew, and St. Jerome upon Isa. xx. 27. Nay, the words of the apostle, Heb. xi. 37, ἰεροδυνασ are commonly referred to this, as primate Usher observes in his Annals, ad. a. m. 3306.

Till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another:] Top-full, as we speak. For it is a metaphor from measures wet or dry, when they are filled up to the brim.

Beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin.] That is, besides his abominable idolatry.

Ver. 17. *The rest of the acts of Manasseh,—are they not written, &c.*] All that he did in his captivity, and after, was written in the journals, from whence Ezra took what we find in 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11, &c.

Ver. 18. *Manasseh—was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza:]* Some think this was the place where Uzziah was buried (2 Chron. xxvi. 23), and that he chose to be buried here, as unworthy, because of his manifold sins (of which he repented), to be laid in the common sepulchre of the kings of Judah.

Ver. 19. *Amon—reigned two years]* Which is the number of years to which the sons of those kings arrived, who provoked God to anger; as some of the Jews observe in the son of Jeroboam, the son of Baasha, and the son of Ahab (1 Kings xv. 25. xvi. 8. xxii. 51).

Meshullemeth, the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah.

20 And he did *that which was evil* in the sight of the LORD, as his father Manasseh did.

21 And he walked in all the way that his father walked in, and served the idols that his fathers served, and worshipped them :

22 And he forsook the LORD God of his fathers, and walked not in the way of the LORD.

23 ¶ And the servants of Amon conspired

Ver. 20. *He did that which was evil—as his father Manasseh did.*] He imitated him in all things but in his repentance, as is observed, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 23.

Ver. 21. *Served the idols*] For he was bred up in idolatry, and solemnly consecrated by his father to the service of Moloch (ver. 6).

Ver. 22. *Walked not in the way of the Lord.*] As Hezekiah, and Jotham, and others of his pious ancestors had done. There are two doctors also in the chapter *Chelek*, the one of which saith, he burnt the book of the law; the other, that he lay with his own mother.

Ver. 23. *The servants of Amon—slew the king in his own house.*] As he forsook God, whose servant he ought to have been; so his servants forsook him, and murdered him in his own palace.

Ver. 24.] It was a thing of such pernicious example to kill their king, though very bad, that the people

against him, and slew the king in his own house.

24 And the people of the land slew all them that had conspired against king Amon; and the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his stead.

25 Now the rest of the acts of Amon which he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah ?

26 And he was buried in his sepulchre in the garden of Uzza : and Josiah his son reigned in his stead.

would not suffer it to go unpunished. The common people seem to have been better disposed than the great men, who it is probable, were engaged in the conspiracy against Amon. But it is not likely that the common people took upon them to constitute a king, but their elders and great men met, together with the people, upon such occasions as this, to declare to whom the right of succession belonged. Therefore, by the "people of the land," must be meant the people assembled in the common council of the nation.

Ver. 25.] There is nothing said here of him, but that he was a gross idolater: which was not the ground of the conspiracy against him; but it is likely was related in the book here mentioned.

Ver. 26. *He was buried*] He was buried either in his father's sepulchre, or in one that he made for himself in the same place.

CHAPTER XXII.

1 *Josiah's good reign.* 3 *He taketh care for the repair of the temple.* 8 *Hilkiah having found a book of the law, Josiah sendeth to Huldah to inquire of the Lord.* 15 *Huldah prophesieth the destruction of Jerusalem, but respite thereof in Josiah's time.*

1 JOSIAH was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah of Boscath.

2 And he did *that which was right* in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left.

3 ¶ And it came to pass in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, *that* the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, the scribe, to the house of the LORD, saying,

4 Go up to Hilkiah the high priest, that he

may sum the silver which is brought into the house of the LORD, which the keepers of the door have gathered of the people :

5 And let them deliver it into the hand of the doers of the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD: and let them give it to the doers of the work which *is* in the house of the LORD, to repair the breaches of the house,

6 Unto carpenters, and builders, and masons, and to buy timber and hewn stone to repair the house.

7 Howbeit there was no reckoning made with them of the money that was delivered into their hand, because they dealt faithfully.

CHAP. XXII.

Ver. 1. *His mother's name was Jedidah,*] Who it is likely was a good woman, and took care to instil early good principles into him.

Ver. 2. *He did that which was right, &c.*] In him was verified the words of Solomon (Prov. xx. 11), "Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right." For when he had reigned eight years, *while he was yet young*, as Ezra observes, he began to reform all abuses in religion (2 Chron. xxxiv. 3, &c.).

Ver. 3. *The eighteenth year*] This was in the eighteenth year of his reign, not of his age, as we are told, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 8.

Ver. 4. *Go up to Hilkiah the high priest, that he may sum the silver which is brought into the house of the*

Lord,] He ordered him to give him an exact account of what money had been offered by pious people, for the reparation of the house of the Lord; as had been done in the reign of Jehoash (xii. 4, &c.).

Which the keepers of the door have gathered of the people :] These were the Levites, as we learn from 2 Chron. xxxiv. 9.

Ver. 5. *Deliver it into the hand of the doers of the work,*] They entrusted certain persons with the money, who were to oversee the work (whose names are recorded in 2 Chron. xxxiv. 12), and they delivered it to the workmen to buy materials for the reparation of the house, as it follows in the next verse.

Ver. 6. *Builders,*] Builders (as distinguished from carpenters and masons) were such as laid the timber and the stone together, which the other had prepared.

Ver. 7. *There was no reckoning made—because they*

8 ¶ And Hilkiab the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord. And Hilkiab gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it.

9 And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the king word again, and said, Thy servants have gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of them that do the work, that have the oversight of the house of the Lord.

10 And Shaphan the scribe shewed the king, saying, Hilkiab the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king.

11 And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes.

12 And the king commanded Hilkiab the

priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Michaiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asahiah a servant of the king's, saying,

13 Go ye, inquire of the Lord for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened to the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us.

14 So Hilkiab the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went unto Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college;) and they communed with her.

dealt faithfully.] They were men of such approved honesty (like those in the days of Jehoash, xii. 15), that there was no need to call them to an account how they laid out the money.

Ver. 8. *I have found the book of the law, &c.]* The book of Deuteronomy, saith Procopius Gazæus. But it was rather the whole book of the law written by Moses; that authentic copy which by God's command was laid up in the most holy place (Deut. xxxi. 24, &c.). About which the Hebrew doctors made great difficulties in their explication of this place, particularly R. Lipman in his Nitzacon, out of which Hottinger hath alleged a long passage concerning this matter, in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, N. T. sect. 16. par. iv. p. 137, where he justly thinks it a wonder that Josiah should so early fear God, and begin to reform religion, if he had never seen the book of the law before this time. And how should the people have kept such a passover, and the priests been so well instructed in the rites of it this very year (2 Chron. xxxiv. 19)? For the copies of the book now found could not be so soon made and dispersed everywhere as to teach them these things. It is most likely therefore, nay certain, that though this was the original book, yet the Jews had many copies of the law among them, though some of them perhaps imperfect or corrupted. For they report that Manasse blotted the name of Jehovah out of all the books he could find. Hilkiab, therefore, rejoiced that he had found the original, by which all might be corrected. Which had been hid, it is probable, from the impious fury of their idolatrous kings, in some secret place of the temple, where it was now found when they were about to repair it: and the finding it at this very time, when Josiah was making a reformation of religion, could not but be looked upon as a remarkable providence, which very much affected him, as we read afterward.

Ver. 9.] He gives him an account that he had executed his commands, given him ver. 4—6.

Ver. 10. *Shaphan read it before the king.]* Some part of it. It is said, indeed, in 2 Chron. xxxiv. 30, that "they read in the ears of the people all the book of the law." But that was done afterward, and was done by parcels, not all at one time. And so it follows here, xxiii. 2, that Josiah read, that is, caused some by his order to read, all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of the Lord, in the ears of all the people.

Ver. 11. *When the king had heard—the law—he rent his clothes.]* Being very much affrighted when he heard the dreadful threatenings against the transgressor of the law, read out of the book of Deuteronomy. At which the book opened either by the special pro-

vidence of God, or by the design of Shaphan, who had read the book before he brought it to the king (ver. 8). The Jerusalem Talmud, and from thence Abarinel, saith, that he happened to read the place where the punishment of their king is denounced (Deut. xxviii. 36), or, that he observed the time drew near, when the punishments God threatened would be inflicted, for their long offences against this law. According to what the king himself here saith, ver. 13, "Great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us," &c. By all which it is plain, the king had not written a copy of the law with his own hand, according to the command, Deut. xvii. 8. Disuse often cancels the most excellent laws. For it is too probable they had a long time neglected also to read the law publicly the seventh year (Deut. xxxiv. 9, 10).

Ver. 12. *Shaphan—and Asahiah.]* Shaphan was a servant of the king, being secretary, or some such officer; but Asahiah, I suppose, was one that waited on his person, and was always about him.

Ver. 13. *Go ye, inquire of the Lord for me, and for the people, &c.]* Of Jerusalem. I suppose he sent them to know whether there were any hopes his anger might be appeased, and by what means.

Ver. 14. *So Hilkiab the priest, &c. went unto Huldah the prophetess.]* It is certain that both Jeremiah and Zephaniah prophesied in the reign of Josiah; therefore it may seem strange that they did not resort to one of them. Of which Abarinel gives this account: That Jeremiah was at this time absent from Jerusalem being gone to convert the ten tribes; or rather, being at his own house in Anathoth. And the same he supposes of Zephaniah, that he was not near at hand; and therefore they went to Huldah, who lived at Jerusalem; and the rather, as some suppose, because women are more inclined to pity and compassion than men. But this is an absurd reason, as Abarinel well observes: for the prophets did not speak according to their own inclinations, but as God dictated to them. The Jews have a tradition in Massebeth Megillah, that eight prophets descended from Rahab, whereof Huldah was one. And Kimchi upon this place saith, Our doctors write, that three prophesied in the days of Josiah; viz. Jeremiah in the streets or villages, Zephaniah in the synagogues, and Huldah among the women.

She dwelt—in the college;] The Hebrew word *mishneh*, which we translate *college* (and which the Targum takes to signify a *school*), is in the margin of our bibles, translated the *second part*. For there were three walls about Jerusalem, as Abarinel observes. Within the *first* of which lived artificers, and the common people; within the *second*, the better sort, the wise men,

15 ¶ And she said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you to me,

16 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read :

17 Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands : therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched.

18 But to the king of Judah which sent you to inquire of the LORD, thus shall ye say to him,

prophets, and prophetesses, lived ; and within the third, was the mountain of the Lord, as they speak. Now of the middle part of Jerusalem they think the holy writer here speaks, in which Huldah dwelt.

Ver. 15.] She speaks in the prophetic style, and with great boldness tells him the plain truth.

Ver. 16.] All the plagues threatened in Deut. xxviii. and other places.

Ver. 17.] This was the answer to the king's inquiry ; that the decree of God was peremptory and irresistible, against Judah and Jerusalem, for their extirpation ; and she adds the reason thereof.

Ver. 18. *As touching the words which thou hast heard ;*] As far as they concerned his person.

Ver. 19.] Here are four tokens, as some observe, of a true repentance and conversion unto God. First, softness of heart ; which is opposed to that hardness which arises from unbelief of God's threatenings ; because faith makes men tenderly affected with them. Secondly, great humility, arising from a sense of his unworthiness of any mercy. These two were inward : the other were outward tokens of this inward

Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, *As touching the words which thou hast heard ;*

19 Because thy heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me ; I also have heard thee, saith the LORD.

20 Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace ; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place. And they brought the king word again.

sense ; which were rending his clothes, and weeping for his own, and for the public offences ; which moved God to take some pity upon him, though he resolved to destroy the nation.

Ver. 20. *Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers,]* The time hastening for their utter destruction, God would let him live but a short time ; which was a mercy to him, that he might not see the miseries that were coming upon them.

Thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace, &c.] Though he was slain in battle (xxiii. 29), yet " he went to his grave in peace ; because, as the next words explain it, he did not live to see the calamities which were inevitably threatened to come upon the nation ; but left his kingdom in a peaceable condition. For the Egyptians, who slew him, gave them no long disturbance, and the Babylonians were not yet ready to come up against them.

And they brought the king word again.] Who immediately set himself to do all the good he could for his time ; though he could not prevent the evil that was coming.

CHAPTER XXIII.

1 Josiah causeth the book to be read in a solemn assembly. 3 He reneweth the covenant of the Lord. 4 He destroyeth idolatry. 15 He burnt dead men's bones upon the altar of Beth-el, as was forepropheesied. 21 He kept a most solemn passover. 24 He put away witches and all abomination. 26 God's final wrath against Judah. 29 Josiah, provoking Pharaoh-nechoh, is slain at Megiddo. 31 Jehoahaz, succeeding him, is imprisoned by Pharaoh-nechoh, who made Jehoiachim king. 36 Jehoiachim's wicked reign.

1 AND the king sent, and they gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem.

2 And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great : and he read in their ears all the words

of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the LORD.

3 ¶ And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all their heart and all their soul, to perform the words of this

CHAP. XXIII.

Ver. 1. *The king—gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem.]* Whom he acquainted with what he intended to do ; and, I suppose, had their consent, which gave the greater authority to what follows.

Ver. 2. *The prophets,]* Jeremiah and Zephaniah were the principal prophets ; and, it is likely, there were many more who are not mentioned.

And he read—all the words of the book of the covenant] He ordered some to read (xxii. 10) in several places, so that all might hear ; for it is not likely that one man's voice could reach so great a multitude.

Which was found in the house of the Lord.] And

some of the Jews say, was found lying open at that very place, when those words presented themselves (Deut. xxviii. 36), which awakened the king to cause all the law of God to be read to them.

Ver. 3. *The king stood by a pillar,]* Unto which his throne adjoined ; wherein the king was placed when he came to the temple, as the Hebrew doctors will have it. The king's seat, saith Jacob Juda Leo, was in the court of the Israelites, at the entrance into the court of the priests, by a marble pillar. There he sat when he came into the temple to worship God : there Joash was made king by Jehoiaad (xi. 14) : there Hezekiah read before the Lord the blasphemous letter which the king of Assyria sent him (xix. 14) ; and there Josiah now made a covenant with God that

covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant.

4 And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the door, to bring forth out of the temple of the Lord all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for the grove, and for all the host of heaven: and he burned them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried the ashes of them unto Beth-el.

5 And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn

he would serve him (see Vitrina, Proleg. ad lib. De Synag. Veteri, cap. 4).

To keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes] That is, all his laws of all sorts.

With all their heart, and with all their soul,] He made this covenant in his own name, and in the name of all the people, whom he engaged faithfully to God's service.

And all the people stood to the covenant.] They gave their consent to the covenant; standing before the Lord as he did, and not stirring from the place where he propounded it unto them.

Ver. 4. And the king commanded Hilkiah the high-priest,] It was very proper to commit the reformation of the house of God to the high-priest; and those who ministered under him. Some will have Hilkiah to be the father of Jeremiah, as is asserted by Greg. Abulfaragius, in his Histor. Dynastarum, p. 68. Which is an error; for Jeremiah was a priest of Anathoth, whither Abiathar was banished, of the seed of Ithamar, from whom it is likely he was descended (1 Kings ii. 26).

The priests of the second order,] They that were under the high-priests; especially the sagan (as the Targum here hath it), who was the vicar of the high-priest, and stood at his right hand when he officiated, as the Jews tell us in Joma, where they say a man could not be made a high-priest unless he had been first a sagan.

The keepers of the door,] Whom the Jews call *amarcelim*; which word we find xii. 10, where the Targum expounds it, "priests that were treasurers:" that is, such Levites as had the custody of the sacred money, which was for the repair of the temple. And the Hebrew phrase is not much different, "the keepers of the thresholds;" that is the entrance into those chambers (as Hottinger thinks) wherein were kept such things as were of public use in the temple. Of which there were seven: wherein the priests' garments were laid up, and other such-like things.

All the vessels,] The word we translate *vessels* or *instruments*, signifies all the various furniture belonging to Baal, and the rest of the false gods, which served either for offering of incense, or sacrifices, or the vestments of the priests, &c.

Baal,] Who was the principal idol, whose worship Ahab first introduced, and Manasseh restored after Jehu had abolished it, as was said before, xxi. 3.

The grove,] I observed before, that by a *grove*, is meant the *image* or *idol of the grove*; which Ahab had brought in also (see there, xxi. 3. 7, and here below, ver. 6).

All the host of heaven:] That is, the planets, and the rest of the stars, which the Sabæans, and Chaldeans, and other eastern people, worshipped. Whom the Jews impiously imitated, though they had been taught, in the very beginning of their law, that the sun, the moon, and all the stars, were all created by their God.

incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven.

6 And he brought out the grove from the house of the Lord, without Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron, and burned it at the brook Kidron, and stamped it small to powder, and cast the powder thereof upon the graves of the children of the people.

7 And he brake down the houses of the so-

He burned them—and carried the ashes of them unto Beth-el.] Which place (where, as Kimchi speaks, was the very foundation of idolatry) he polluted and profaned, by casting this filth there; that they who were wont to worship the calves in that place might avoid it, and not come near it.

Ver. 5. Idolatrous priests,] These idolatrous priests are called *chemarim* in the Hebrew, because they were clothed in black garments (as Kimchi gives the reason, both upon this place and upon Zeph. i. 4): whereas the priests of the Most High were clothed in white; especially those whose genealogy was not questioned. They, indeed, who could not make out their descent, were clothed in a black habit, to distinguish them from undoubted priests; and so were they who had any defect or blemish in their body, as appears from the Talmud in Middoth. And indeed it is certain, that they among the heathens, who sacrificed to the infernal gods, were clothed with such vestments, as appears by Canidia in Horace, lib. i. sat. 8, and Medea in Apollonius Rhodius, lib. iii. ver. 861; from whence some think they had the name of *μελανόφθοροι*, which we find in some ancient inscriptions. And thus the Egyptians bewailed Osiris, all which was suitable to their nightly sacrifices; wherein they were sad for the absence of the sun, who was meant by Osiris, as Gilbertus Cuperus observes in his Harpocrates, p. 129. And here now we have found the original of these *chemarim*, priests clothed in black. For it was a black ox which represented Osiris among the Egyptians, and it was covered *μαύρῳ μίθρῳ βυσσίνῳ*, "with a black silk garment;" from whence, in all likelihood, the priests came to be so clothed.

Them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon,] Here Baal is distinguished from the sun; and therefore signifies the same with Belus, who was a deified king: and indeed it is highly probable, that not only Baal, but Moloch and Adonis, were the names only of some very potent kings, who were adored when they were dead, and in time were thought to be real gods.

And to all the planets, and to all the host of heaven.] The Hebrew word *mazaloth*, which the LXX. pronounce *mazuroth*, is thought by Procopius Gazæus to be the name of a star, and most likely the evening star: which others take to signify a constellation, as we translate it in the margin; or all the twelve signs. For the Jewish astronomers call the zodiac, *ophanhamazaloth*, the circle of the signs.

Ver. 6. He brought out the grove] By the *grove*, as I have observed before, is meant the "image of the grove," or, in plainer words, *Ashtaroth*: for so Procopius Gazæus saith, that where the LXX. translate this word the *grove*, others render it *Ἀστάρωθ*, or *Ἀστάρωθ*; that is, *Ἀστάρτη*, or "Venus." For τῆς Ἀφροδίτης τὸ εἶδον ἵδον Ἰσραήλ ἐν τῷ Διὶ νεῖ, "they had set up the statue of Venus in the temple of God" (see Selden, Syntag. ii. De Diis Syris, cap. 2).

domites, that were by the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the grove.

8 And he brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from Geba to Beer-sheba, and brake down the high places of the gates that were in the entering in of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which were on a man's left hand at the gate of the city.

9 Nevertheless the priests of the high places

Burned it—and cast the powder thereof upon the graves of the children of the people.] Which by the law were impure and unclean; and such he declared these ashes to be, and actually made them to be unclean, that none might touch them: much less gather them up as sacred relics. And so Kimchi expounds this place. He brought forth the wooden statue of Diana, which Manasseh had placed there (xxi. 7), and having burnt it, and stamped it to powder, scattered the ashes on the graves of the idolaters, in detestation and contempt of their idolatry.

Ver. 7. *And he brake down the houses of the sodomites, that were by the house of the Lord.*] From this some gather they were come to such a height of wickedness, that there were those among them who exposed their bodies to be abused contrary to nature, in honour of those filthy deities which they worshipped. For these public houses were near the temple of the Lord; and therefore these were persons consecrated to impurity, contrary to Deut. xxiii. 17 (see 1 Kings xiv. 24). And so the ancient interpreters here understand corporal filthiness: only the Chaldee translates it, "the houses of things consecrated to idols." R. Solomon Jarchi thinks it probable that among those who worshipped the statues of the moon, or Venus, there were those who prostituted themselves to filthy mixtures. But Mr. Selden, by *kedeshim* (which we translate *sodomites*), understands the priests of Astarte, whom St. Jerome upon Hosea iv. calls *exsectos*, upon pretence of greater purity, depriving themselves of those parts that serve for procreation of children.

Where the women wove hangings for the grove.] For Asherah, or Astarte, before mentioned; as Selden expounds it in the forenamed place. These hangings, or curtains, encompassed the image, and made a kind of house for it, as the Hebrew word imports, which the Greeks called *ναῖσκος* and *ναῖδα*, "little temples or habitations." Into those tents the worshippers went, and there committed all manner of lewdness; for they had not arrived to such a degree of impudence, as not to seek for privacy in their filthiness.

Ver. 8. *He brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah.*] Would not suffer them to dwell there, to corrupt the people.

Defiled the high places] He made them, saith Kimchi, receptacles of impurity, by casting dead carcases there, and other such-like unclean things; that so he might remove out of the people's hearts all idolatry: for where sweet odours were wont before to be, there was nothing but stench.

From Geba to Beer-sheba.] That is, throughout the whole country; for Geba was in the northern parts, and Beer-sheba in the southern (see 1 Kings xv. 22. Judg. xx. 1).

The high places of the gates] The high places of the gates seem to have been erected there, to offer incense to those tutelal gods, unto whom their idolatrous kings had committed the protection of their city. And Kimchi thinks that the governor of the city had his private household god, and a portable altar where-

came not up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, but they did eat of the unleavened bread among their brethren.

10 And he defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech.

11 And he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entering in of the house of the LORD, by the chamber of

on he offered to his domestic idol. Which Josiah did not spare; but let the greatest men see his impartial zeal against all idolatry.

Ver. 9.] He mixed mercy together with severity. For though he did not suffer those priests who had offered incense in those high places, (directly contrary to the law, Deut. xii. 11), to offer sacrifices at God's altar; because they had defiled themselves with that sinful worship, though to the true God; yet he permitted them to partake of the bread of the priests, which comprehends all those parts of any sacrifice that were the priest's portion. He mentions, indeed, only the meat-offering, which was to be of *unleavened bread* (Lev. ii. 4, 5, 11); but that is put by a synecdoche for all other offerings belonging to the priests. So that they were put into the condition of those priests that had any blemish: who might not "offer the bread of their God" (Lev. xxi. 17—21); but they "might eat the bread of their God, both of the holy and most holy" (Lev. xxi. 22. Ezek. xlv. 10).

Ver. 10. *He defiled Topheth.*] By throwing all manner of filth into it, as well as by throwing down the altars on which they sacrificed their children, as the Syriac and Arabic seem to understand it.

Pass through the fire] Though a great number of the Hebrew doctors think that their *passing their children through the fire*, was nothing more than making them pass between two fires, whereby they were consecrated to that idol; yet it is certain as I have shown before (xvi. 3), that they offered their children sometimes as burnt-sacrifices to idols; which was a thing so horrid, that perhaps they invented this instead of it, to make them pass through two fires: or, perhaps, the opinion of Maimonides may be true, that they did not burn their children to Molech, as they did to other idols; but the entire worship of Molech was abolished, by making children only pass through the fire to him; as his words are in his book of Idolatry, cap. 6. sect. 5.; which may be confirmed from Jer. xix. 5, where he saith, "they burnt their sons with fire unto Baal" in Topheth (see Selden, Syntag. i. De Diis Syris, cap. 6, where he largely treats of this).

Ver. 11. *He took away*] That is, he destroyed, as the Hebrew word signifies, ver. 5, where we translate it, "he put down the chemarim;" that is, destroyed or slew those priests, as Bochartus interprets it. So Lev. xxvi. 6, we translate the same word, "I will rid evil beasts out of the land;" that is, destroy them. The LXX. here translate it *καταράσσει*, "he burnt" the horses; as before, *καταράσσει χωρικούς*, "he burnt the priests." Though, perhaps, in both places it should be *καταράσσει*, "he made to cease," as the Hebrew word literally signifies.

Had given to the sun.] That is, had consecrated to the sun; as Lev. xx. 2, they are said to give their children to Molech. A great number of authors tell us, that among several nations these animals were sacred to the sun (as hawks and some other creatures were), because of their swiftness in their course. But it is uncertain whether they were kept to be

Nathan-melech the chamberlain, which *was* in the suburbs, and burned the chariots of the sun with fire.

12 And the altars that *were* on the top of the upper chamber of Abaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the Lord, did the king beat down, and brake *them* down from thence, and cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron.

13 And the high places that *were* before Jerusalem, which *were* on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the king defile.

sacrificed to the sun (as they were among the Masagetae, Persians, Armenians, and other people mentioned by Bochartus), or only to be led forth in pomp (as some of the Jews speak) every morning to meet the rising sun. Or, as others take it, the worshippers of the sun got upon these horses early in the morning, and rode out to adore the sun at its rising (see Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. xi. cap. 10).

[*Nathan-Melech, the chamberlain.*] Or, the eunuch, who was some great officer in the court.

[*Which was in the suburbs.*] So the Targum interprets the word *parvarim*; which most translations retain as the name of a place, unto which the street in which these horses were kept reached; from the chamber of Nathan-melech. He was the principal officer, perhaps, that looked after them: and had the oversight of all those stables which were built from the temple gate to Parvarim. And perhaps he rode out himself every morning upon one of them, to salute the rising sun in the king's name.

[*And builded the chariots of the sun with fire.*] The ancients fancied the sun itself was carried about in a chariot (as Bochart observes in the place above mentioned), and therefore chariots as well as horses were dedicated to it. Which he makes an argument, that they were not mere brazen, silver, or golden statues of horses that are here meant; but real living horses to draw those chariots (see Vossius, De Orig. et Prog. Idol. lib. xi. cap. 4). Some of those who think they were only imagines equorum et quadrigarum (as Selden speaks, Syntag. ii. De Diis Syris, cap. 8), "images of horses and chariots," made of some metal or other, imagine they were represented in the shape of griffins, as the famous M. Spoon thought (see Dr. Hyde, De Relig. Vet. Pers. p. 117).

Ver. 12.] They were not satisfied with the public altars they had made, in a vast number of high places; but the roofs of their houses being flat, they made altars there (see Jer. xix. 13. xxxii. 29. Zeph. i. 5), and particularly upon the king's palace, where they worshipped the sun, moon, and stars. But this could not privilege them from destruction, that they were on the top of the king's house. It is said in 2 Chron. xxxiii. 13, that when Manasseh repented, he "took away all the altars he had made in the mountain of the house of the Lord:" and I suppose those in the courts of the priests and of the people were then removed. But Amon set them up again in the very place where Manasseh had erected them; and so they are here called his altars.

Ver. 13. [*Mount of corruption.*] That is, mount Olivet (1 Kings xi. 2), which was anciently called *harmischah*, the *mount of unktion*; because of the olives that grew there in great plenty; but by way of contempt and scorn, was called by the prophets

14 And he brake in pieces the images, and cut down the groves, and filled their places with the bones of men.

15 ¶ Moreover the altar that *was* in Beth-el, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burned the high place, and stamped it small to powder, and burned the grove.

16 And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchres that *were* there in the mount, and sent, and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burned *them* upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the Lord which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words.

17 Then he said, What title is that that I see?

harnaschith, the "mount of corruption," because of the idols that were placed there, whereby the people were corrupted in their religion.

[*Which Solomon the king of Israel had builded*] It is not to be doubted but these detestable idols had been taken away by such religious kings as Asa, Jehoshaphat, and Hezekiah: but they were restored again by their impious successors, in the very same place, and the same figure with those ancient ones; and so are here called those that Solomon made, because he was the first author of them, or at least permitted them to be made by his wives, and connived at their worship, as R. Levi thinks.

[*Did the king defile.*] By dead men's bones, and other unclean things, which he threw into those places.

Ver. 14. [*Cut down the groves.*] Wherein the images were.

[*And filled their places with the bones of men.*] Which he caused to be digged out of their graves and burnt; being the bones of idolatrous priests (ver. 16).

Ver. 15. [*Moreover the altar that was at Beth-el.*] For this city and the territories thereof had been under the power of Judah, ever since the reign of Abijah (2 Chron. xiii. 19, 20).

[*Burned the grove.*] That is, he burnt the golden calf, as Mr. Selden thinks; for Asherah commonly signifies some image, as he shows in his discourse about Astarte, whose image it is likely this was; for the golden calf, as the Jews think, was carried away before this. But that is not certain: and Selden's opinion is probable, that the golden calves were made of wood gilded over, and thence called golden, which were easily burnt (Syntag. i. De Diis Syris, cap. 4).

Ver. 16. [*As Josiah turned himself.*] Looking round about him; being resolved to trust no man's eyes but his own, in discovering the monuments of idolatry.

[*He spied the sepulchres*] It is not said whose sepulchres they were; but it is probable of the idolatrous priests (for in the Chronicles he is said to have burnt their bones), and of the prophets and great men, who had been instruments to promote Jeroboam's idolatry.

[*Took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burned them upon the altar, and polluted it.*] For nothing was more unclean than that which had touched dead men's bones.

[*According to the word of the Lord*] Who foretold three hundred and sixty years ago these very things should be done by a king called Josiah (1 Kings xiii. 2).

Ver. 17. [*What title is that that I see? &c.*] There was one stone, or pillar, I suppose, more eminent than the rest, with the name of the persons buried under it: and therefore called a *title*, because there was an inscription engraven upon it, according to the

And the men of the city told him, *It is the sepulchre of the man of God, which came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Beth-el.*

18 And he said, Let him alone; let no man move his bones. So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet that came out of Samaria.

19 And all the houses also of the high places that were in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke the LORD to anger, Josiah took away, and did to them according to all the acts that he had done in Beth-el.

20 And he slew all the priests of the high places that were there upon the altars, and burned men's bones upon them, and returned to Jerusalem.

21 ¶ And the king commanded all the people, saying, Keep the passover unto the LORD your God, as *it is written in the book of this covenant.*

custom among the Jews (as now among us), to preserve thereby the memory of those they loved. The king was the more curious (as Rasi, and Kimchi also, tell the story out of the Midrasch) to know whose grave that was; because on one side of it he saw nettles and thistles grow, and on the other side myrtles and other odoriferous plants; signifying that there lay a true prophet and a false. For which there is no ground, but their fabulous fancy.

Ver. 18. *Let no man move his bones.*] It is pertinently observed by Joh. Wolfius, that if pious persons in those days had had the same opinion about relics which now is in the church of Rome, the king would not merely have ordered his bones to lie quiet and undisturbed, but put them into golden boxes, and carried them to Jerusalem, to be there religiously worshipped by the people.

Came out of Samaria.] That is, out of the country of Samaria.

Ver. 19. *All the houses*] What these houses were, whether places for worship, or for the habitation of the priests of the high places (mentioned in the next verse), is uncertain. It is most likely the former; because they provoked God to anger.

The cities of Samaria.] In such cities of Samaria as were in the possession of the king of Judah; for upon the fall of the Assyrian empire, many of the cities, no doubt, became subject to their old masters.

Josiah took away,] That is, he brake them down, and burnt them, and stamped them to powder (ver. 15).

Ver. 20. *He slew all the priests of the high places that were there upon the altars.*] There were some priests of the high places (of whom we read before, ver. 8, 9) that he did not kill; for they were such as sacrificed only unto God in the high places. But those whom he slew, were either the priests of Jeroboam who worshipped the calves, and had no right to the priesthood (but had invaded it by the favour of their king), or such priests of the order of Aaron as sacrificed to Baal, or other false gods.

Burned men's bones upon them,] Which was the highest pollution of those altars (ver. 13, 14).

Returned to Jerusalem.] Having made a progress through all the country, to abolish idolatrous worship where it was practised; he returned to Jerusalem, there to restore the solemnities of true religion.

Ver. 21.] Which he had bound them and himself to observe (ver. 3), and now tried them whether they

22 Surely there was not holden such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah;

23 But in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, wherein this passover was holden to the LORD in Jerusalem.

24 ¶ Moreover the workers with familiar spirits, and the wizards, and the images, and the idols, and all the abominations that were spied in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away, that he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the LORD.

25 And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the LORD with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there any like him.

26 ¶ Notwithstanding the LORD turned not

would stand to the covenant, as they promised, by making a proclamation through the whole kingdom that they should keep this feast, which was a commemoration of the greatest benefit God ever bestowed on them, before the giving them the law, for it made them a free nation.

Ver. 22.] Since the time of the prophet Samuel, the last of their judges, there had never been such a great concourse of people at any passover, nor such a multitude of sacrifices offered; nor such an exact observation of the rites and ceremonies belonging to this feast. For in the time of Hezekiah many were absent: and many had not purified themselves as they ought: but now, as Ralbag expounds it, they were all turned to the Lord, and there were no idolaters nor apostates among them (see Selden, lib. i. De Syned. cap. 12. p. 478).

Ver. 23.] In the same year that he took care to have the temple repaired (xxii. 3), and to purge it from all idols (xxii. 4), he restored the true worship of God to such purity, as it had not been in for some ages.

Ver. 24. *The workers with familiar spirits, and the wizards,*] Of which see what I have noted upon Lev. xix. 31. xx. 6.

The images,] In the Hebrew the *teraphim*, which were very ancient among idolaters, as I have observed upon the book of Genesis, xxxi. 19.

The idols,] Of which there were many sorts, that are all comprehended in this word.

The abominations] What these abominations were is not certain, but it is likely they were such as Ezekiel saw and described in aftertimes; when God showed him what odious things they committed secretly (see Ezek. viii. 9, 10, 13, 15, &c). He had his spies, it is probable, to discover all secret idolatry, as well as public, which, being found out, he abolished as abominable unto God.

Ver. 25.] He doth not compare him with David and Hezekiah (as Procopius Gazæus here notes), but with other pious kings, such as Asa, Jehoshaphat, and Jotham; who were far inferior to him in piety. And Hezekiah himself was not so exact, and did not make such a thorough search as he did, after all idolatrous practices. The nation also was so much corrupted since his days, by his son Manasseh, who reigned a long time, that it made the work of reformation more difficult in the time of Josiah. Yet in some regard Hezekiah excelled him; and therefore the same character is given of him xviii. 5, which is here given of

from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal.

27 And the LORD said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there.

28 Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

Josiah; because of his trust in God, in the time of his greatest distress, for which he was very eminent. But as to repentance, Josiah was most exemplary.

Ver. 26.] Though Josiah was most sincere in what he did, and omitted nothing to restore the purity of God's worship among them; yet he could not procure the preservation of the nation from destruction, but only a forbearance of it for a time. For the people were so corrupted by Manasseh, that they rather complied with Josiah in his reformation, than heartily desired it, out of an inward affection to him. The innocent blood also shed by Manasseh was unpardonable (xxiv. 3, 4.) Of which the people it is likely approved, and so fell under an irreversible sentence of destruction (see Ezek. xxiv. 6.)

Ver. 27.] He peremptorily decreed that they should be carried away captive, as the ten tribes had been; and that his divine presence among them should not save them; but he would abandon his own dwelling-place, and, removing from them, leave them a prey to their enemies; which we find lively represented in Ezek. x. 18, 19, where the prophet saw the glory of the Lord departing from his house, and carried away by the cherubims.

This may seem strange, as Abarbinel observes, that God should thus visit the sins of Manasseh, of which he had repented, and not be reconciled after Josiah had abolished all monuments of idolatry, and the Israelites had kept such a passover, as is before mentioned: unto which he answers, that though it be said Manasseh repented, yet it is not said he turned to God with all his heart, and with all his soul, as Josiah did. For Manasseh repented only when he was in great distress; and though he repented, the people did not; but fell to their idolatrous practices as soon as he was dead, following his wicked son Amon. Nay, he thinks in the days of Josiah, they were little better, as he gathers from the eleventh and twelfth of Jeremiah. To which may be added what we read in the prophet Zephaniah, who lived in the days of Josiah, and threatened in the name of God, "I will utterly consume all things from off the land, and consume both man and beast" (Zeph. i. 2, 3.) For they were still private idolaters, though they complied with the public reformation; swearing by the Lord, and by Milcom; and when the high places were taken away, worshipping the host of heaven upon the house-tops (ver. 5.)

Ver. 29. *Pharaoh-nechoh*] Whom Herodotus, in his second book, called Νεχος, and mentions the fight which he had with the Syrians, ἐν Μαγδόφ, (see Usher's Annals, ad. A. M. 3394.)

Went up against the king of Assyria] Who was then king of Babylon; for he had subdued the Assyrians, and brought them under his empire. There are those, indeed, who think this happened before that time, and that this king of Egypt went to revenge the injuries done them by Sennacherib; and he hoped for the better success, because he was much weakened

29 ¶ In his days Pharaoh-nechoh king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates: and king Josiah went against him; and he slew him at Megiddo, when he had seen him.

30 And his servants carried him in a chariot dead from Megiddo, and brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own sepulchre. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and anointed him, and made him king in his father's stead.

31 ¶ Jehoahaz was twenty and three years

by that slaughter the angel had made of his army; and because the Medes and Babylonians had rebelled against the Assyrians. But why Josiah should go to help the Assyrians no account can be given. Our forementioned primate hath better expounded it, that as the king of Persia, having subdued Babylon and Assyria, is called the king of Assyria (Ezra vi. 22:) so here the king of Babylon, having subdued Assyria, is called the king of Assyria. Besides that, Babylon was anciently accounted a part of Assyria; and the land of the Chaldeans is said to be founded by the Assyrians (Chal. xxiii. 13.) And thus Josephus expressly saith (lib. x. Antiq. cap. 6.) Μήδους πολεμῶν καὶ τοῖς Βαβυλωνίους, ὃ τῆν Ἀσσυρίων κατέλασαν ἄρχη, "The king of Egypt came to fight the Medes and Babylonians, who had overturned the Assyrian empire."

To the river Euphrates:] To besiege Carchemish, which lay upon that river, as we read 2 Chron. xxxv. 20, which city was possessed by the Assyrians in the time of Sennacherib (Isa. x. 9), but their empire being overthrown, it returned under the power of the Babylonians.

And king Josiah went against him:] Being afraid he intended to invade his country in his passage; or to divert him from his expedition against the Babylonians, with whom he was in league. It is likely the latter was the reason; for the king of Egypt assured him he had no quarrel with him, and yet he would fight him (2 Chron. xxxv. 21, 22.)

And he slew him at Megiddo,] Gave him a mortal wound; of which he died, not till he came to Jerusalem (2 Chron. xxxv. 24.)

When he had seen him.] At the first brunt, as soon as they had joined battle (see xiv. 8.)

Ver. 30. *And his servants carried him in a chariot dead from Megiddo,*] Mortally wounded (as I said before), which befel him, the Jews think, because he did not ask counsel of the Lord, by the prophet Jeremiah.

Brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him] With such lamentations, as we nowhere read were made for any other king (2 Chron. xxxv. 25), which continued so long that it became a proverb (Zech. xii. 11).

Took Jehoahaz—and anointed him, and made him king] He is called Shallum, Jer. xxii. 11, and was younger than Jehoiakim, as appears by this, that he was but twenty-three years old when he began to reign, and reigned but three months: after which Jehoiakim, being made king, was twenty-five years old (ver. 31. 36.) But the people preferred Jehoahaz before him because, perhaps, he was the more warlike person. And they anointed him, as Abarbinel thinks, because, perhaps, he was not the first-born, and his title questionable. For they anointed persons only when there was a controversy about the succession. Ralbag, also, is of opinion, that the people by force made him a king against his will: which he will have

old when he began to reign; and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hanntal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

32 And he did *that which was evil* in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done.

33 And Pharaoh-nechoh put him in bands at Riblah, in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and put the land to a tribute of an hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold.

34 And Pharaoh-nechoh made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in the room of Josiah his father, and turned his name to Jehoiakim, and

to be the import of that phrase, "they took Jehoahaz," &c.

Ver. 31.] His father Josiah had four sons, and this was the youngest of them, as appears from 2 Chron. iii. 15, where he is called Shallum, as he is by the prophet Jeremiah. Which name our great primate thinks, seemed to the people to be of an ill omen (for Shallum king of Israel reigned but one month,) which made them change it into Jehoahaz; which proved not much more fortunate to him, for he reigned but three months, ad a. m. 3371.

Ver. 32. *He did that which was evil*] After the example of Ahaz, Manasseh, Amon, and such-like wicked kings; his mother, perhaps, having infused ill principles into him.

Ver. 33. *Pharaoh-nechoh put him in bands at Riblah*] When he returned from his expedition against the Babylonians, he deposed this prince, as an usurper; or hearing that he intended to be revenged of him for his father's death; or that he was of a turbulent spirit, and so put it out of his power to give him any disturbance.

Put the land to a tribute] In token of their subjection to him.

Ver. 34. *Pharaoh-nechoh made Eliakim—king*] For the eldest son Johanan, in all likelihood, was dead.

Turned his name to Jehoiakim.] As the manner of conquerors was, to change the names of those whom they had subdued, in token of their absolute power over them (see Dan. i. 7). And the forenamed primate thinks he gave him this name, that he might

took Jehoahaz away: and he came to Egypt, and died there.

35 And Jehoiakim gave the silver and the gold to Pharaoh; but he taxed the land to give the money according to the commandment of Pharaoh: he exacted the silver and the gold of the people of the land, of every one according to his taxation, to give it unto Pharaoh-nechoh.

36 ¶ Jehoiakim was twenty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Zebudah, the daughter of Pedaiah of Rumah.

37 And he did *that which was evil* in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done.

testify he ascribed his victory over the Babylonians to Jehovah, the God of Israel; who, he said, excited him to that expedition (2 Chron. xxxv. 21, 22).

And took Jehoahaz away: and he came to Egypt, and died there.] According to the prophecy of Jeremiah, whom God sent to call this new king and the people to repentance (xxi. 1—3), "Weep ye not for the dead (i. e. for Josiah), neither bemoan him, but weep sorely for him that goeth away (that is, for Shallum), for he shall return no more, nor see his native country, &c. but he shall die in the place whither they shall lead him captive," &c. (Jer. xxii. 10—12).

Ver. 35. *Jehoiakim—taxed the land*] For the treasures of the Lord's house, and of the king's, it seems were empty.

According to his taxation.] Proportionable to every man's estate.

Ver. 36.] In the very beginning of his reign Jeremiah was sent to him with a message from God, to bring him to repentance, Jer. xxvi. 1—3, xxvii. where he seems (ver. 12) to have told his brother Zedekiah that he should be king, if Jehoiakim was disobedient; and exhorts him not to be so.

Ver. 37.] See ver. 32. For he killed the prophet Urijah, and was at the charge to fetch him out of Egypt, whither he fled to save his life (Jer. xxvi. 20, 21, &c.). And if it had not been for Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, who had been a great man in his father Josiah's court, he had served Jeremiah in the same manner, ver. 21.

CHAPTER XXIV.

1 *Jehoiakim, first subdued by Nebuchadnezzar, then rebelling against him, procureth his own ruin.* 5 *Jehoiachin succeedeth him.* 7 *The king of Egypt is vanquished by the king of Babylon.* 8 *Jehoiachin's evil reign.* 10 *Jerusalem is taken and carried captive into Babylon.* 17 *Zedekiah is made king, and reigneth ill unto the utter destruction of Judah.*

I In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant

three years: then he turned and rebelled against him.

CHAP. XXIV.

Ver. 1. *In his days Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon came up.*] He is called by heathen writers, Naboccol-assar: and, as primate Usher thinks, Nebopolassar was his father. He begun his reign in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, as Jeremiah tells us (xxv. 1); when, having smote the army of Pharaoh-nechoh, at Carchemish, near Euphrates (Jer. xlvi. 2), he came up to make the Jews tributaries to him, as they had been to Pharaoh.

And Jehoiakim became his servant three years.] He omits his being bound in chains, and carried to Babylon, which was in the fifth year of king Nebuchadnezzar, and the eighth of Jehoiakim, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 6, where, having been kept awhile, and promising fidelity to Nebuchadnezzar, he restored him to his kingdom, in which he served him three years; and then in the ninth year rebelled against him, by the instigation, it is probable, of Pharaoh, who began to gather strength again. But this proved fatal to him, for Pharaoh was not able to help him (ver. 7).

2 And the Lord sent against him bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by his servants the prophets.

3 Surely at the commandment of the Lord came *this* upon Judah, to remove *them* out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did;

4 And also for the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; which the Lord would not pardon.

5 ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

6 So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead.

7 And the king of Egypt came not again any more out of his land: for the king of Babylon

had taken from the river of Egypt unto the river Euphrates, all that pertained to the king of Egypt.

8 ¶ Jehoiachin *was* eighteen years old when he began to reign; and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. And his mother's name *was* Ne-hushta, the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem.

9 And he did that *which was* evil in the sight of the Lord according to all that his father had done.

10 ¶ At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged.

11 And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, and his servants did besiege it.

12 And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers: and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign.

Ver. 2.] These were all subject to Nebuchadnezzar, whom he sent to chastise Jehoiakim, before he came himself, and besieged Jerusalem, and carried away part of the vessels of the house of the Lord, &c. For this was the third house mentioned by Daniel, after he was restored to his kingdom (Dan. i. 1, 2), when he, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, were carried captive to Babylon (ver. 6).

According to the word of the Lord, which he spake] By the prophet Isaiah, xx. 17, 18 of this book, and by Huldah, xxii. 16, and Jeremiah, in the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters.

Ver. 3.] By God's special order those people came up against Judah (therefore, in the verse before he is said to *send them*), because they were incurable. For Manasseh had so corrupted the whole body of the people, that Josiah's reformation could not recover them; but immediately upon his death, his son relapsed to the old idolatry.

Ver. 4.] See xxi. 16. Upon the repentance of Manasseh, and the reformation made by Josiah, God deferred their punishment; but he resolved not to grant them an absolute pardon of their iniquity; which provoked him to decree their extirpation.

Ver. 6. *Jehoiakim slept with his fathers:*] It appears by this, that to sleep with one's fathers, signifies no more than to die, as he did. For Jehoiakim was not buried with them, nor died in his bed; but being taken by the Chaldeans, he died as they led him out of Jerusalem, and, according to the prophecy of Jeremiah (xxii. 18, 19), they cast him out of the gates, and he had the burial of an ass; that is, lay upon the ground unburied. Abarbinel thinks he died in the way to Babylon; and his body was left in the highway, without any care taken to inter it; but it lay exposed to the sun by day, and to the frost by night (Jer. xxxvi. 30).

Jehoiachin his son reigned] Who is called also Jeconiah, 1 Chron. iii. 16, and more chiefly Choniah (by way of contempt, as some think), Jer. xxii. 24.

Ver. 7.] After the fight at Carchemish (which I mentioned, ver. 1). Nebuchadnezzar conquered all the places that the king of Egypt held, between that and the river of Egypt; concerning which, see my notes on Gen. xv. 13. So that he durst not stir out of the limits of his own country, which was bounded by that river, till the reign of Zedekiah, when the king of Egypt adventured to come up to help him, but in vain; for he was forced to return to his own land (Jer. xxxvii. 7, 8).

Ver. 8. *Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign.*] That is, when he began to reign alone after his father's death; but his father, when he was but eight years old, made him his associate in the kingdom (2 Chron. xxxvi. 9), that he might continue the kingdom in his family, and there might be no contention among his sons about it. Thus this account and that in the Chronicles are easily reconciled. When his father had reigned one year, he took him to reign with him; and so he came to reign ten years with his father, and three months alone. Now here Ezra mentions only the time he reigned alone, but there he speaks of all the years he reigned with his father and alone. Abarbinel gives another account of this difficulty, with which I shall not trouble the reader; it seeming to me a little more forced than this solution of it. And the plainest way is to acknowledge an error in the transcriber of the book of Chronicles.

And he reigned in Jerusalem three months. &c.] "And ten days," as it is explained, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 9, but such small numbers are wont to be omitted in greater sums (see 1 Kings xvi. 18).

Ver. 9. *He did that which was evil*] A wonderful thing, that he should not be moved to do better, by the sad example of his father, and his predecessor.

Ver. 10.] It is likely that Nebuchadnezzar heard he was entered into a confederacy with the king of Egypt, as his successor did; and therefore sent an army against him in the very beginning of his reign, to lay siege to Jerusalem, against which he intended to come himself. Some of the Jews say, that the counsellors of Nebuchadnezzar represented to him how unadvisedly he had acted in making him king, whose father had been in rebellion against him; using this proverb, "From an ill dog never comes a good whelp." Whereupon he resolved to depose him, and make Zedekiah king.

Ver. 11.] He first sent an army under his great commanders, and then came in person, and found they had obeyed his orders, and invested the city.

Ver. 12. *Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon.*] He made a surrender of the city into the hands of the king of Babylon; by the counsel of Jeremiah, perhaps, who advised the same to his successor more than once (Jer. xxi. 9. xxvii. 17. xxxviii. 2). And happy was it for him that he obeyed, and gave up himself to the king of Babylon; for God declared by the figure of good and bad figs, that he had sent them into the land of the Chaldeans

13 And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the Lord, as the Lord had said.

14 And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land.

15 And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officers, and the mighty of the land: *those*

for their good; whereas they that remained in the land should be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth, for their hurt (see Jer. xxiv. 5—8, &c.).

And the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign.] That is, in the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign; for he began to reign in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, who reigned seven more after that, which was the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar.

Ver. 13. *He carried out thence all the treasures*] There being no mention of the carrying away of the ark, either here, or in the book of the Chronicles, or in Jeremiah, among the holy things of the temple, it is probable that it was burnt, together with the temple, in the next reign, when the remaining holy things were carried away, but nothing said of this. For what the Jews say of its being hidden by the prophet Jeremiah in a certain cave in mount Nebo is a mere fable; there being no ark in the second temple, as they confess; which there might have been, if it had been only hidden till the temple was restored.

And cut in pieces all the vessels of gold] That is, all in a manner, but not absolutely all; for some were remaining, or else renewed again (which is not likely), xxvi. 14, 15. And by "cutting in pieces" must be meant no more than their being cut off from the temple; which was deprived of a principal part of its treasure; for these vessels were preserved entire, and not cut in pieces, as appears from Dan. v. 2.

As the Lord had said.] By the prophet Isaiah unto Hezekiah (xx. 17). As for the pillars, and the sea, and the bases, and the residue of the vessels that were not now taken away, they were only reserved till the next reign; when Jeremiah prophesied they should be carried away also (Jer. xxvii. 19—22).

Ver. 14. *And he carried away all Jerusalem.*] He explains what he means by the following words; which restrain it to the principal persons.

And all the princes, &c.] Among whom was Ezekiel; who began his prophecy from this captivity (Ezek. i. 2, 3), and calls it *our captivity* (xl. 1). Mordecai, of the tribe of Benjamin, was carried away at this time (Esther ii. 5—7), if we believe the Jews. By craftsmen, some understand carpenters; who were artificers, as the smiths were.

None remained, save the poorest.] Who were so numerous, that Zedekiah was tempted to rebel, and that against his oath of fidelity to the king of Babylon.

Ver. 15.] All that belonged to the court, or that were of any quality in the country (see Jer. xxiv. 1. xxix. 1, 2, Ezek. xvii. 12, 13).

Ver. 16.] This, and the foregoing verses, Abarbanel explains in this manner:—By the ten thousand mentioned ver. 14 are meant in general the whole number of Judah and Benjamin, that were now carried

carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon.

16 And all the men of might, *even* seven thousand, and craftsmen and smiths a thousand; all that were strong and apt for war, even them the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon.

17 ¶ And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah his father's brother king in his stead, and changed his name to Zedekiah.

18 Zedekiah was twenty and one years old when he began to reign; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah.

19 And he did that which was evil in the

captivity. Then here he comes to show how this number was made up (ver. 15, 16); Jehoiachin, and all his court and great men, were seven thousand, the craftsmen and smiths a thousand. The rest were not mighty men, nor such tradesmen, but ministers and servants of the court, and other considerable men in the country, who made up two thousand more, and completed the ten thousand. Jeremiah computes them to have been but a little above three thousand that were now carried away to Babylon; but he reckons only those that were carried from Jerusalem; whereas here is an account of those that were carried from other cities, and out of the tribe of Benjamin, which were seven thousand. There was another captivity before this, in the last year of king Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. i. 1—3), but then only a few select persons were carried away to wait upon the king of Babylon; and therefore are not mentioned, either by Jeremiah, or by this divine writer. But a very learned friend of mine (in his late Chronology of the Old Testament, p. 49), thinks that the first captivity was the greatest of all; those words (xxiv. 3), "This came upon Judah to remove them out of God's sight," implying (in his opinion) that not only some of the seed-royal, with some others, but the body of the people were led into captivity. And therefore he dates the seventy years' captivity from that time; viz. the fourth year of Jehoiakim, in the beginning of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar (see Jer. xxv. 1, 11, 12).

Ver. 17. *Changed his name to Zedekiah.*] Which signifies the justice of God; and seems to have been given him, to put him in mind of the just judgment of God, which would fall upon him, if he broke the oath of fidelity which he took to the king of Babylon (2 Chron. xxxvi. 13. Ezek. xvii. 13, 14, 18).

Ver. 18. *Zedekiah—reigned eleven years in Jerusalem, &c.*] In the end of which he was carried captive (Jer. i. 3).

Ver. 19.] Not regarding what Jeremiah said unto him, but shut him up in prison, &c. (Jer. xxxiii. 1, 2. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 12). And his servants, and the people of the land, were as bad as himself (Jer. xxxvii. 1, 2).

Ver. 20.] God was so highly displeased with this wicked people, that he permitted Zedekiah to break his faith with Nebuchadnezzar, and to rebel against him, forgetting for what cause he changed his name. Unto this revolt, it is probable, he was persuaded by the ambassadors which the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Zidon, sent unto him, to solicit him to throw off the yoke of the king of Babylon (Jer. xxvii. 2—4, &c.). Which was the greater crime, because he had made him swear by God he would be true to him (2 Chron. xxxvi. 13). The king of Egypt also, it is likely, promised him help, as I noted before (ver. 7. and see Ezek. xvii. 15). And Hananiah, a false prophet, assured him God would in two years'

sight of the Lord, according to all that Jehoiakim had done.

20 For through the anger of the Lord it came

time break the yoke of the king of Babylon, and bring back all the vessels of the house of God, with Jehoiachin and all the captives (see Jer. xxxviii. 1—4, &c.). Jeremiah, indeed, proved that he had made them trust in a lie, by predicting his death that very year, which accordingly fell out (ver. 15—17). But

to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, until he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

they still persisted in their vain hopes, there being other deceivers, that *prophesied falsely in God's name* (Jer. xxxix. 8, 9). And they most of all deceived themselves with proud conceits that they were the true seed of Abraham, who had a right to that land (Ezek. xxxiii. 24).

CHAPTER XXV.

1 Jerusalem is besieged. 4 Zedekiah taken, his sons slain, his eyes put out. 8 Nebuzar-adan defaceth the city, carrieth the remnant, except a few poor labourers, into captivity, 13 spoileth and carrieth away the treasures. 18 The nobles are slain at Riblah. 22 Gedaliah, who was set over them that remained, being slain, the rest flee into Egypt. 27 Evil-merodach advanceth Jehoiachin in his court.

1 AND it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he, and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it; and they built forts against it round about.

2 And the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah.

3 And on the ninth day of the fourth month the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land.

4 ¶ And the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled by night, by the way of the gate between two walls, which is by the king's garden: (now the Chaldees were against the city round about:) and the king went the way toward the plain.

5 And the army of the Chaldees pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho: and all his army were scattered from him. ¶

6 So they took the king, and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah; and they gave judgment upon him.

7 And they slew the sons of Zedekiah, before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him to Babylon.

8 ¶ And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which is the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzar-adan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, to Jerusalem:

9 And he burnt the house of the Lord, and

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Ver. 1.] See Jer. xxxix. 1. lii. 1.

Pitched against it;] Encamped themselves before it. *Built forts.*] On which to place their batteries, and keep any relief from coming to them.

Ver. 2. *The city was besieged.*] There was another siege began before this; viz. in the third year of Zedekiah; but during this second siege, the king of Egypt came to help Zedekiah: which made the Chaldeans raise the siege for a time (Jer. xxxvii. 12). And then Jeremiah endeavoured to get out of the city, but was hindered; and bade them not flatter themselves, for the Chaldeans should return and burn the city with fire; as he had told Zedekiah before (xxxiv. 1, 2, &c.)

Ver. 3. *There was no bread for the people of the land.*] Who had fled thither out of the country to secure themselves and their families. This famine is described as very terrible, in the book of the Lamentations of Jeremiah, iv. 10.

Ver. 4.] It is a hard matter to understand how they made their escape, since the Chaldeans had begirt the city round about; unless we suppose they kept strong guards only at the gates of the city; but the Chaldeans having made a breach in the wall, they got away privately between the wall and the outworks, in a passage which the Chaldeans did not suspect: and the king ran into the champaign country, with some of his forces attending him. The Jews think there were subterranean conduits from the royal garden into the plain, through which Zedekiah went out: but this is without any ground.

Ver. 5.] Every man shifting away, and endeavouring to save himself in such places as he could flee unto.

Ver. 6. *So they took the king—to the king of Babylon to Riblah;* Where he lay to attend the success of the siege, and to send them supplies, and intercept any relief that might come to them. A great council, I suppose, was called; who passed a solemn sentence upon him, in condemning him as a rebellious subject. This was fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah, that he should see the king of Babylon, and speak with him (Jer. xxxii. 4. xxxiv. 3).

Ver. 7. *Slew the sons of Zedekiah;* See Jer. lii. 11. *Put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with fetters of brass, and carried him to Babylon.*] Thus two famous prophecies were fulfilled, which seemed to contradict one the other (whereby Zedekiah, perhaps, was tempted not to believe them): one of Jeremiah, that he should be carried to Babylon (xxxii. 5. xxxiv. 3.) and the other of Ezekiel, that he should not see Babylon (xii. 13). The event made good both; for he was carried thither blind.

Ver. 8.] It is said in Jer. lii. 12 that he came on the tenth day of this month; that is, he came from Riblah upon the seventh, and arrived at Jerusalem on the tenth. Or, if he came to Jerusalem on the seventh he did not burn the temple till the tenth; but spent the eighth and ninth days, as the Jews say, in eating, drinking, and making merry. Nebuchadnezzar did not come himself to Jerusalem, but he sent this great man to execute his commands; who, the Jews say, became a proselyte.

Ver. 9. *He burnt the house of the Lord,*] After it had stood four hundred years, as Sir John Marsham

the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house burnt he with fire.

10 And all the army of the Chaldees, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about.

11 Now the rest of the people that were left in the city, and the fugitives that fell away to the king of Babylon, with the remnant of the multitude, did Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard carry away.

12 But the captain of the guard left of the poor of the land to be vinedressers and husbandmen.

13 And the pillars of brass that were in the house of the LORD, and the bases, and the brasen sea that was in the house of the LORD, did the Chaldees break in pieces, and carried the brass of them to Babylon.

14 And the pots, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass wherewith they ministered, took they away.

15 And the firepans, and the bowls, and such things as were of gold, in gold, and of silver, in silver, the captain of the guard took away.

16 The two pillars, one sea, and the bases, which Solomon had made for the house of the LORD; the brass of all these vessels was without weight.

17 The height of the one pillar was eighteen cubits, and the chapter upon it was brass: and the height of the chapter three cubits; and the wreathen work, and pomegranates upon the chapter round about, all of brass: and like unto these had the second pillar with wreathen work.

18 ¶ And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest, and the three keepers of the door:

19 And out of the city he took an officer that was set over the men of war, and five men of them that were in the king's presence, which were found in the city, and the principal scribe of the host, which mustered the people of the land, and threescore men of the people of the land that were found in the city:

20 And Nebuzar-adan, captain of the guard, took these, and brought them to the king of Babylon to Riblah:

computes it. But primate Usher makes account it was burnt four hundred and twenty-four years, three months, and eight days after it began first to be built by Solomon. But neither of these accounts is true, if we believe all the learned Jews (Kimchi, Rabbag, Abarinel, &c.) who agree that it stood four hundred and thirty years. Josephus stands amazed at this, that the second temple was burnt by the Romans, in this very month, and the same day of the month (lib. vi. De Bello Judaico, cap. 27). And so we read in Seder Olam Rabba, cap. 30, that the Levites were in their desks singing the very same song in both destructions, which was this: "He shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness; yea, the Lord our God shall cut them off." (Ps. xciv. 23).

And the king's house,—and every great man's house burnt he with fire.] By *col beth gadol*, which signify every great house, the Talmudists understand all the synagogues. But Kimchi, Rabbag, and Abarinel, interpret the words as we do. And so the Targum; yea, Jarchi himself, who is the most tenacious of the Talmudical interpreters, after he had said, "The houses of the synagogues, where the law and prayers were read," adds these words, "and the palaces of the princes;" not daring (as Vitringa observes) to vouch the former for a literal interpretation (lib. De Synag. par. ii. cap. 11).

Ver. 10.] That they who were left there might not be able to make any resistance hereafter; and that it might no longer be looked upon as a city, but as an open village.

Ver. 11.] That is all that escaped the sword and the famine; and all that fled to the king of Babylon, and put themselves under his protection. Who were in all eight hundred thirty and two persons; as we read in Jer. lii. 29, where he saith, in the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar (that is, in the end of it, and the beginning of his nineteenth year), he carried away this number.

Ver. 12.] What should move the Talmudists by the Hebrew word *ceremin* to understand gatherers of balsam; and by *jogebim fishers for purple*, is hard to understand (though Bochartus hath attempted some account of it); when Jeremiah tells us expressly that

he gave these poor people vineyards and fields; which shows what they were (Jer. xxxix. 10).

Ver. 13.] They were too cumbersome to be carried away whole, therefore he brake them in pieces, and so transported the brass of which they were made.

Ver. 14, 15.] He did not alter these, but carried them away as he found them; that he might give a punctual account of them to his master. And the singular providence of God herein appeared, that these vessels were not embezzled, nor employed to any common use, but put into the house of the king of Babylon's god, viz. Belus, where they were preserved to be restored, in God's appointed time, by Cyrus. So we read they were, Ezra i. 7, 8, &c.

Ver. 16. The brass of all these vessels was without weight.] So we read they were, when they were first made (I Kings vii. 47).

Ver. 17.] These two pillars are more fully described in I Kings vii. 15, &c. and in Jer. lii. 21, &c.

Ver. 18. Zephaniah the second priest,] Whom the Jews call the sagan; who was the deputy of the high-priest, in the case of sickness, or any incapacity to officiate.

Three keepers of the door:] Of the vessels of the temple, saith Kimchi; or the treasury.

Ver. 19. Out of the city he took an officer—and five men of them that were in the king's presence,] Who constantly attended the king's person wheresoever he was.

Which were found in the city,] Where at first they found but five of them: but afterward seven (Jer. lii. 26).

The principal scribe of the host,] The muster-master-general, as we speak, or some such great officer.

Threescore—people of the land,] These were some eminent persons who had concealed themselves in some private place; but, before Nebuzar-adan left Jerusalem, were discovered. And the Jews will have it that they were the men of the great Sanhedrim; whose whole number of seventy-one persons they make shift to find here; viz. the three keepers of the door, and the seven near attendants upon the king, and the scribe; which, with these threescore, make seventy-one (see Selden, lib. ii. De Synedriis, cap. 16. p. 671).

Ver. 20. Nebuzar-adan—took these,] That he

21 And the king of Babylon smote them, and slew them at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Judah was carried away out of their land.

22 ¶ And as for the people that remained in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left, even over them he made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, ruler.

23 And when all the captains of the armies, they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor, there came to Gedaliah to Mizpah, even Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan the son of Careah, and Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, and Jazaniah the son of a Maachathite, they and their men.

24 And Gedaliah sware to them, and to their men, and said unto them, Fear not to be the servants of the Chaldees: dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon: and it shall be well with you.

might dispose of them as he thought fit; they being not vulgar persons, like those whom he had ordered to be carried captive, or left in the land.

Ver. 21. *The king of Babylon smote them, and slew them*] Passed the sentence of death upon them; which was forthwith executed; because he looked upon them, it is likely, as the king's principal counsellors, who advised him to rebel against him. And the judgment of God, Strigelius here observes, was remarkable upon impious priests, whom he suffered not to live, because they had been great instruments in promoting idolatry.

So Judah was carried away out of their land.] Four hundred sixty and eight years after the beginning of the reign of David; three hundred eighty and eight years since the division of the ten tribes from Judah and Benjamin; and a hundred thirty-four years since the destruction of the ten tribes; as our primate of Ireland makes account.

Ver. 22.] See ver. 12.

He made Gedaliah—ruler.] His father Ahikam was a great friend of Jeremiah's (Jer. xxvi. 14) and therefore Gedaliah may be presumed to have been so likewise; and by his advice, it is likely, was one of those that went out to the king of Babylon (ver. 11).

Ver. 23. *And when all the captains of the armies, &c.*] That is, such as fled away from Zedekiah (ver. 5) and those that fled perhaps before the siege to the Moabites, and Ammonites, and Edomites, and other neighbouring countries (see Jer. xl. 7. 11. 12). He reckons up the principal persons that came in to him, with those under their command. Jeremiah also himself put himself under his protection (Jer. xl. 5, 6).

Ver. 24.] He was so well assured of the king of Babylon's favour to him that he secured them by an oath, they should be safe under his government; provided they would serve the king of Babylon, which it was their interest to do.

Ver. 25. *But it came to pass in the seventh month,*] After he had been governor about two months.

That Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the seed royal,] His pride (being of the seed-royal) tempted him to conspire against Gedaliah; though he had no power to maintain any authority in the country; but was forced presently to flee away. Nor was the king of Moab, who instigated him to this villany (Jer. xl. 14) able to support him.

Came, and ten men with him.] These ten men were commanders, no doubt, of some forces under them;

25 But it came to pass in the seventh month, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the seed royal, came, and ten men with him, and smote Gedaliah, that he died, and the Jews and the Chaldees that were with him at Mizpah.

26 And all the people, both small and great, and the captains of the armies, arose, and came to Egypt: for they were afraid of the Chaldees.

27 ¶ And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, that Evil-merodach king of Babylon in the year that he began to reign did lift up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah out of prison;

28 And he spake kindly to him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon;

29 And changed his prison garments: and he

for so few were not sufficient to make a slaughter of Gedaliah, and all the Jews and Chaldeans that were with him (see Jer. xli. 1—3).

And smote Gedaliah, that he died, &c.] This story is told more largely in the fortieth and forty-first of Jeremiah: where we read that Gedaliah was admonished of this intended conspiracy against him; but, like other good men, who are commonly void of suspicion, because they have no design to hurt others, he did not believe what was told him.

Ver. 26.] Contrary to the persuasion of Jeremiah (by whom they pretended they would be advised), who assured them that they should be safe if they would stay in the land of Judah, but should perish if they went into Egypt (see Jer. xlii. 9, 10, &c.). Thus this populous and fertile country was laid waste and desolate; part of the people being carried captive to Babylon, part of those that were left in the land being slain with Gedaliah, the remainder flying into Egypt. So that it was left to be overrun with briars and thorns, and to be inhabited by wild beasts. Only some of the neighbouring nations seem to have settled themselves in some parts of it (see Jer. xii. 14, Ezek. xxxix. 4, 5).

Ver. 27. *On the seven and twentieth day of the month,*] It was resolved on the twenty-fifth day of the month, and executed two days after. So this place is easily reconciled with Jer. lii. 35.

Evil-merodach—did lift up the head of Jehoiachin—out of prison:] Raised him from his dejected condition; for in affliction men hang down their heads. By this it appears that Nebuchadnezzar reigned five-and-forty years; for Jehoiachin was carried captive in the eighth year of his reign (xxiv. 12), and now had been prisoner thirty-seven years, when Nebuchadnezzar was newly dead. Which two sums put together make forty-five. This is the account of the Jews; but, according to the canon of Ptolemy, he reigned but three-and-forty years: and therefore primate Usher makes him to have reigned two years with his father.

Ver. 28.] He had the kings of several countries with him in Babylon, whom his father had taken captive, and made prisoners; unto whom he not only left the names and titles of kings, but now gave them some liberty, and bestowed a royal seat upon them. But he preferred Jehoiachin above them all; either because of the great fame of his royal ancestors David and Solomon, from whom he was descended; or, as the Jews say, because he had made a friendship in

did eat bread continually before him all the days of his life.

30 And his allowance *was* a continual allow-

prison with Evil-merodach, who was thrown into it by his father Nebuchadnezzar for his maladministration of the government, during the seven years that he was moped.

Ver. 29. *Changed his prison garments,*] Bestowed on him royal apparel; that he might be fit to keep him company.

He did eat bread continually before him] Was frequently invited to his own table, as Cræsus was to that of Cyrus. Victorinus Strigelius thinks it not unlikely that he had learned the doctrine of the true God from the prophet Daniel, as Nebuchadnezzar his father had done; who in a public edict professed as much: and upon this account he showed such great

ance given him of the king, a daily rate for every day, all the days of his life.

kindness to Jehoiachin. For which cause he got the name of Evil-merodach among impious princes; that is, *Foolish Merodach.*

Ver. 30.] The meaning may be, that when he did not eat with the king, he lived upon a pension, that was duly paid him every day for meat, drink, clothing, lodging, and other expenses. Or if the word *continually* (in the foregoing verse) be understood literally, that he always ate with the king: then this allowance was made for his family and attendants: as in the case of Mephibosheth (2 Sam. ix. 10). Jeremiah, in the conclusion of his book, gives the same account of the king's extraordinary kindness to him; which continued, he saith, to the day of his death.

THE

FIRST BOOK OF THE CHRONICLES.

It is the common opinion of the Jews that these books were written by Ezra: which is the more probable, because the book of Ezra begins with the same words, without the least variation, wherewith these books end: which argues one and the same person to have written both; who, to connect his history together, makes use of his own words, as Grotius observes other ancient authors have done. Howsoever, it appears from hence, that these books were written after the captivity, since they mention their restoration by Cyrus: and it is also evident from 2 Chron. xxxv. 25, that they were written after the time of the prophet Jeremiah.

Huetius, in his learned work, *Demonstratio Evangelica*, thus far agrees with this opinion of the Jews, that he thinks Ezra digested these books; and added to them the first six chapters of the book which bears his name, which afterward he continued: but Nehemiah, he thinks, had some hand in this work: which was gathered not only out of the public journals, but of the writings of the prophets, Shimeah, Iddo, Jehu, Nathan, Abijah, Isaiah, and others; and, it is likely, out of some genealogies (R. Solomon saith, upon the seventh chapter, that after their return he found three), and out of the other books of Holy Scripture before published, as Kimchi adds: and thus Procopius Gazæus, *Hæc ex multis prophetarum scriptis collegit*; "he gathered these out of many writings of the prophets."

That which confirms this opinion, is what we read in the second book, ch. v. 9, where it is said of the ark and its staves, which Solomon brought into his temple, *there they are to this day*. Which words are so far (as Huetius observes) from proving that these books were written before the captivity (after which the ark was no more heard of), that Ezra took this passage, and that in 1 Kings viii. 8, where are almost the same words, out of some other ancient book, and set them down word for word as he found them there. For having written the books of the Kings in the time of the captivity, he found at their return more ancient registers, containing larger accounts of several transactions; which he thought good to add to what he had before written, to make the history more complete: which Dr. Alix (in his *Reflections upon the Books of the Old Testament*, vol. ii. ch. 1.) thinks was done about six and twenty years after the writing of the books of the Kings, in the eighteenth year after the captivity was ended.

This seems to be implied in the Hebrew title of these books, which is *Dibre hajamim*, signifying they contain such things as were contained in the *diaries* or *day-books*, wherein the passages of those times were recorded, if any thing memorable happened, every day. The word *jamim* also signifying *years*, these books may be called *Annals*: which the Greeks call *Παραλειπόμενα*: as much as to say, those things are here supplied which were omitted in other books of Holy Scripture, especially in the books of the Kings, as other things are here amplified and enlarged; others explained and made more clear. For instance, in the conclusion of this first book, he gives an account of the things which David did in his old age: in ordering the courses of the priests, and of the Levites, the singers, and musicians; and in making vast preparations for the building of the temple by his son; none of which had been mentioned in the foregoing books. Thus Xenophon (Strigelius observes) wrote *Paralipomena* of the Peloponnesian war, which had been written before by Thucydides.

He begins these books with a genealogy from the beginning of the world to his own time, which had not been done in any book of Scripture before: but was necessary to be done now, that a distinction between their tribes and families being preserved (which was in danger to be lost by their dispersion in the captivity), it might clearly appear, the Messiah sprung out of that tribe and family, from which he was to descend, according to the ancient prophecies. For, as Procopius Gazæus observes, from these books it is that we learn, among other things, that Nathan, from whom St. Luke derives the genealogy of our Saviour, was the brother of Solomon by David and Bath-sheba.

To conclude this preface, it may be noted, that no book in the world shows the original propagation of mankind, but only the Holy Scriptures. They who were ignorant of them, having nothing of true antiquity, devised senseless fables of their descent, they knew not how, nor from whom. The Areadians fancied that they were before the moon; the people of Thessaly, that they sprung from stones. The Athenians took themselves to be ἀνθρώποις, who sprung up out of the ground; and affirmed, they were more ancient than Japetus, who in truth, was the father of the Greeks; Javan, from whom came the Iones, being the son of Japheth, as these holy books show. See upon 2 Chron. xxix. 21. a little additional proof that these books were written by Ezra.

CHAPTER I.

1 *Adam's line to Noah.* 5 *The sons of Japheth.* 8 *The sons of Ham.* 17 *The sons of Shem.* 24 *Shem's line to Abraham.* 29 *Ishmael's sons.* 32 *The sons of Keturah.* 34 *The posterity of Abraham by Esau.* 43 *The kings of Edom.* 51 *The dukes of Edom.*

1 ADAM, Sheth, Enosh,

2 Kenan, Mahalaleel, Jered,

3 Henoch, Methuselah, Lamech,

4 Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

5 ¶ The sons of Japheth; Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras.

6 And the sons of Gomer; Ashchenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah.

7 And the sons of Javan; Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodaniam.

8 ¶ The sons of Ham; Cush, and Mizraim, Put, and Canaan.

9 And the sons of Cush; Seba, and Havilah, and Sabta, and Raamah, and Sabtecha. And the sons of Raamah; Sheba, and Dedan.

10 And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be mighty upon the earth.

11 And Mizraim begat Ludim, and Ananim, and Lehabim, and Naphtuhim,

12 And Pathrusim, and Casluhim, (of whom came the Philistines,) and Caphthorim.

CHAP. I.

Ver. 1. *Adam, Sheth, Enosh.*] He mentions only their names briefly: but the meaning is, that Adam begat Sheth, and Sheth begat Enosh: and so the rest are to be understood. Adam, indeed, had two sons, before he begat Sheth: but one of them was murdered without issue, and the other was accursed; so that all who descended from him perished in the flood; therefore these only that came from Sheth are remembered.

This may seem to be sufficiently recorded, as much of that which follows is, in the book of Genesis: so that there was no need, some may imagine, to repeat it here: but there being a genealogy to be drawn of the several families of the Jews, it was fit to begin it with an account of the honour they had to be the select people of God, whose original and descent was manifest and plain from the very first man, who was the son of God. This was the peculiar glory of the Jewish nation, that they alone were able to derive their pedigree from the first man that God created; of which no other nation could boast, or make a shadow of pretence. Besides, by the recital of this, the divine writer of this book designed to keep up the belief that the world was not eternal, but had a beginning as is recorded in the book of Genesis.

Ver. 2. *Kenan.*] We translate it Cainan, Gen. v. 9. *Mahalaleel, Jered.*] See Gen. xii. 15.

Ver. 3.] See concerning these, Gen. v. 18. 21. 25.

Ver. 4.] These were the three sons of Noah: among whom Japheth was the eldest (Gen. x. 21);

and therefore his genealogy is first mentioned. But Shem being the person in whose posterity true religion was preserved, and from whom the promised seed was to come, is first named both here and in Gen. v. 31. x. 1.

Ver. 5.] Thus they were reckoned up in the same order, Gen. x. 2, where see concerning them.

Ver. 6.] The same account we have in Gen. x. 3.

Ver. 7.] The same we read, Gen. x. 4. And neither there nor here is any mention of the rest of Japheth's posterity, but only of Gomer and Javan (see Gen. x. 5, in the latter end of my annotations on that verse).

Ver. 8.] In this place, and in this order, they are mentioned in Gen. x. 6. And the reason, I suppose, why his genealogy is mentioned before Shem's, is, because from Shem the genealogy of Abraham and the Jewish nation was to be derived: which it was thought fit to set down without any interruption.

Ver. 9.] See Gen. x. 7, where an account is given of the sons of Cush, and of his two grandsons by one of them.

Ver. 10. *Cush begat Nimrod.*] He mentions him alone by himself, because he was the most eminent among all his sons (see upon Gen. x. 8, where I have given an account of the next words).

He began to be mighty upon the earth.] That is, was the first that raised a great kingdom.

Ver. 11.] The very same account we have in Gen. x. 13, where I have shown in what parts of the world their posterity settled.

Ver. 12. *Pathrusim, and Casluhim.*] See Gen. x. . .

13 And Canaan begat Zidon his firstborn, and Heth,

14 The Jebusite also, and the Amorite, and the Girgashite,

15 And the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite,

16 And the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite.

17 ¶ The sons of Shem; Elam, and Asshur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram, and Uz, and Hul, and Gethar, and Meshech.

18 And Arphaxad begat Shelah, and Shelah begat Eber.

19 And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of the one was Peleg; because in his days the earth was divided; and his brother's name was Joktan.

20 And Joktan begat Almodad, and Sheleph, and Hazarmaveth, and Jerah,

21 Hadoram also, and Uzal, and Diklah,

[Of whom came the Philistines,] Who were a colony from the Casluhim.

And Caphthorim.] See Gen. x. 14.

Ver. 13. *Canaan begat Zidon*] See Gen. x. 15.

Ver. 16.] In this very order they are set down by Moses, in Gen. x. 16—18 (see what I have noted there).

Ver. 17. *The sons of Shem; Elam, &c.*] Thus they are set down in Gen. x. 22, and Arphaxad is mentioned after Elam and Asshur, just as Aaron is after Moses in Exod. vi. 27, though he was the elder brother. For, as the Jews often note, the Scripture doth not strictly observe the order of time.

Uz, and Hul, and Gether, and Meshech.] These were not the sons of Shem, but his grandsons by Aram his youngest son: as appears from Gen. x. 22. But nothing is more usual in Scripture, than to call grandsons by the name of sons. As Laban is called the son of Nahor, Gen. xxix. 5, being his grandchild by Bethel. And Mephibosheth is called the son of Saul, 2 Sam. xix. 24, because he was descended from him by his son Jonathan. Meshech had two names; for he is called Mash, Gen. x. 23, and possessed the mountain of Masius in Mesopotamia; as Bochart thinks in his Phaleg. lib. ii. cap. 11. Though Mash may very well be thought not to be another name, but only the contraction of Meshech: who some think was the father of the Cappadocians.

Ver. 18.] He follows Moses exactly; who gives no account of the posterity of the two sons of Shem first mentioned, but only of the third, Arphaxad: that he might the sooner come to him from whom the Israelites descended. Here the LXX. interpose Cainan between Arphaxad and Shelah: but it is not in the Greek Muscovite translation; as is observed by primate Usher, in his Letters, ccxvi. (and see Bochart, in his Phaleg. lib. ii. cap. 13).

Ver. 19. *Unto Eber were born two sons:*] Gen. x. 25.

Peleg; because in his days the earth was divided:] That is, the inhabitants of the earth were divided, and dispersed; according to the division of their languages (see my annotations there).

His brother's name was Joktan.] Who had a more numerous issue than any hitherto mentioned.

Ver. 20.] See concerning these, Gen. x. 26.

Ver. 21.] See Gen. x. 27.

Ver. 22.] See Gen. x. 28, where the first of these is called Obal: from whence some have argued, that the name in this place is corrupted. As if, in process

22 And Ebal, and Abimael, and Sheba,
23 And Ophir, and Havilah, and Jobab. All these were the sons of Joktan.

24 ¶ Shem, Arphaxad, Shelah,

25 Eber, Peleg, Ren,

26 Serug, Nahor, Terah,

27 Abram; the same is Abraham.

28 The sons of Abraham; Isaac, and Ishmael.

29 ¶ These are their generations: The first-born of Ishmael, Nebaioth; then Kedar, and Ad-beel, and Mibsam,

30 Mishma, and Dumah, Massa, Hadad, and Tema,

31 Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. These are the sons of Ishmael.

32 ¶ Now the sons of Keturah, Abraham's concubine: she bare Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah. And the sons of Jokshan; Sheba, and Dedan.

33 And the sons of Midian; Ephah, and

of time, there might not be a variation in the vowel: Moses pronouncing the name as they spake it in his time, and this author as they spake in his.

Ver. 23.] Who were thirteen in all: and all but one settled their habitation in Arabia (see Gen. x. 29).

Ver. 24.] These are repeated from ver. 17, 18, to show how Abraham was descended from Shem: who was the most eminent of all Noah's sons; whom he solemnly blessed: the Messiah being to spring from him (Gen. ix. 36). For from Adam the promise of the Messiah was translated to Seth; and from Seth to Shem; from Shem to Eber; from whom the Hebrew nation, some think, derived their name; and had this precious promise committed to their trust, above all other nations in the world.

Ver. 26.] This genealogy from Eber, is recorded by Moses in Gen. xi. 16—18, &c.

Ver. 27.] God changed his name from Abram to Abraham, when he established his covenant with him (Gen. xvii. 5, &c.), and made him the father of many nations.

Ver. 28.] Isaac is first mentioned, being the son of a free-woman, and the heir of the promise: though Ishmael was elder than he, but born of a bond-woman.

Ver. 29. *The firstborn of Ishmael, Nebaioth:*] To show how God made Abraham the father of many nations, he reckons up twelve great persons descended from his son Ishmael; the first of which was Nebaioth: concerning whom, and the rest that follow, see Gen. xxv. 13, 14, &c.

Then Kedar:] I shall only observe here, that as from Nebaioth came the people called Nebatæi; so from Kedar came the Cedreni, whom geographers call Cedrei, and Cedranita, as Bochart observes.

Ver. 30, 31.] In what country they dwelt, see Gen. xxv. 18.

Ver. 32. *Now the sons of Keturah, Abraham's concubine:*] After the death of Sarah, Abraham married Keturah: and having many children by her, this holy writer names them, to show how faithfully God made good the name he gave him, by making Abraham the father of many more nations.

She bare Zimran, &c.] See Gen. xxv. 2.

The sons of Jokshan; Sheba, and Dedan. There were four Shebas, as I there observed; and one more of the name of Dedan: and this man's sons are there mentioned, though here omitted.

Ver. 33. *The sons of Midian; Ephah, and Epher:*] See Gen. xxv. 4. The first of these, as Bochart thinks, was the same with the Greek Hippos, a mountain and

Epher, and Henoah, and Abidah, and Eldaah. All these are the sons of Keturah.

34 And Abraham begat Isaac. The sons of Isaac; Esau and Israel.

35 ¶ The sons of Esau; Eliphaz, Reuel, and Jeush, and Jaalam, and Korah.

36 The sons of Eliphaz; Teman, and Omar, Zephi, and Gatam, Kenaz, and Timna, and Amalek.

37 The sons of Reuel; Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah.

38 And the sons of Seir; Lotan, and Shobal, and Zibeon, and Anah, and Dishon, and Ezar, and Dishan.

39 And the sons of Lotan; Hori, and Homam; and Timna was Lotan's sister.

40 The sons of Shobal; Alian, and Manahath, and Ebal, Shephi, and Onam. And the sons of Zibeon; Aiah, and Anah.

41 The sons of Anah; Dishon. And the sons of Dishon; Amram, and Eshban, and Ithran, and Cheran.

42 The sons of Ezer; Bilhan, and Zavan, and Jakan. The sons of Dishan; Uz, and Aran.

43 ¶ Now these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the children of Israel; Bela the son of Beor; and the name of his city was Dinhabah.

44 And when Bela was dead, Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his stead.

45 And when Jobab was dead, Husham of the land of the Temanites reigned in his stead.

46 And when Husham was dead, Hadad the son of Bedad, which smote Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his stead: and the name of his city was Avith.

47 And when Hadad was dead, Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his stead.

48 And when Samlah was dead, Shaul of Rehoboth by the river reigned in his stead.

49 And when Shaul was dead, Baal-hanan the son of Achbor reigned in his stead.

50 And when Baal-hanan was dead, Hadad reigned in his stead: and the name of his city was Pai; and his wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab.

51 ¶ Hadad died also. And the dukes of Edom were; duke Timnah, duke Aiah, duke Jetheth,

a village of which name Ptolemy describes on the same shore, a little below Madian, which he calls Modiana, in his Hieroz. par. i. lib. ii. cap. 3.

These are the sons of Keturah.] Her sons or grandsons.

Ver. 35.] These were by several wives, as we read Gen. xxxvi. 10. 14.

Ver. 36.] It is plain from Gen. xxxvi. 12, that Timnah was not one of his sons, but his concubine; by whom he begat Amalek. This, therefore, is a short form of speech, as much as if he had said, "Of Timnah Amalek." Who was not equal to the rest of his sons, and therefore he mentions his mother's name. Kimchi hath expressed this so well, that it may be for the reader's use to transcribe some of his words: which may serve for a rule in such-like cases. "In my judgment (saith he) the scripture uses here a concise and compendious way of speaking: for there was no need that Ezra should recount all these things exactly and accurately, which had been done before in the law (he means in the book of Genesis), therefore he describes these genealogies briefly." Thus he doth in the seventeenth verse of this chapter, mentioning Uz and Hul after Aram: who were not his sons but his grandsons. R. Solomon hath the same observation (see Buxtorf's Anticritica, par. ii. cap. 2).

Ver. 37.] Who are called dukes, as the sons of Eliphaz also are (see Gen. xxxvi. 15. 17), that is, rulers or governors of the country, but not with kingly authority.

Ver. 38.] This Seir was not Esau, nor of his posterity, but the ancient lord of this country, from whom it had its name (see Gen. xxxvi. 20), whose genealogy is here set down, that it may be understood from whom Timnah and Amalek sprung.

Ver. 39.] This woman was Eliphaz's concubine, and bare him Amalek (ver. 36), who, by his mother's side, was Seir's grandson.

Ver. 40. The sons of Shobal:] See Gen. xxxvi. 23.

Aiah, and Anah.] The latter of which was a person of great note (see Gen. xxxvi. 24).

Ver. 41.] The first-born of these was otherwise called Hemdan, Gen. xxxvi. 26, which was the name,

it is possible, whereby he was known among Esau's posterity: though anciently his name was Amram.

Ver. 42.] Among all these persons descended from Seir, seven of them were dukes: who reigned perhaps at the same time in several parts of the country (Gen. xxxvi. 29, 30). By which it appears, that this was the ancient form of government before Esau conquered this country: which his posterity at the first followed, but afterward was changed into kingly, as it here follows.

Ver. 43. Now these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom] See this explained in Gen. xxxvi. 31.

Bela the son of Beor:] This Beor was not Balaam's father, for he was a Mesopotamian, not an Edomite; but one of the same name, as Aben Ezra well observes.

Dinhabah.] Of which he was governor, perhaps, before he was made king: and therefore therein he reigned, and made it the seat of his kingdom.

Ver. 44.] See concerning this succession, Gen. xxxvi. 33. Bozrah, was a city in Edom, as three prophets plainly describe it (Isa. xxxiv. 6. Jer. xlix. 13. Amos i. 12). And one of these represents it also as a city of Moab: because, as some think, it was in the confines of both countries: or, rather, in the opinion of Bochartus, there were two Bozrahs; the one in Idumea, the other in Moab.

Ver. 45.] We know nothing of Husham; but he seems not to have been the son of Jobab, but one of another family, in another part of the country. Some take this Jobab to have been Job: which opinion is exploded by Aben Ezra.

Ver. 46.] See Gen. xxxvi. 35, where R. Solomon saith, the Midianites making war against the Moabites, this king of Edom came to help the Moabites.

Ver. 48.] See Gen. xxxvi. 37.

Ver. 50. Hadad (or Hadar) reigned] See Gen. xxxvi. 39.

Mezahab.] Some of the Jews fancy this Mezahab to have been a very ingenious woman, being the first that found out the art of drawing gold out into wires or threads: for zahab signifies gold in Hebrew. But the LXX. take this for the name of a man, and translate it *ὁ υἱὸς Μαζαβῶβ*.

Ver. 54. After the death of Hadad, the form of go-

52 Duke Aholibamah, duke Elah, duke Pinon,
53 Duke Kenaz, duke Teman, duke Mibzar,

54 Duke Magdiel, duke Iram. *These are the dukes of Edom.*

vernment was altered again: for there were no more kings for a long time; but they returned to the first constitution, which they found, when they conquered the country; which was governed by dukes (see Gen. xxxvi. 40). And thus it was in Israel, after they came into the land of Canaan. They were first governed by judges, who had not kingly power. After which, from the time of Saul, they were governed by kings till their captivity. At their return, they had no more kings, but only such governors as Zerubbabel was. Some have imagined that Esau was the

first king of this country: but in all likelihood, if he was, he would have left his son Eliphaz in the same authority; who was but a duke (Gen. xxxvi. 15, 16). Therefore Esau contented himself with that form of government which he found among the Horites: which continued till Bela made himself king (ver. 43). The difference between their kings and dukes was, (as Esthius observes), that the former ruled absolutely, according to their pleasure; the power of the other was limited and bounded by certain prescribed laws.

CHAPTER II.

1 *The sons of Israel.* 3 *The posterity of Judah by Tamar.* 13 *The children of Jesse.* 18 *The posterity of Caleb the son of Hezron.* 21 *Hezron's posterity by the daughter of Machir.* 25 *Jerahmeel's posterity.* 34 *Sheshan's posterity.* 42 *Another branch of Caleb's posterity.* 50 *The posterity of Caleb the son of Hur.*

1 *THESE are the sons of Israel; Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun,*
2 *Dan, Joseph, and Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.*

3 ¶ *The sons of Judah; Er, and Onan, and Shelah: which three were born unto him of the daughter of Shua the Canaanitess. And Er, the firstborn of Judah, was evil in the sight of the LORD; and he slew him.*

4 *And Tamar his daughter in law bare him Pharez and Zerah. All the sons of Judah were five.*

5 *The sons of Pharez; Hezron, and Hamul.*

6 *And the sons of Zerah; Zimri, and Ethan, and Heman, and Calcol, and Dara: five of them in all.*

7 *And the sons of Carmi; Achar, the troubler of Israel, who transgressed in the thing accursed.*

8 *And the sons of Ethan; Azariah.*

9 *The sons also of Hezron, that were born unto him; Jerahmeel, and Ram, and Chelubai.*

10 *And Ram begat Amminadab; and Am-*

CHAP. II.

Ver. 1, 2.] He reckons up his first four sons in the order wherein they were born (Gen. xxix. 32, &c.) and next to them their two brethren by the same mother, Leah (Gen. xxx. 18, 20). Afterward, I can give no reason why Dan and Naphtali (the two sons of Bilhah) are not mentioned together, and Joseph and Benjamin, the two sons of Rachel, and Gad and Asher, the two sons of Zilpah.

Ver. 3. *The sons of Judah;* There is a plain reason why the genealogy of Judah is set down in the first place; because this tribe had obtained a superiority and pre-eminence among the rest, before the time of David; ever since the prophecy of Jacob, in the blessing he pronounced upon him (Gen. xlix. 10). For Judah, when they came into the wilderness, was ordered to march first (Num. ii. 3); and accordingly we find they did, when they removed from mount Sinai (Num. x. 14). And when the princes of the tribes offered at the dedication of the altar, the prince of the tribe of Judah offered on the first day (Num. vii. 12). When they came into Canaan, they obtained of Joshua a portion for Caleb without casting of any lot, as there was in the dividing of the land (Josh. xiv. 6). And when Joshua was dead, they were appointed by God to go up first against the Canaanites, to take from them what remained unconquered (Judg. i. 2). From David's time every one knows till the captivity of Babylon, a kingly power continued in this tribe: and Zerubbabel was of the same, who was their leader when they returned to their own land.

Which—were born unto him of the daughter of Shua] See an account of this in Gen. xxxviii. 2.

Er, the firstborn of Judah, was evil in the sight of the Lord; and he slew him.] See ver. 7 of the same chapter. His second son also, though he be not

represented under so bad a character, yet displeased God so much, that he slew him also (ver. 9, 10).

Ver. 4.] See there, ver. 29. 50.

Ver. 5.] Who were born unto him before they went into Egypt (Gen. xli. 12).

Ver. 6.] These were born after they came into Egypt; for there is no mention of them in the book of Genesis. And the Jews in Seder Olam Rabba, and in Jalkut, say, these men professed when they were in Egypt: for they suppose them to be the same with those mentioned 1 Kings iv. 31. If they were then Zerah had two names, and was also called Mahol: but there is a great reason to think they were not the same, as I have shown in my annotations there.

Ver. 7. *Carmi;*] This man was the son of Zimri: who in Josh. vii. 18 is called Zabdi; for by length of time his name might easily be thus altered. And, indeed, in copying proper names, one might easily mistake.

Achar the troubler of Israel,] He who is there called Achan, is here elegantly called *Achar*; which signifies *troubler*: because he had brought Israel into great danger, by the sin he committed in the accursed thing. The remembrance of this some thought fit he should carry in his name: which in process of time was changed, by common use and custom, from Achan into Achar. Which is more likely, than that there should be an error here in the transcriber (see Borchart, in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 31).

Ver. 8.] Here is but one son mentioned: but it is usual in scripture to speak of a singular person in the plural number (Gen. xli. 23) to include all his descendants.

Ver. 9. *Ram,*] This Ram is mentioned in the genealogy of our Saviour (Matt. i. 3, 4.) and called Aram.

minadab begat Nahshon, prince of the children of Judah;

11 And Nahshon begat Salma, and Salma begat Boaz,

12 And Boaz begat Obed, and Obed begat Jesse,

13 ¶ And Jesse begat his firstborn Eliab, and Abinadab the second, and Shimma the third,

14 Nathaneel the fourth, Raddai the fifth,

15 Ozem the sixth, David the seventh:

16 Whose sisters were Zeruiah, and Abigail. And the sons of Zeruiah; Abishai, and Joab, and Asahel, three.

17 And Abigail bare Amasa: and the father of Amasa was Jether the Ishmeelite.

18 ¶ And Caleb the son of Hezron begat children of Azubah his wife, and of Jerioth: her sons are these; Jeshur, and Shobab, and Ardon.

19 And when Azubah was dead, Caleb took unto him Ephrath, which bare him Hur.

20 And Hur begat Uri, and Uri begat Bezaleel.

Ver. 10.] When they came out of Egypt, and pitched under their several standards (Numb. ii. 3).

Ver. 11, 12.] These three are the principal persons in all this genealogy, as Pellicanus observes; being put into the genealogy of our Saviour, who was descended from David by these three great ancestors.

Ver. 13—15.] It is manifest from 1 Sam. xvi. 10, 11, that Jesse had eight sons: but some think one of them was only an adopted son, and therefore not here mentioned: and they gather from 2 Sam. xxi. 2, that his name was Jonathan, by a mistake; for that Jonathan was David's nephew by his brother Shamma. The truest account therefore is, that one of Jesse's sons was dead, before David came to the kingdom. So Rasi.

Ver. 16. Whose sisters were Zeruiah, and Abigail.] Who were the sisters of David last mentioned.

The sons of Zeruiah; Abishai, and Joab, and Asahel.] Who were all eminent commanders under David.

Ver. 17. Abigail bare Amasa:] Another valiant man, who was murdered by Joab.

The father of Amasa was Jether the Ishmeelite.] He was an Ishmeelite by birth, but by religion an Israelite: or, as others will have it, he was born an Israelite, but bred so long among the Ishmeelites, that many called him by that name (see 2 Sam. xvii. 25). The father of Abishai, Joab, and Asahel, is nowhere mentioned; being not eminent, it seems, as this Jether was; but their glory was by their mother's side.

Ver. 18. Caleb the son of Hezron begat children.] It is plain this is not Caleb, whom Moses sent to search out the land of Canaan; for he was the son of Jephunneh, of whom he gives an account below (iv. 15). This man is called Chelubai, ver. 9 of this chapter.

Of Azubah his wife.] It is an ungrounded fancy of the Talmudists, in Sota, who say she was called Azubah (which signifies forsaken) because Caleb married her for the love of God when nobody would have her.

Of Jerioth:] This is understood by Conradus Pellicanus, as if he had said, that "of his wife Azubah he begat Jerioth:" for there is nothing in the Hebrew that answers to the word children.

Her sons are these:] That is, these were the sons of Jerioth.

Ver. 19.] This was a very continent man, who had but one wife at a time; and loved Azubah so well, that he married no other while she lived. His second wife also was of such note, that she gave name to a place in the country of Judah (ver. 24).

21 ¶ And afterward Hezron went in to the daughter of Machir the father of Gilead, whom he married when he was threescore years old; and she bare him Segub.

22 And Segub begat Jair, who had three and twenty cities in the land of Gilead.

23 And he took Geshur, and Aram, with the towns of Jair, from them, with Kenath, and the towns thereof, even threescore cities. All these belonged to the sons of Machir the father of Gilead.

24 And after that Hezron was dead in Caleb-ephratah, then Abiah, Hezron's wife, bare him Ashur, the father of Tekoa.

25 ¶ And the sons of Jerahmeel the firstborn of Hezron were, Ram the firstborn, and Bunah, and Oren, and Ozem, and Ahijah.

26 Jerahmeel had also another wife, whose name was Atarah; she was the mother of Onam.

27 And the sons of Ram the firstborn of Jerahmeel, were, Maaz, and Jamin, and Eker.

Ver. 21. Afterward Hezron went in to the daughter of Machir] After the death of Ephrath, I suppose, he married another woman of an eminent family.

The father of Gilead.] The prince of the country of Gilead; as the word father often signifies.

Ver. 22. Segub begat Jair,] Who is called the son of Manasseh in Numb. xxxii. 41, because his grandmother was of that tribe, the daughter of Machir, the son of Manasseh (Numb. xx. 29.)

Who had three and twenty cities in the land of Gilead.] In the right of his wife, as the common opinion of the Jewish doctors is: who observe in scripture two instances of husbands that inherited the estate of their wives, though in another tribe. The first is in Josh. xxiv. 33, and the other in this place; where Kimchi notes that this Jair, "the son of Segub, took a wife in the land of Gilead, unto whom he succeeded as her heir in her possessions, when she was dead: these twenty-three cities being her inheritance" (see Selden, De Successionibus ad Leges Hebr. cap. 18).

Ver. 23. He took Geshur, and Aram, with the towns of Jair.] They were afterwards called by his name, who conquered them, and took them from the neighbouring Geshurites and Syrians.

With Kenath, and the towns thereof,] the metropolis of which was Kenath: in the taking of which he employed a great commander, called Nobah, Num. xxxii. 42, who, I suppose, was of the same tribe and family.

All these belonged to the sons of Machir] His posterity possessed these towns.

Ver. 24. Caleb-ephratah,] This city was called after the name of both husband and wife (ver. 19), they being both famous persons. And it was also called Beth-lehem, from the fruitfulness of the place.

Abiah, Hezron's wife, bare him Ashur] He married her when he was very old (for he was threescore when he took his former wife, ver. 21) and he died before the child was born, whom he begat of her. The Jews look upon his marrying when he was so old, as proceeding from a great desire of posterity in the family of Pharez, from whom the Messiah was to descend. The same we see in Boaz, who married Ruth when he was old.

The father of Tekoa.] Who gave name to a famous town in this country (2 Sam. xiv. 2. Jer. iii. 6).

Ver. 26.] There being (according to our translation of the foregoing verse) mention of his former wife, it seems not to be unreasonable to take Ahijah to have

28 And the sons of Onam were, Shammai, and Jada. And the sons of Shammai; Nadab, and Abishur.

29 And the name of the wife of Abishur was Abihail, and she bare him Ahban, and Molid.

30 And the sons of Nadab; Seled, and Appaim: but Seled died without children.

31 And the sons of Appaim; Ishi. And the sons of Ishi; Sheshan. And the children of Sheshan; Ahlai.

32 And the sons of Jada, the brother of Shammai; Jether, and Jonathan: and Jether died without children.

33 And the sons of Jonathan; Peleth, and Zaza. These were the sons of Jerahmeel.

34 ¶ Now Sheshan had no sons, but daughters. And Sheshan had a servant, an Egyptian, whose name was Jarha.

35 And Sheshan gave his daughter to Jarha his servant to wife; and she bare him Attai.

36 And Attai begat Nathan, and Nathan begat Zabad,

37 And Zabad begat Ephlal, and Ephlal begat Obed,

38 And Obed begat Jehu, and Jehu begat Azariah,

been the mother of Ram, and the rest which he had by Ahijah. So the words may be understood, supposing the particle *mem* to be wanting before Ahijah.

Ver. 28.] He sets not down the names of the children of Jerahmeel's eldest son, by his first wife; but of both those he had by his second. The rest, perhaps, had no children, as is noted afterward of one of his grandsons, ver. 30.

Ver. 29.] This, though the second son, it seems married first; and therefore his children are mentioned before the other.

Ver. 31. *The sons of Appaim; Ishi.*] The plural number is often used when one son or daughter only is spoken of (as I observed ver. 8) for in that one all the posterity are comprehended. The next words are another example of this.

The children of Sheshan; Ahlai.] It is plain from ver. 34, 35, that this Ahlai was not a son, but a daughter.

Ver. 32. *The sons of Jada*] Mentioned in ver. 28.

Jether died without children.] He had neither son nor daughter.

Ver. 33.] Whose male line he carries no farther; because, perhaps, it failed in these last named.

Ver. 34. *Sheshan had no sons, but daughters.*] We read of no more than one daughter that he had; but he speaks in the plural number, as before, ver. 31.

Sheshan had a servant, an Egyptian, whose name was Jarha.] Who being a proselyte, it is probable, to the Jewish religion, and a faithful servant to his master, he gave him his freedom, and married his daughter to him.

Ver. 35.] This servant was very dear to him, and perhaps, ruler of his house, as Eliezer of Damascus was to Abraham; who, if he had not had a son, he looked upon as his heir to all his estate (Gen. xv. 23).

Ver. 41.] We cannot now understand why so long a genealogy should be inserted here of the descendants of Sheshan's daughter by an Egyptian. The Jews imagine it is the genealogy of Ishmael (who slew Gedaliah, whom the king of Babylon left the governor of the land after he had taken Jerusalem), who they fancy was "the son of Nathaniah the son

39 And Azariah begat Helez, and Helez begat Eleasah,

40 And Eleasah begat Sisamai, and Sisamai begat Shallum,

41 And Shallum begat Jekamiah, and Jekamiah begat Elishama.

42 ¶ Now the sons of Caleb the brother of Jerahmeel were, Mesha his firstborn, which was the father of Ziph; and the sons of Mareshah the father of Hebron.

43 And the sons of Hebron; Korah, and Tapuah, and Rekem, and Shema.

44 And Shema begat Raham, the father of Jorkoam; and Rekem begat Shammai.

45 And the son of Shammai was Maon; and Maon was the father of Beth-zur.

46 And Ephah, Caleb's concubine, bare Haran, and Moza, and Gazez: and Haran begat Gazez.

47 And the sons of Jahdai; Regem, and Jotham, and Gesham, and Pelet, and Ephah, and Shaaph.

48 Maachah, Caleb's concubine, bare Sheber and Tirhanah.

49 She bare also Shaaph the father of Madmannah, Sheva the father of Machbenah, and the

of Elishama," last mentioned (as Jeremiah describes him, ch. xli. 1) which we might have believed, if this genealogy had so concluded: in which, as there is no mention of Nathaniah, as the son of Elishama (but the genealogy ends with Elishama, and goes no further), so it is not probable, that the descent of so in famous a person, though of the seed-royal, should be deduced thus largely.

Ver. 42. *The sons of Caleb*] Called Chelubai, ver. 9.

The brother of Jerahmeel] This is added to show he speaks of the same Caleb there mentioned, and ver. 18.

Mesha his firstborn,] By a third wife; for his children by Azubah and Ephrath are named before.

The father of Ziph;] The prince of Ziph, as some understand it. There were two places of this name in the tribe of Judah (see Josh. xv. 24, 25).

The sons of Mareshah the father of Hebron.] Hebron here is the name of a man, not of a place: for his posterity is immediately mentioned: but Kimchi makes this to be the sense of these and the foregoing words: "The sons of Ziph were Mareshah, the father of Hebron." Which is very natural.

Ver. 45. *Maon was the father of Beth-zur.*] Who gave name to a place in the tribe of Judah (Josh. xv. 58). Which Josephus saith was in the mountainous part of it, as the word imports. Maon also is a well-known name to a wilderness in this tribe.

Ver. 46. *Ephah, Caleb's concubine, &c.*] Besides his forenamed wives, he married a concubine: which was an inferior sort of a wife, as I have shown upon Gen. xxv. 6.

Haran begat Gazez.] This is another Gazez; to whom Haran gave the name of his younger brother.

Ver. 47.] We read nothing of Jahdai in the foregoing genealogy; but the Jews take him for one of the sons of Ephah before named; and most probably Moza, next brother to Haran; whose posterity is here set down, as Haran's was before. Moza therefore had two names; which was not unusual among the Jews.

Ver. 48.] This Caleb was a great man, and could

father of Gibeā: and t e daughter of Caleb was Achsa.

50 ¶ These were the sons of Caleb, the son of Hur, the firstborn of Ephraim; Shobal the father of Kirjath-jearim.

51 Salma the father of Beth-lehem, Hareph the father of Beth-gader.

52 And Shobal the father of Kirjath-jearim had sons; Huroch, and half of the Manahethites.

53 And the families of Kirjath-jearim; the

maintain many wives; which he took, and had a numerous issue by them.

Ver. 49.] By the word *father* in this verse, in all likelihood, is meant the prince or ruler of these places. For Gibeā was a city in the tribe of Judah; and so was Madmannah (Josh. xv. 31. 57).

The daughter of Caleb was Achsa.] Who is mentioned in the books of Joshua and Judges; but it was not said by what wife he had her. She was married to a great man, Othniel (Josh. xv. 17. Judg. i. 12).

Ver. 50. *These were the sons of Caleb, the son of Hur, the firstborn of Ephraim;*] This was another Caleb, descended from the foregoing, by Hur his son by Ephraim (ver. 19), who had this son, whom he called Caleb, after the name of his grandfather.

Shobal the father of Kirjath-jearim.] The Targum translates it "the prince of Kirjath-jearim:" which is a place, as Beth-lehem, and Beth-gader were, of which two other persons are presently after said to be the father. But Kimchi takes the word *father* in the proper sense, and thinks Shobal's posterity possessed the city of Kirjath-jearim.

Ver. 51.] It is not material which way we understand this; either as the Targum or as Kimchi expounds the word *father* in the foregoing verse.

Ver. 52.] The Hebrew words being "Huroch. Hatzi, Hammenioth," the LXX. expound them, as if Shobal had three sons, Araa, and Aisi, and Ammanith. But Kimchi takes the last word for the name of a place; which is evident from ver. 54, where the other half of it is mentioned: and of one half he thinks Huroch was the lord and governor. But Jacchiades follows the LXX. and leaves Kimchi's explication.

Ver. 53. *The families of Kirjath-jearim, &c.*] The inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim were divided into several families (as Kimchi interprets it), and these here mentioned were the heads of families, denominated from the Ithra or Jether, and Puhah, &c. as from

Ithrites, and the Puhites, and the Shumathites, and the Mishraites: of them came the Zareathites, and the Eshtaulites.

54 The sons of Salma; Beth-lehem, and the Netophathites, Ataroth, the house of Joab, and half of the Manahethites, the Zorites.

55 And the families of the scribes which dwell at Jabez; the Tirathites, the Shineathites, and Suchathites. These are the Kenites that came of Hemath, the father of the house of Rechab.

Jimna came the family of the Jimnites, and from Beriah the family of the Berites, in Num. xxvi. 44.

Of them came the Zareathites, and the Eshtaulites.] The same Kimchi observes, that Zarah and Eshtaul were two cities in the tribe of Judah; which were built by two of Kirjath-jearim of this name. Who inhabited these places, and left two great families, who were from them called Zareathites, and Eshtaulites.

Ver. 51.] This Salma, the son of Caleb the younger (ver. 51), had a numerous posterity. For from him descended the inhabitants of Beth-lehem (so we are to understand this word, for Beth-lehem was the name of a place, not of a man), the Netophathites, and those of Ataroth, and Beth-joab (so these words we translate "the house of Joab" should be rendered; for he is not speaking of Joab's family, but of Caleb's), and half of the Manahethites, and the Zorites, who were a people possessed of a town called Zarah: where the other half dwelt.

Ver. 55. *The families of the scribes which dwell at Jabez;*] This place, Kimchi thinks, might possibly be built by Jabez (an honourable person, mentioned ch. iv. 9), in which some doctors of the law dwell, who were of the family of Salma; for of these he is still speaking.

These are the Kenites that came of Hemath,] These Kenites, as R. Solomon thinks, were the inhabitants of a place called Cani, in the tribe of Judah (Josh. xv. 57), though it must be acknowledged also, some of the Kenites, the posterity of Jethro, did settle in the same tribe (Judg. i. 16), of whom, some think, Ezra here speaks. And then Hemath descended from Jethro, who was the father, that is, the prince, of Beth-rechab; so the last words may be understood. There were other Kenites, descended from Heber, who dwelt in the tribe of Naphtali, or Manasseh (Judg. iv. 11).

CHAPTER III.

1 The sons of David. 10 His line to Zedekiah. 17 The successors of Jecooniah.

1 Now these were the sons of David, which were born unto him in Hebron; the firstborn Amnon, of Abinoam the Jezreelitess; the second, Daniel, of Abigail the Carmelitess:

2 The third, Absalom the son of Maachah the

daughter of Talmi king of Geshur: the fourth, Adonijah the son of Hagith;

3 The fifth, Shephatiah of Abital: the sixth, Ithream by Eglah his wife.

4 These six were born unto him in Hebron;

CHAP. III.

Ver. 1. *These were the sons of David.*] Having given a large account of the posterity of Hebron, he returns to David before mentioned, ch. ii. 15.

Which were born unto him in Hebron;] Before he was king of all Israel.

The second Daniel.] This second son is called Chisleab in 2 Sam. iii. 3, where I have given an account of it. And here it may be noted, once for all, that it was a frequent thing among the Jews for men to have

two names; especially when they lived sometimes in one country and sometimes in another. This appears from a famous case mentioned in the Gemara of Codex Gittin, where it is resolved, that if a man have two wives, one in Judea, and another in Galilee, and he gave a bill of divorce to her in Judea, subscribing to it his name whereby he is known in Galilee, the bill is void. And in like manner, if he write his name whereby he goes in Judea, unto a bill of divorce to his wife in Galilee, it is of no effect.

and there he reigned seven years and six months: and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years.

5 And these were born unto him in Jerusalem; Shimea, and Shobab, and Nathan, and Solomon, four, of Bath-shua the daughter of Ammiel:

6 I Bhar also, and Elishama, and Eliphelet,

7 And Nogah, and Nephem, and Japhia,

8 And Elishama, and Eliada, and Eliphelet, nine.

9 *These were* all the sons of David, beside the sons of the concubines, and Tamar their sister.

10 ¶ And Solomon's son was Rehoboam, Abia his son, Asa his son, Jehoshaphat his son,

Ver. 3. *Eglah his wife.*] This Eglah is generally thought by the Jews to be Michal daughter of Saul (see my notes upon 2 Sam. iii. 5), who, some think, is peculiarly called *his wife*, because she was his only legal wife, according to the divine institution: all the rest he took by custom then reigning.

Ver. 4.] This has been explained in 2 Sam. v.

Ver. 5. *Bathshua*] In 2 Sam. xi. 3, she is called *Bath-sheba* (as she is through the whole scripture), and her father Eliam. But I observed just now, it was usual among the Jews to have two names; though there is no great difference in this first of these, no more than there is between Shammah and Shimea; the vowels being only changed, not the consonants, of which the names consist. Solomon was the eldest of these four sons; but he is mentioned last, because the discourse was to return to his genealogy (ver. 10).

Ver. 6.] There is a small difference in the name of the second of these as he is mentioned 2 Sam. v. 15, where he is called Elishua.

Ver. 8. *Elishama, and Eliada, and Eliphelet,*] Two of these names are mentioned before; who, it is supposed, died in their infancy: and therefore he preserved their memory, by giving their names unto two others, who were born afterward, and lived longer. So Kimchi.

Nine.] Beside the four born of Bath-sheba (ver. 5), but there are only seven mentioned in 2 Sam. v. 16, those two who died early being there omitted (see my notes on that place).

Ver. 9. *Besides the sons of the concubines,*] Who are not mentioned, either here or in Samuel.

Tamar their sister.] See 2 Sam. xiii. 1.

Ver. 10—15. *The sons of Josiah were, the firstborn Johanan,*] There is nothing needs explaining in the foregoing genealogy down from Solomon to this time; but here is some difficulty; for this Johanan is thought by many to be the same with Jehoahaz, who succeeded Josiah in the throne. But he was not his firstborn; being but twenty-three years old when the people made him king, and after three months' time, his brother, being put in his place, is said to be twenty-five years old (2 Kings xxiii. 31. 36). Petavius hath said a great deal about this in his annotations upon Epiphanius ad Heres. Epicur. p. 18. But, after all, I take the truth to be, that Johanan was his eldest son, but he died before his father: and therefore is not mentioned in the book of the Kings: as Jehoahaz is not mentioned here, being made king by the people of the land, and presently dethroned.

Jehoiakim.] Who was next to him, to whom by right of succession the kingdom belonged: he being the eldest now Johanan was dead. He was called by

11 Joram his son, Ahaziah his son, Joash his son,

12 Amaziah his son, Azariah his son, Jotham his son,

13 Ahaz his son, Hezekiah his son, Manasseh his son,

14 Amon his son, Josiah his son.

15 And the sons of Josiah were, the firstborn Johanan, the second Jehoiakim, the third Zedekiah, the fourth Shallum.

16 And the sons of Jehoiakim: Jeconiah his son, Zedekiah his son.

17 ¶ And the sons of Jeconiah: Assir, Salathiel his son,

18 Malchiram also, and Pedaiah, and Shenazar, Jecamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah.

his father Eliakim: but had this other name imposed on him by the king of Egypt (2 Kings xxiii. 34).

Zedekiah.] Who was the youngest of all Josiah's sons, as appears by his age, when he was made king after Jehoiakim was carried captive. The same Petavius thinks there were two Zedekiahs; one the son of Josiah, who was their last king; the other the son of Jeconiah (mentioned in the next verse), who never came to be king.

Shallum.] This was the next son to Jehoiakim, and the same with Jehoahaz, as is plain from Jer. xxii. 11 (see my notes upon 2 Kings xxiii. 30, 31). He is put last, because he was not at all considerable; being made king by a popular faction; and in three months' time thrust out of his throne, by the king of Egypt, who carried him thither, and there he died.

Ver. 16.] The posterity of Jeconiah is set down in the next verse; and therefore here by the word *son* we must understand his successor in the kingdom. Thus Seneca makes Atreus and Tantalus to be descendants of Inachus; because they succeeded him in the kingdom of Argos. And in like manner Jacobus Capellus here observes (in his *Histor. Sacra et Exotica*, ad a. m. 3424), that *Multi filii dicuntur, qui legaliter tantum erant filii, id est, hæredes*; "many are called sons, who were only sons legally, that is, heirs." Of which he makes Zedekiah an example, who is here called the son of Jeconiah (who was his uncle, 2 Kings xxiv. 17), because he succeeded him.

Ver. 17.] Some think that Assir is not the name of his son, but signifies *captive*; to denote that his son Salathiel was born when he was a captive in Babylon, as St. Matthew notes (ch. i. 12), which doth not contradict the prophecy of Jeremiah, who said he should die childless (Jer. xxii. 30), for his meaning no more, but that he should have no child sitting on the throne after him. But Jacobus Capellus, in the place forenamed, makes Salathiel another instance of an heir being called a *son*. For he thinks he succeeded Jeconiah in the dignity to which he was restored by Evil-merodach; but was the son of Neri, who sprung from Nathan.

Ver. 18.] These were not all the immediate sons of Jeconiah, but the sons of Salathiel; as may be gathered from hence: that in the next verse Zerubbabel is said to be the son of Pedaiah, and in St. Matthew (ch. i. 12) to be the son of Salathiel; that is, his grandson. So there is something to be supplied, to make out the sense of this verse, viz. "The sons also of Salathiel were Malchiram, and Pedaiah, &c." But Grotius (on Matt. i. 23) thinks, that Zerubbabel here mentioned is not he, who was the leader of God's people when they returned from their captivity in Babylon; with whom Huetius also agrees. But others

19 And the sons of Pedaiah were Zerubbabel, and Shimei: and the sons of Zerubbabel; Meshullam, and Hananiah, and Shelomith their sister:

20 And Hashubah, and Ohel, and Berechiah, and Hasadiah, Jushab-hesed, five.

21 And the sons of Hananiah; Pelatiah, and Jesaiah: the sons of Rephaiah, the sons of Arnan, the sons of Obadiah, the sons of Shechaniah.

think, this may better be solved by supposing, that Salathiel dying without children, Pedaiah raised up seed to his brother, as the scripture speaks, and begat Zerubbabel of Salathiel's wife. Who therefore was the son of Pedaiah, because begotten by him; and yet the son of Salathiel, because begotten of his wife; who had no son by Salathiel, but by Pedaiah; who begat him, not to be his heir, but the heir of his brother who was dead.

Ver. 19. *Shelomith their sister*:] That is, sister to the two sons before named; she having the same father and mother that they had; which the other five mentioned in the next verse, it is supposed, had not; but were by another mother, though they had the same father.

Ver. 20.] Upon this they ground their opinion, who think the Zerubbabel here mentioned is not he that was the governor of the people after the captivity; for his son's name was Rhesa (Luke iii. 27.) who is not found among the eight children that are here reckoned up.

Ver. 21. *Pelatiah, and Jesaiah*:] These are sons of the second son of Zerubbabel (ver. 19.)

The sons of Rephaiah.—Arnan.—Obadiah.—Shechaniah.] These four (and their sons) seem to have been likewise the children of Hananiah.

Ver. 22.] Here are but five sons of Shechaniah; and therefore the Hebrew word *shishah* (which we translate *six*) is rather the name of his last son; who might possibly be so called, because he was his sixth son.

22 And the sons of Shechaniah; Sheamaiah; and the sons of Sheamaiah; Hattush, and Igeal, and Bariah, and Neariah, and Shaphat, six.

23 And the sons of Neariah; Elioenai, and Hezekiah, and Azrikam, three.

24 And the sons of Elioenai were, Hodaiah, and Eliashib, and Pelatiah, and Akkub, and Johanan, and Dalaiah, and Anani, seven.

Ver. 23. [The rest of Sheamaiah's sons had no issue.

Ver. 24.] The Targum here hath a very strange observation: for after the word Anani, he saith, "He is the king Messiah, who is to be revealed." The reason of which is given in the famous book *Tanchuma* (as Beckius here notes,) because it is said in Dan. vii. 13. He saw in a vision, and behold, one like the Son of man, *in anani* (in the clouds; which certainly was a vision of the Messiah, as Saadis Gaon acknowledges. And this use is to be made of this passage, that their minds were always full of the thoughts of the Messiah, and that they expected he should be revealed as they speak) so many generations after Zerubbabel: which is an argument he came long ago. St. Matthew, indeed, counts more generations from Zerubbabel to our Saviour's birth than are here mentioned, and hath quite different names in this succession: which is another argument that this Zerubbabel in the Chronicles is not the same with him in St. Matthew. And, indeed, though some persons in scripture have two names, yet it is not likely that so many persons as are reckoned in this succession, should all have quite different names. Therefore St. Matthew's genealogy is not here recorded: but he had it out of the public tables, which were kept by the priests of all the great families of Judah: particularly that of David's, out of whose family they expected the Messiah should come, would not fail to keep a punctual account of his successors in every generation.

CHAPTER IV.

1, 11 *The posterity of Judah by Caleb the son of Hur.* 5 *Of Ashur the posthumous son of Hezron.* 9 *Of Jabez, and his prayer.* 21 *The posterity of Shelah.* 24 *The posterity and cities of Simeon.* 39 *Their conquest of Gedor, and of the Amalekites in mount Seir.*

1 THE sons of Judah; Pharez, Hezron, and Carmi, and Hur, and Shobal.

2 And Reaiah the son of Shobal begat Jahath: and Jahath begat Ahumai, and Lahad. These are the families of the Zorathites.

3 And these were of the father of Etam; Jez-

reel, and Ishma, and Idbash: and the name of their sister was Hazeleponi:

4 And Pennel the father of Gedor, and Ezei the father of Hushah. These are the sons of Hur, the firstborn of Ephratah, the father of Beth-lehem.

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 1.] By the sons of Judah are meant his posterity: for here is only one of his sons mentioned in this place: viz. Pharez: whose son Hezron begat Carmi, (the same with Chelubai and Caleb, ch. ii. 9. 18), whose sons were Hur and Shobah: who is the same, I suppose, with Shobal; of whose posterity he intends here to give an account.

Ver. 2.] Zora is not the name of a man, but of a place in the tribe of Judah: where several families of that tribe settled themselves, who descended from Jahath, Shumai, and Lahad, the sons and grandsons of Shobal, by whom this city was built and inhabited. Thus Kimchi explains this place.

Ver. 3. *These were of the father of Etam*:] De-

scended from the lord of a place called Etam: which was in this tribe (ver. 32).

Jezreel, and Ishma, and Idbush:] These were the sons of the lord of Etam: whose name is not here recorded.

Their sister was Hazeleponi:] Who, it is likely, was a very eminent woman: and therefore her name is remembered; though now we are ignorant of the particular reason there was then for it.

Ver. 4. *Pennel the father of Gedor*.] In the eighteenth verse of this chapter, Jered is said to be the father, that is, the lord, of Gedor. But there might be then two lords of the same city; as there are now among us several lordships in the same town.

These are the sons of Hur.] By some other wife than her by whom he had the children mentioned, ii. ver. 20.

5 ¶ And Ashur the father of Tekoa had two wives, Helah and Naarah.

6 And Naarah bare him Ahuzam, and Hopher, and Temeni, and Haahashtari. These were the sons of Naarah.

7 And the sons of Helah were, Zereth, and Jehoar, and Ethnan.

8 And Coz begat Anub, and Zobebah, and the families of Aharhel the son of Harum.

9 ¶ And Jabez was more honourable than his brethren: and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I bare him with sorrow.

10 And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested.

11 ¶ And Chelub the brother of Shuah begat

The firstborn of Ephratah.] See there ver. 19.

The father of Beth-lehem.] In the second chapter, ver. 52, Salma is said to be the father of Beth-lehem; but that doth not contradict this: for they might both be lords of the same place, especially one being the grandfather, the other the son.

Ver. 5.] See ch. ii. ver. 24.

Ver. 6.] His first wife being barren for some time, it moved him to take another; who bare him these sons.

Ver. 7.] Afterward his first grew fruitful, and bare him as many sons as the other. For it is probable that Coz (mentioned in the next words) was her son.

Ver. 8.] I suppose several families sprung from Aharhel, who was the son of Coz by his wife Harum.

Ver. 9. *Jabez*] It is very uncertain who Jabez was: perhaps the founder of one of the families of Aharhel. But the Targum both here and upon ch. ii. 55 saith, he was the same with Othniel. But this is a Jewish fancy, confuted by ver. 13.

Was more honourable than his brethren.] Wiser in the law, as the Targum expounds it: who had respect, it is likely, to his piety and devotion, expressed in the next verse. Others think he was a person of greater courage and valour, for which Othniel was famous.

I bare him with sorrow.] She had a very hard labour, when she was in travail with him.

Ver. 10. *Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed.*] He prayed for the help of God, to drive out the Canaanites, and make room for his family; that they might dwell more commodiously.

That thine hand might be with me.] As it was with Othniel, to enable him to take Kirjath-sepher, as we read in the first chapter of Judges.

That thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me!] Preserve him in health, and prosper him, when he had enlarged his border: that he might not live in such misery, as that wherewith his mother brought him forth. For in the word *grieve*, most think he alludes to the pains of his mother in her travail.

God granted him that which he requested.] And the rather, because he had hereby greater leisure for the study of the law, and instructing others in piety, as many understand it. For the Jews think this Jabez was an eminent doctor of the law, and left behind him a great many disciples, who are mentioned, they suppose, in the last verse of the second chapter of this book; where we read of the "family of the scribes that dwelt at Jabez."

Ver. 12. *These are the men of Rechah.*] The per-

Mehir, which was the father of Eshton.

12 And Eshton begat Beth-rapha, and Paseah, and Tehinnah the father of Ir-nahash. These are the men of Rechah.

13 And the sons of Kenaz; Othniel, and Seraiah: and the sons of Othniel; Hathath.

14 And Meonothai begat Ophrah: and Seraiah begat Joab, the father of the valley of Charashim; for they were craftsmen.

15 And the sons of Caleb the son of Jephunneh; Iru, Elah, and Naam: and the sons of Elah, even Kenaz.

16 And the sons of Jehaleleel; Ziph, and Ziphah, Tiria, and Asareel.

17 And the sons of Ezra were, Jether, and Mered, and Ephraim, and Jalou: and she bare Miriam, and Shammai, and Ishbah the father of Esh-temoa.

18 And his wife Jehudijah bare Jered the fa-

sons whose posterity possessed the city of Rechah: of which we have no mention elsewhere.

Ver. 13. *The sons of Kenaz*;) It is not said whose son he was: it is likely of Chelub, mentioned ver. 11.

Othniel, and Seraiah: and the sons of Othniel; Hathath.] And likewise Meonothai, mentioned in the next verse: for his sons follow the sons of Othniel's younger brother.

Ver. 14. *The father of the valley of Charashim*;) Or, of those that dwelt in Gecharashim: which was a city in the tribe of Benjamin, mentioned in Neh. xi. 35.

For they were craftsmen.] The smiths that dwelt and wrought there gave it the name Charashim: by which word some understand *carpenters*. For in this catalogue several such-like sort of persons are mentioned: such as potters, and weavers, and gardeners (ver. 21, 23). For societies cannot consist only of one sort of persons; but must be composed of men of different and various employments. As Strigelius observes out of Aristotle, "A city is not composed of physicians and physicians: but of physicians and ploughmen." So the son of Sirach discourses, that though such kind of men are not fit to be admitted to counsel, "yet they maintain the state of the world" (Ecclus. xxxiii. 34). When Solomon, indeed, began to reign, there were not many craftsmen in Israel, but afterward they increased: and such honour was paid unto arts, that they took care to preserve the memory of such persons and families as applied themselves that way; as appears by this very verse, and ver. 21, 23 of this chapter. Whence the prophet Isaiah foretells this as a judgment God would send upon them, that he would take their artificers (ch. iii. 5). And when Jerusalem was taken by the Babylonians, it is said, they carried away all the craftsmen (2 Kings xxiv. 14).

Ver. 15. *Jephunneh*;) Some take this Jephunneh to be the same with Hezron, whose son Caleb was: and had this son by a different wife from her mentioned ch. ii. 18.

The sons of Elah, even Kenaz.] Or rather Uknaz was the son of Elah: as some of the Jews understand it.

Ver. 16. *Jehaleleel*;) Who was the son of Uknaz last mentioned.

Ver. 17. *Ezra*] Who was the son of Asareel last named.

She bare] That is, Bithiah the wife of Mered (mentioned in the next verse) bare the sons following.

Miriam, and Shammai] Miriam was the name of a man as well as of a woman: and there are several

ther of Gedor, and Heber the father of Socho, and Jehuthiel the father of Zanoah. And these are the sons of Bithiah the daughter of Pharaoh, which Mered took.

19 And the sons of his wife Hodiah the sister of Naham, the father of Keilah the Garmite, and Eshtemoa the Maachathite.

20 And the sons of Shimon were, Amnon, and Rinnah, Ben-hanan, and Tilon. And the sons of Ishi were, Zoheth, and Ben-zoheth.

21 ¶ The sons of Shelah the son of Judah were, Er the father of Lecah, and Laadah the father of Mareshah, and the families of the house of them that wrought fine linen, of the house of Ashbea,

22 And Jokim, and the men of Chozeba, and Joash, and Saraph, who had the dominion in Moab, and Jashubi-lehem. And these are ancient things.

such instances in scripture, as Kimchi observes upon this place.

Eshtemoa.] It is uncertain whether Eshtemoa be the name of a person, or of a place whereof he was lord.

Ver. 18. *His wife Jehudijah bare Jered*] Mered had this son by another wife called Jehudijah.

The father of Gedor.] The Targum and Jarchi, with others, by *father*, in all these three instances, understand the lord or ruler of those cities, which were in the tribe of Judah (see Josh. xv. 34, 35).

Bithiah] Mentioned in the foregoing verse.

The daughter of Pharaoh which Mered took.] That is, married. But it is not likely he married the daughter of the king of Egypt, unless some natural daughter: but rather of some other person, called by the name of Pharaoh; who might be an Israelite as well as an Egyptian; names being upon several occasions, given from other countries.

Ver. 19. *Hodiah*] This was his third wife.

The sister of Naham.] It seems to be more reasonable to translate it Achotnaam: who was his son by Hodiah.

The father of Keilah the Garmite, and Eshtemoa the Maachathite.] These were his grandsons, who are frequently in scripture called sons.

Ver. 20. *Shimon*] Who is supposed to be another son of Mered by his last wife.

Ishi] Who is thought to be the son of Tilon last mentioned.

Ver. 21. *The sons of Shelah*] Having given an account of those descended from Pharez the eldest son of Judah, and Zerach, whom Judah had by Tamar (ch. ii. 4, 5), he now relates the posterity of Shelah, whom he had by his wife Shuah (Gen. xxxviii. 5).

Lecah.] This was a city in the tribe of Judah of which Er was the lord.

Mareshah.] Another city in the same tribe.

Of the house of them that wrought fine linen.] From him came all those families that were famous for this sort of workmanship in fine linen: wherewith their kings and priests were clothed, as the Targum notes.

Of the house of Ashbea.] The principal of which, I suppose, were those of this man's posterity.

Ver. 22. *Jokim.*] This was either a person or a family descended from Shelah.

The men of Chozeba.] They were another family sprung from the same root: who settled in this place.

Joash, and Saraph, who had the dominion in Moab.] Conquered several places there, in the time of David:

23 These were the potters, and those that dwelt among plants and hedges: there they dwelt with the king for his work.

24 The sons of Simeon were, Nemuel, and Jamin, Jarib, Zerach, and Shaul;

25 Shallum his son, Mibsam his son, Mishna his son.

26 And the sons of Mishma: Hamuel his son, Zacchur his son, Shimei his son.

27 And Shimei had sixteen sons and six daughters; but his brethren had not many children, neither did all their family multiply, like to the children of Judah.

28 And they dwelt at Beer-sheba, and Moladah, and Hazar-shual.

29 And at Bilhah, and at Ezem, and at Tolad,

30 And at Bethuel, and at Hormah, and at Ziklag,

or had the government of them given by him. The Targum takes the Hebrew word *baahu*, as if it signified that they married wives in the country of Moab.

Jashubi-lehem.] Or rather, "the inhabitants of Lehem:" a place where some of Shelah's posterity settled.

These are ancient things.] That is, these things which have been related concerning Joash and Saraph (as Kimchi interprets it), who had dominion in Moab, show that they were long ago; but now, as it follows, their condition was altered.

Ver. 23. *These were the potters.*] Or rather, "these now are potters," &c. being fallen from the glory and splendour wherein they formerly lived, to common and mean employments.

There they dwelt with the king for his work.] This is commonly understood, as if they stayed in Babylon (for there was no king now in Judea) to be vine-dressers, gardeners, and husbandmen, under that monarch: whose service they liked so well, that they chose to continue in it, rather than return to Jerusalem.

Ver. 24. *Simeon*] This tribe is mentioned next to Judah, because they were neighbours to them: part of their possessions being taken out of the tribe of Judah (Josh. xix. 1, &c.). But the names of some of Simeon's sons were much altered, by length of time, from what they were when they went down into Egypt (Gen. xlv. 10). And Ohad, there mentioned, is not here remembered: because, it is likely, he had no issue.

Ver. 25. *Shallum his son.*] That is, he was the son of Shaul, last mentioned.

Ver. 26.] It seems Mibsam had no son.

Ver. 27. *Shimei had sixteen sons and six daughters.*] The posterity of his eldest sons are not taken notice of: but only, as it follows, that they had not many.

Neither did all their family multiply.] Which evidently appears by the number that was taken of them at their first muster, Numb. i. 23, where we find that they were but fifty-nine thousand and three hundred: when the children of Judah were threescore and four thousand and six hundred (ver. 26). And at the next muster there was a far greater inequality (Numb. xxvi. 14, 22).

Ver. 28.] These places are mentioned in Josh. xix. 2, 3.

Ver. 29. *Bilhah.*] Called Balah in the place above named.

At Ezem, and at Tolad.] These are called Azem, and Eltolad, the former part of names being often cut

31 And at Beth-marcaboth, and Hazar-susim, and at Beth-birei, and at Shaaraim. These were their cities unto the reign of David.

32 And their villages were, Etam, and Ain, Rimmon, and Tochen, and Ashan, five cities:

33 And all their villages that were round about the same cities, unto Baal. These were their habitations, and their genealogy.

34 And Meshobab, and Jamlech, and Joshah the son of Amaziah,

35 And Joel, and Jehu the son of Josibiah, the son of Seraiah, the son of Asiel,

36 And Elioenai, and Jaakobah, and Jeshohaiah, and Asaiah, and Adiel, and Jesimiel, and Benaiah,

37 And Ziza the son of Shiphai, the son of Alon, the son of Jedaiah, the son of Shimri, the son of Shemaiah;

38 These mentioned by their names were

princes in their families: and the house of their fathers increased greatly.

39 ¶ And they went to the entrance of Gedor, even unto the east side of the valley, to seek pasture for their flocks.

40 And they found fat pasture and good, and the land was wide, and quiet, and peaceable; for they of Ham had dwelt there of old.

41 And these written by name came in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and smote their tents, and the habitations that were found there, and destroyed them utterly unto this day, and dwelt in their rooms: because there was pasture there for their flocks.

42 And some of them, even the sons of Simeon, five hundred men, went to mount Seir, having for their captains Pelatiah, and Neariah, and Rephaiah, and Uzziel, the sons of Ishi.

43 And they smote the rest of the Amalekites that were escaped, and dwelt there unto this day.

off; as Hermon for Baal-hermon (Judg. iii. 3), Shittim (Numb. xxv. 1), for Abel-shittim (Numb. xxxiii. 49, &c.).

Ver. 30.] See Josh. xix. 4, 5.

Ver. 31. *Hazar-susim*.] Called there, Josh. xix. 5, Hazar-susah.

At Beth-birei, and at Shaaraim.] The names are different in Josh. xix. 6.

These were their cities unto the reign of David.]

Who, the Jews fancy, took these cities from them, and gave them again to Judah. Which is not likely, nor doth the word *unto* denote that they held them no longer, than till the reign of David: but that when he came to the crown their families dwelt here; though Ziklag had been in the possession of the Philistines, who gave it to David, as his own town.

Ver. 32.] Here is one place mentioned, more than is in Josh. xix. 7, which they had some way acquired since his days.

Ver. 33. *Baal*.] Called Baalath-beer, Josh. xix. 8.

These were their habitations and their genealogy.] Or, as it is in the margin, "they divided themselves by nations among them;" i. e. among these places.

Ver. 34.] These, and the rest that follow, seem to have been very eminent persons in this tribe: by whose valour these great things were performed, which are mentioned ver. 38, 39, &c. There is so great a resemblance in the name, that some fancy the name Ἰαμλεχ among the Greeks came from this name Jamlech.

Ver. 38. These mentioned by their names] Whose names are mentioned in the four foregoing verses.

Were princes in their families:] Great persons of chief authority in their several families.

The house of their fathers increased greatly.] By their valour they enlarged their habitations, which were too strait for them.

Ver. 39. *Gedor*.] There was a place of this name belonging unto Judah (Josh. xv. 58), and another called Gederah, appertaining to the same tribe (ver. 36), out of which perhaps Judah had not driven the old inhabitants: and therefore the Simeonites wanting room went thither, and by dispossessing them enlarged their border. But see the next verse, which places Gedor elsewhere.

To seek pasture for their flocks.] For their sheep and their goats: which are properly meant by flocks.

Ver. 40. The land was—peaceable:] So that they might feed their flocks securely.

For they of Ham had dwelt there of old.] This had inclined Bochart to think, that Gedor was some place in Arabia, where some of the posterity of Ham settled, as he had demonstrated. And the Arabians being wholly addicted to pasturage, sought out the best ground they could find for the feeding their flocks. Whose country the Simeonites made no scruple to invade; the posterity of Ham being accused by Noah (see his Phaleg. lib. iv. cap. 1).

Ver. 41. These written by name came in the days of Hezekiah] Their names are set down before, ver. 34—37, now the time is recorded wherein they performed such memorable exploits, which was in the reign of Hezekiah king of Judah. That is, as some take it, a little before the ten tribes were carried captive: or rather, some time after it, when these Simeonites, who were mixed with Judah, finding themselves very much straitened, made this expedition.

And smote their tents, and the habitations that were found there.] If they smote their tents, then it was sufficiently evident they smote their habitations; for they dwelt in tents. Therefore the word *meunim*, I have shown upon Judg. x. 12 (see my notes there), doth not signify habitations, but a people in Arabia, who dwelt in tents; which the Simeonites smote, as it here follows, and settled themselves in their place.

Destroyed them utterly unto this day, and dwelt in their rooms:] There were none remaining to attempt the recovery of their country any more: but the Simeonites possessed it when this book was written, after the captivity of Babylon.

Because there was pasture there] Which made them seek for no other settlement.

Ver. 42.] Another body of them under these four great commanders, who were brethren, settled themselves in some part of the country of the Edomites: being forced to seek for subsistence abroad: either when the Assyrians invaded their country, or afterward, when it was destroyed, and there was not room enough for them among the Jews; whither many of them fled.

Ver. 43. They smote the rest of the Amalekites that were escaped,] Who escaped the hands of Saul, and of David.

And dwelt there unto this day.] The king of Babylon did not disturb them in these new possessions: which were small, and not worth his regard.

CHAPTER V.

1 *The line of Reuben (who lost his birthright) unto the captivity.* 9 *Their habitation and conquest of the Hagarites.* 11 *The chief men and habitations of Gad.* 18 *The number and conquest of Reuben, Gad, and the half of Manasseh.* 23 *The habitations and chief men of that half tribe.* 25 *Their captivity for their sins.*

I Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel, (for he *was* the firstborn; but, forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel: and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright.

2 For Judah prevailed above his brethren, and of him *came* the chief ruler; but the birthright *was* Joseph's:)

3 The sons, *I say*, of Reuben the firstborn of Israel *were*, Hanoch, and Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.

4 The sons of Joel; Shemaiah his son, Gog his son, Shimei his son,

5 Micah his son, Reaia his son, Baal his son,

6 Beerah his son, whom Tiglath-pileser king

of Assyria carried away *captively*; he *was* prince of the Reubenites.

7 And his brethren by their families, when the genealogy of their generations was reckoned, *were* the chief, Jeiel, and Zechariah,

8 And Bela the son of Azaz, the son of Shema, the son of Joel, who dwelt in Aroer, even unto Nebo and Baal-meon:

9 And eastward he inhabited unto the entering in of the wilderness from the river Euphrates: because their cattle were multiplied in the land of Gilead.

10 And in the days of Saul they made war with the Hagarites, who fell by their hand: and they dwelt in their tents throughout all the east land of Gilead.

CHAP. V.

Ver. 1. *Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel.*] The double portion which was the right of the firstborn (Deut. xxi. 16, 17), was given to Joseph: whose two sons had each of them a lot in the land of Canaan; as if they had been the sons of Israel. The Jewish doctors say there were two other prerogatives belonging to the firstborn; viz. the *principality*, and the *priesthood*: the former of which was given to Judah, the latter to Levi. But I see no ground to think the priesthood was annexed to it: and as for the other, it is taken notice of in the following verse.

The genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright.] This is the reason why neither Reuben's nor Joseph's genealogy is first set down: for though the double portion belonged to the firstborn, yet he had not therefore the pre-eminence in other things, as it here follows.

Ver. 2. *For Judah prevailed above his brethren.*] That is, the tribe of Judah (not his person), which was the most powerful, and in all things, as I before showed, preferred to the rest.

And of him came the chief ruler;] This is the principal reason why he prevailed, because the great prince of the people was to arise out of this tribe: first David, and at last the Messiah.

But the birthright was Joseph's;] Or, though the birthright was Joseph's: yet for the reason before mentioned, Judah's genealogy is first set down.

Ver. 3.] See Gen. xli. 19.

Ver. 4. *The sons of Joel;*] Who, it is likely, was the son of Hanoch the eldest son of Reuben: because it appears from ver. 6, that he here gives an account of the chief persons of this tribe; and consequently those who were descended from the firstborn.

Ver. 6. *Beerah his son.*] Whom the Targum takes for a prophet, the father of Hosea, who is called Beeri, Hos. i. 1. But that is a mere fancy; for that prophet was of the tribe of Issachar, but this Beerah of the tribe of Reuben.

Tiglath-pileser] He is called Tiglath-pileser, 2 Kings xv. 29.

He was prince of the Reubenites.] When the two tribes and half were carried away captive out of their own country beyond Jordan, by the king of Assyria; viz. Tiglath before mentioned. The rest were carried away by Shalmaneser.

Ver. 7.] The genealogies of those descended from the rest of Reuben's sons were preserved; but he thought fit to mention only the chief of them, who were these two and those that follow.

Ver. 8. *Joel.*] This was another Joel, different from him mentioned ver. 4.

Who dwelt in Aroer, even unto Nebo and Baal-meon:] All these were seated on the other side of Jordan. See Numb. xxxii. 37, Josh. xiii. 15, 16, &c., where we read of this city Baal-meon.

Ver. 9. *And eastward he inhabited*] That is, the posterity of Reuben.

Unto the entering in of the wilderness] This is the wilderness of Kedemoth, mentioned Deut. ii. 28, upon which the country of Sihon (which Reuben possessed) bordered.

From the river Euphrates:] Their territory did not reach so far as Euphrates; but only to the entrance of that wilderness, which extended itself to that river.

Because their cattle were multiplied] When their stock very much increased, so that they had not pasturage enough for them, they enlarged their border, as far they were able, eastward towards the river Euphrates.

Ver. 10. *In the days of Saul they made war*] With the assistance of other tribes that dwelt on that side Jordan (ver. 18, 19).

With the Hagarites,] That is, the Ishmaelites descended from Hagar; who were settled in Arabia Deserta (see Bochartus, in his Phaleg, lib. iv. cap. 11).

Who fell by their hand:] Were conquered by them in that war: so that, as it here follows, they possessed their country.

They dwelt in their tents] This shows they were Arabians; or near neighbours to them.

Throughout all the east land of Gilead.] They possessed all that country which lay east of Gilead: which chiefly belonged to the Gadites and Manassites, though the Reubenites had some of it (Deut. iii. 12, 13). A very learned man of our own is of opinion, that those Hagarites inhabited the country called Petra-nabatea. See Dr. Fuller's Miscellanea Sacra, lib. ii. cap. 13, where he observes, that all the rest, who were called Ishmaelites, or Kedar, were afterward comprehended under the name of Saracens.

11 ¶ And the children of Gad dwelt over against them, in the land of Bashan unto Salcah:

12 Joel the chief, and Shaphan the next, and Jaanai, and Shaphat in Bashan.

13 And their brethren of the house of their fathers *were*, Michael, and Meshullam, and Sheba, and Jorai, and Jachan, and Zia, and Heber, seven.

14 These *are* the children of Abihail the son of Huri, the son of Jaroah, the son of Gilead, the son of Michael, the son of Jeshishai, the son of Jahdo, the son of Buz;

15 Ahi the son of Abdiel, the son of Guni, chief of the house of their fathers.

16 And they dwelt in Gilead in Bashan, and in her towns, and in all the suburbs of Sharon, upon their borders.

Ver. 11.] See Josh. xiii. 24, 25, &c. He next mentions the Gadites, because they were neighbours to the Reubenites.

Ver. 12.] He doth not give us the genealogy of this whole tribe, but only the names of the principal persons; among whom these were the most eminent, when their genealogy was examined: which seems to have been in the reign of Jotham (ver. 17). All these dwelt, I suppose, in the metropolis of the country called Bashan: where the chief city was called by the same name; and afterward called Batanea.

Ver. 13.] These seven were eminent persons descended from other great men, of the same family with those before named: and therefore are called their *brethren*.

Ver. 14. *These are the children of Abihail the son of Huri.*] That is, the seven before mentioned came from Abihail; whose pedigree here followed.

Ver. 15.] Besides the foregoing, there was another great person who was of chief authority in the family of Abdiel, and Guni, and their fathers.

Ver. 16. *They dwell in Gilead in Bashan.*] In a part of it, the rest being given to the Reubenites and the half tribe of Manasseh. See Josh. xiii. 25, xvii. 1, Deut. iii. 13, where it is said Moses gave all Bashan to the Manassites: but the meaning is, all that was not given to the other two tribes, who had a share therein (see what I have noted upon Deut. iii. 13).

In her towns,] That is, such towns as belonged to that portion of the country which they possessed.

In all the suburbs of Sharon.] A country where there was excellent pasturage, and which produced the most generous wine. There were two Sharons; one in the east inhabited by the Gadites, (Deut. iii. 12, 13), another in the west (Josh. xii. 18), not far from the famous port called Joppa (Acts ix. 35).

Upon their borders.] Unto the utmost bounds (as the Hebrew words signify) of that country.

Ver. 17.] This doth not imply that Jotham and Jeroboam reigned in the same time: but that in their several reigns this account was taken. Kimchi thinks that *all these* (i. e. the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half tribe of Manasseh) *were reckoned*, that were listed to undertake the war afterward mentioned with the Hagarites: so that it may not concern the genealogy.

Ver. 18.] These three tribes, or at least so many of them as made a great army, joined their forces together, consisting of their best soldiers, to invade the country of the Hagarites. This seems to be a distinct war from that in the days of Saul, ver. 10 (see 1 Sam. viv. 47.).

17 All these were reckoned by genealogies in the days of Jotham king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam king of Israel.

18 ¶ The sons of Reuben, and the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, of valiant men, men able to bear buckler and sword, and to shoot with bow, and skilful in war, *were* four and forty thousand seven hundred and threescore, that went out to the war.

19 And they made war with the Hagarites, with Jetur, and Nephish, and Nodab.

20 And they were helped against them, and the Hagarites were delivered into their hand, and all that *were* with them: for they cried to God in the battle, and he was entreated of them; because they put their trust in him.

21 And they took away their cattle; of their camels fifty thousand, and of sheep two hundred

Ver. 19.] There was mention of the Hagarites before, but now he shows how they were utterly expelled their country, though their neighbours came to their assistance; viz. those of Jetur, Nephish, and Nodab: who were all Ishmaelites; the first two being expressly mentioned as the sons of Ishmael (Gen. xxv. 15), from whom these people took their name. But, as Dr. Jackson observes, there are no people mentioned in scripture, who took their name from Nebaioth his eldest son. Which makes it probable, that they who in heathen writers are called Nabathæi, were in scripture called Ishmaelites, as sole heirs to their first progenitor's name. Their seat was in the best part of Arabia Petræa, near to the Midianites. See book i. on the Creed, ch. 25, sect. 3, where he notes, that the Greek writers call the Hagarites Ἀγάραιοι; which is more consonant to the Hebrew name than the Latin, Hagareni. Their chief city was called Atræ, and the inhabitants Atræni, unless they mistook their name, which perhaps was Agreni.

Ver. 20. *They were helped against them.*] It is likely the Hagarites fought stoutly, but God assisted the Israelites; ending them with extraordinary courage, and daunted their enemies. For it is not likely any other *help* is here meant but that from God.

The Hagarites were delivered into their hand, and all that were with them:] That is, those allies before mentioned, who came to their aid.

They cried to God in the battle,—they put their trust in him.] I suppose their enemies were too hard for them in the first onset, which made them pray to God most earnestly in the midst of the fight: representing to him the pious confidence they placed in him and his almighty power, and not in their arms and warlike skill; which moved him to give them the success they desired. Here the Targum, instead of these words, they put their trust in him, hath these, They put their trust *be Memra*, “in his Word.”

Ver. 21. *They took away their cattle:*] In the Hebrew, *led captive*: that is, drove as many of their cattle as they pleased into their own country. This place is, among others, alleged by Grotius, as a proof of the lawfulness of taking the spoil in a just war against an enemy: as God allowed the Israelites to do, when a city fell into their hands, which had refused their offers of peace (Deut. xx. 14). But this instance is the more to be minded, because the war here spoken of was not by divine precept as that against the seven nations of Canaan: but from common right, which men had to defend themselves

and fifty thousand, and of asses two thousand, and of men an hundred thousand.

22 For there fell down many slain, because the war was of God. And they dwelt in their steads until the captivity.

23 ¶ And the children of the half tribe of Manasseh dwelt in the land: they increased from Bashan unto Baal-hermon and Senir, and unto mount Hermon,

24 And these were the heads of the house of their fathers, even Ephraim, and Ishi, and Eliel, and Azriel, and Jeremiah, and Hodaviah, and Jahdiel, mighty men of valour, famous

against injurious persons, or to invade those who had invaded them, and would make them no satisfaction. Such war was approved by God, it appears by this, that he aided them, when they called upon him for help, as we read in the foregoing verse (see lib. iii. De Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 6. sect. 1).

Of their camels fifty thousand.] It is no wonder there were so many, for the Arabians abounded in camels, as Diodorus Siculus relates, lib. iii. cap. 12, which they used in war, as well as to carry burdens in the time of peace (see Pliny, lib. viii. cap. 18, and Vegetius, lib. iii.). For they being creatures very patient of thirst, were the fitter for any service in that hot and dry country (see Boehartus, in his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 2).

Of sheep two hundred and fifty thousand, and of asses two thousand.] The prodigious number of sheep that those countries produced, is at large shown by the same author, lib. ii. cap. 46, and their breed of asses in the same book, cap. 13.

Of men] In the Hebrew, *souls of men*; i. e. of men, women, and children.

An hundred thousand.] Whom they did not kill (it appears by this relation), but carried them out of their own country, and sold them for slaves (as the manner was in those days), or employed them as such in their own business.

Ver. 22. *For there fell down many slain.*] Besides these taken captive, a great number were slain in the fight, which could not be avoided.

Because the war was of God.] Perhaps they consulted him before they went upon this expedition; and he encouraged them to undertake it, as he powerfully assisted them in it. Here again the Targum saith, The war was "from the Word of Jehovah."

They dwelt in their steads] Possibly all those valiant men who were engaged in this war, settled themselves in the country which they had conquered.

Until the captivity.] In the days of Pekah, 2 Kings xv. 29, when they were rooted out, as the rest of the ten tribes were in the days of Hoshea.

Ver. 23. *The children of the half tribe of Manasseh dwelt in the land.*] In the same country, on the other side of Jordan, with the Reubenites and Gadites: of whom he having spoken, gives a short account of the Manassites.

They increased from Bashan unto Baal-hermon] They were first possessed of the kingdom of Og and Bashan (Josh. xiii. 30): from whence they extended their territories, when they were increased, unto the northern parts of the country beyond Jordan.

Ver. 24.] He reckons only the most remarkable men of this tribe: who were not only of chief authority in their several families, but by their valiant exploits had gotten great renown.

Ver. 25.] All Israel transgressed as well as they: but it seems they were the greatest transgressors, who began, perhaps, the apostasy from God, and

men, and heads of the house of their fathers.

25 ¶ And they transgressed against the God of their fathers, and went a whoring after the gods of the people of the land, whom God destroyed before them.

26 And the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, and the spirit of Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria, and he carried them away even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, and brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara, and to the river Gozan, unto this day.

were ring-leaders to idolatry. And, therefore, as it here follows, they were the first that were carried away captive.

Ver. 26. *The God of Israel*] The Targum saith, the *Memra*, or "Word, of the God of Israel." From whence it appears they thought the divine ΛΟΓΟΣ to be the God of Israel: for they are words of the same import.

Stirred up the spirit of Pul] When, perhaps, he intended to bend his forces another way, God inclined him to go against Israel: whom he distressed so much, that they were forced to make him a great present: whereby they moved him not to stay there, but return to his own country (2 Kings xv. 19, 20). We do not read that he carried any of the people captive, though perhaps he might, after some spoil in the skirts of the country, as he went home.

The spirit of Tilgath-pilneser] Who came in the next king's reign but one, and carried those tribes away captive, as we read in 2 Kings xv. 29.

He carried them away.] He carried these away entirely, together with some of the people of Galilee, particularly all Naphtali, as the forenamed place tells us. And the Jews say, they carried away the golden calf which was in Dan, as they gather from 2 Chron. xxviii. 22.

And brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara.] These are the very places unto which Shalmaneser afterward carried the remainder of the ten tribes, 2 Kings xvii. 6, xviii. 11, where there is only this difference, that there it is said "into the cities of the Medes," but here "unto Hara," which is all one; for Media is the very same with Hara, and is by St. Jerome (without an aspiration) called Ara. And the Greeks commonly call it Aria, and the people of it Arii, as we read in Herodotus, Pausanias, and others. And Boehartus thinks, not without reason, that the mountainous part of the country of Media towards the north was properly called by this name of Hara, from the word *har*, which signifies a *mountain*. Here Strabo saith many foreigners inhabited: for it is likely this hilly country was most empty of people.

To the river Gozan.] That is, to the banks of the river on both sides: for it is much as *την περιχωραν*, "to the region about this river," as our very learned Mr. Nic. Fuller observes, in his *Miscellanea*, lib. ii. cap. 5, where he takes Gozan to be the ancient name for that river, which the Persians afterward called Cyrus; near to which stood the city Gauzania in Ptolemy, which retained that name from the river Gozan.

Unto this day.] Here they settled, as the same learned man observes; and did not range as far as Tartary, as some have thought. For how should they, being miserable captives, who had no power to go back, or to go forward? especially through strange countries, without any arms, or other accommodations.

CHAPTER VI.

1 *The sons of Levi.* 4. *The line of the priests unto the captivity.* 16 *The families of Gershon, Merari, and Kohath.* 49 *The office of Aaron, and his line unto Ahimaz.* 54 *The cities of the priests and Levites.*

1 THE sons of Levi; Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

2 And the sons of Kohath; Amram, Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel.

3 And the children of Amram; Aaron, and Moses, and Miriam. The sons also of Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

4 ¶ Eleazar begat Phinehas, Phinehas begat Abishua,

5 And Abishua begat Bukki, and Bukki begat Uzzi,

6 And Uzzi begat Zerariah, and Zerariah begat Meraioth,

7 Meraioth begat Amariah, and Amariah begat Ahitub,

8 And Ahitub begat Zadok, and Zadok begat Ahimaz,

9 And Ahimaz begat Azariah, and Azariah, begat Johanan,

10 And Johanan begat Azariah, (he it is that executed the priest's office in the temple that Solomon built in Jerusalem:)

11 And Azariah begat Amariah, and Amariah begat Ahitub,

12 And Ahitub begat Zadok, and Zadok begat Shallum,

13 And Shallum begat Hilkiah, and Hilkiah begat Azariah,

14 And Azariah begat Seraiah, and Seraiah begat Jehozadak,

CHAP. VI.

Ver. 1.] The first of these is called Gershon, ver. 16 (see Gen. xlvi. 11; Exod. vi. 16).

Ver. 2. *The sons of Kohath;*] He begins with the genealogy of the second son, because from him sprung the family of the priests.

Amram, Izhar,] The second of these sons is called Amminadab, ver. 22.

Ver. 3. *The children of Amram;*] See Exo. vi. 20. *Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.*] The first two perished for their sin, in offering with strange fire (Lev. x. 1).

Ver. 5.] According to the manner of the Greeks and Latins, who are wont to deprave oriental names, Josephus calls these three Abiezer, Boecias, and Ozi (lib. v. Archæol. cap. 41), and the Chronicon Alexandrinum, as Mr. Selden observes, assigns the very time when they exercised the high-priesthood; Abishua (whom he calls Abiud) in the time of Ehud; Bukki in the time of Shamgar; and Uzzi in the time of Tola. In whose days, the Jews think, the priesthood was translated from the family of Eleazar to that of Ithamar; for some great sin which they had committed; as afterward for the sins of Eli's sons, it was translated back again to Eleazar's posterity. So they say in Juchasin, "In the days of Samson died Uzzi of the family of Eleazar, and the high-priesthood was translated to the family of Ithamar; the first of which was Eli." But, as the Alexandrian Chronicle is of no great authority, so there is no mention, as Mr. Selden observes, of the names of these three persons, as succeeding Phinehas, either in the scripture, or the Hebrew Chronicles, or in Eusebius. But the only high-priest between Eleazar and Eli is Phinehas; who the Jews think was alive in the war with the Benjamites, Judg. xxi. 28 (see lib. i. De Success. ad Pontif. cap. 2). But this cannot be justified.

Ver. 7.] See Ezra vii. 3, where in this genealogy six generations are omitted by him, "from Meraioth to Azariah the son of Johanan," which are here mentioned. This Kimchi thinks was done for brevity's sake.

Ver. 8.] See 2 Sam. viii. 17; xv. 27.

Ver. 10.] The divine writer sets a mark of honour upon Azariah (which he doth not on any of the foregoing) for maintaining his office so resolutely, with the danger of his life, against the usurpation of one of Solomon's successors, who would have offered incense

in that very temple which Solomon had built: of which see 2 Chron. xxvi. 17, 18, &c. The mention of Solomon's temple in this place, plainly denotes that this was written after the second temple was built, or while it was building.

But Lodovicus Capellus is of opinion, that Azariah here spoken of is not he that resisted Uzziah. For such a noble fact as that was, he thinks, would not have been touched in such general words; but he takes him to have been the high-priest in the days of Solomon; and was the first that ministered only in his temple. For Zadok his grandfather, and Ahimaz his father, ministered first in the tabernacle. Therefore to make this agree with that Azariah, he thinks, we ought to acknowledge a double metathesis in these verses, 9—12, which ought to be read thus: "Ahimaz begat Azariah (he is the first that executed the priest's office in the house which Solomon built in Jerusalem), Azariah begat Amariah, Amariah begat Johanan, Johanan begat Azariah, Azariah begat Ahitub, Ahitub begat Zadok." If this be admitted, all the difficulties that arise out of this genealogy are quite removed (see his Chronologia Sacra, Notæ in Tab. xiv. p. 286).

Ver. 12.] Who is called Meshullam, in ch. ix. 11. These three are mentioned nowhere else, but in Neh. xi. 11, though they discharged the high-priest's office in the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, and Manasseh, as Lodovicus Capellus makes account in his Chronol. Sacra, p. 287.

Ver. 14.] When Jerusalem was taken by the king of Babylon's army, Seraiah was carried by the captain of the guard to Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah; where he commanded him to be put to death. So that in him ended the succession of high-priests under the first temple: which from Zadok unto him were twelve. The Jews, in Seder Olam Zula, make them to be eighteen; but they are not to be believed against the scripture: there being also the very same succession mentioned Ezra vii. 1, 2, &c., which beginning from Aaron, the first four of these here mentioned, together with Ahitub the father of Zadok, are omitted for brevity's sake, as Kimchi thinks (see Selden, De Success. ad Pontif. lib. i. cap. 5). But some think it sufficient to say, that it was not the intention of the writer of this book to mention all the high-priests that were from Zadok to Seraiah; because Jehoiada, who was the high-priest in the time of Athaliah, is not here named. He is called indeed

15 And Jehozadak went *into captivity*, when the LORD carried away Judah and Jerusalem by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar.

16 ¶ The sons of Levi; Gershom, Kohath, and Merari.

17 And these *be* the names of the sons of Gershom; Libni, and Shimei.

18 And the sons of Kohath *were*, Amram, and Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel.

19 The sons of Merari; Mahli, and Mushi. And these *are* the families of the Levites according to their fathers.

20 Of Gershom; Libni his son, Jahath his son, Zimham his son,

21 Joah his son, Iddo his son, Zerach his son, Jeaterai his son.

22 The sons of Kohath; Amminadab his son, Korah his son, Assir his son,

23 Elkanah his son, and Ebiasaph his son, and Assir his son,

24 Tahath his son, Uriel his son, Uzziel his son, and Shaul his son.

25 And the sons of Elkanah; Amasai, and Ahimoth.

26 *As for* Elkanah: the sons of Elkanah; Zophai his son, and Nahath his son,

27 Eliab his son, Jeroham his son, Elkanah his son.

28 And the sons of Samuel; the firstborn Vashni, and Abiah.

29 The sons of Merari; Mahli, Libni his son, Shimei his son, Uzza his son,

30 Shimei his son, Haggiah his son, Asaiah his son.

31 And these *are they* whom David set over the service of song in the house of the LORD, after that the ark had rest.

32 And they ministered before the dwelling place of the tabernacle of the congregation with singing, until Solomon had built the house of the LORD in Jerusalem: and *then* they waited on their office according to their order.

33 And these *are they* that waited with their children. Of the sons of the Kohathites: Heman a singer, the son of Joel, the son of Shemuel,

34 The son of Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Eliel, the son of Toah,

every where "Jehoiada the priest:" yet he took upon him such authority, as may well make us suppose him to have been high-priest. It is observed by Kimchi, that the line of the high-priests is drawn from Aaron down to the captivity, through the family of Eleazar his eldest son; none of Ithamar's being mentioned; because the perpetual priesthood was promised only to Phinehas the son of Eleazar (Numb. xxv.).

Ver. 15.] In the captivity he begat Jeshua, who came back in the time of Cyrus (Ezra iii. 2).

Ver. 16.] He hath not yet done with the account he intends to give of Levi's posterity: and therefore repeats the names of his sons, from whom the Levites sprung, who were not priests.

Ver. 17.] Who were not mentioned before.

Ver. 18.] See ver. 2.

Ver. 19. *The sons of Merari;*] See Exod. vi. 19.

These are the families of the Levites according to their fathers.] That is, these were the heads of the families that sprung from them: as it is probable, they that follow in the next catalogue were the chief of their families which continued unto the days of David; who regulated their attendance in their several courses.

Ver. 20.] This last was his grandson by his son Shimei, as appears from ver. 42. But such are frequently called *sons*.

Ver. 22. *Amminadab*] Called Izhar, ver. 2.

Ver. 24. *Uriel*] Called also Zephaniah, ver. 36.

Uzziah] Who went also by the name of Azariah, as that verse tells us.

Ver. 25. *Elkanah;*] He was the son of Korah, mentioned ver. 23, as appears from Exod. vi. 24.

Ver. 26. *As for Elkanah:—Zophai his son.*] Or Zuph, as he is called ver. 35. This is another Elkanah; son it is likely of him last mentioned.

Ver. 27. *Eliab*] Who is called Eliel, ver. 34.

Ver. 28. *The sons of Samuel;*] Who was the son of Elkanah, as we read 1 Sam. i. 1, which being a thing well known, this writer (giving only a brief of these histories) omits the mention of it. But it appears by this account, that Samuel was only a Levite, not of the race of the priests (for he did not descend from Aaron

but from Izhar the uncle of Aaron), much less the high-priest, as some great men have fancied (see Selden, *De Success. ad Pontif. lib. i. cap. 14*).

Vashni, and Abiah.] The first of these is called Joel, 1 Sam. viii. 2, and here below, ver. 33.

Ver. 31. *These are they*] Having thus far deduced the genealogy of the Levites, he proceeds now to give an account how David ordered their attendance upon the service of God at the tabernacle: and sets down the names of the chief of them, which here follow.

Whom David set over the service of song] Appointed to minister unto God by singing of songs in his house.

After that the ark had rest.] After David had brought it from the house of Obad-edom, and settled it at Jerusalem (2 Sam. viii. 17).

Ver. 32. *They ministered before the dwelling place of the tabernacle*] Which David had prepared for the ark, when it came to Jerusalem (2 Sam. viii. 17).

With singing.] The Psalms which David and other prophets composed.

Until Solomon had built the house of the Lord] Before the temple was built by Solomon they performed this service: which did not cease after it was built, but continued in great order, as it here follows.

Then they waited on their office according to their order.] Which David himself had constituted a little before his death: as we read in the latter end of this book.

Ver. 33. *Shemuel,*] That is, of Samuel the great prophet: whose name, it appears by this, was differently pronounced in different times and places. This place also still shows more clearly, that Samuel was only a Levite of the family of the Kohathites, not a priest of the family of Aaron, which is suggested by the psalmist (Ps. xcix.), "Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name." Therefore, as Estius observes, when Samuel is said to have offered sacrifice (as he did often in Gilgal and other places), it must be understood that he did it by the ministry of the priests, not by himself. And thus David and Solomon sacrificed, but not by their own hands, but by those to whose office it properly belonged. This Heman was so eminent for his skill in singing, that he is thought to have been

- 35 The son of Zuph, the son of Elkanah, the son of Mahath, the son of Amasai,
 36 The son of Elkanah, the son of Joel, the son of Azariah, the son of Zephaniah,
 37 The son of Tahath, the son of Assir, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah,
 38 The son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, the son of Israel.
 39 And his brother Asaph, who stood on his right hand, *even* Asaph the son of Berachiah, the son of Shimea,
 40 The son of Michael, the son of Baaseiah, the son of Malchiah,
 41 The son of Ethni, the son of Zerah, the son of Adaiah,
 42 The son of Ethan, the son of Zimmah, the son of Shimci,
 43 The son of Jahath, the son of Gershom, the son of Levi,
 44 And their brethren the sons of Merari stood on the left hand: Ethan the son of Kishi, the son of Abdi, the son of Malluch,
 45 The son of Hashabiah, the son of Amaziah, the son of Hilkiah,
 46 The son of Amzi, the son of Bani, the son of Shamer,
 47 The son of Mahli, the son of Mushi, the son of Merari, the son of Levi.

a composer of hymns: which I have considered in my notes upon 1 Kings iv.

Ver. 34. *Toah.*] Called Nahath, ver. 26.

Ver. 35. *Zuph.*] Called Zophai, ver. 26.

Ver. 36—38.] Thus, in honour of Samuel, the pedegree of Heman, who was his grandson, is derived from Israel the father of them all.

Ver. 39.] This depends upon ver. 33, where it is said, "these are they that waited with their children," &c., viz. Heman and Asaph: who is called Heman's brother, according to the Hebrew phrase; in which all near kindred are called brothers. And these two were of the same tribe and family, and also of the same employment: upon which account, if there were no other, he might be called the brother of Heman.

Ver. 43.] There was no need to add "the son of Israel:" for it is apparent they sprung from the same stock, by two brethren, the sons of Levi.

Ver. 44. *Their brethren the sons of Merari stood on the left hand:*] In like manner the children of the next son of Levi are here mentioned; who had the lowest place assigned, because they were of the youngest family. So there were three principal singers, who were masters and governors of the whole choir; Heman, descended from Kohath, was the prime, who, together with his sons, stood in the middle: and then Asaph, descended from Gershom, with his sons, stood on his right hand: and Ethan and Merari on the left. Of these three families there were three principal persons, who bore rule over the rest of the singers here mentioned, and kept good order among them. And indeed there was an admirable order observed, in the whole ministry at the tabernacle: three great men, and their sons, were singers and musicians; the rest of the Levites prepared and made ready the sacrifices; the priests offered them; and the high-priest officiated in the most holy place, as it here follows.

Ethan] He who is here called Ethan, is called Jethuthan, ch. ix. 16, and in many other places.

Ver. 47.] It is observable, that, in all the genealogies of the Levites, there is not a word said of the

48 Their brethren also the Levites were appointed unto all manner of service of the tabernacle of the house of God.

49 ¶ But Aaron and his sons offered upon the altar of the burnt offering, and on the altar of incense, and were appointed for all the work of the place most holy, and to make an atonement for Israel, according to all that Moses the servant of God had commanded.

50 And these are the sons of Aaron; Eleazar his son, Phinehas his son, Abishua his son,

51 Bukki his son, Uzzi his son, Zerariah his son,

52 Meraioth his son, Amariah his son, Ahitub his son,

53 Zadok his son, Ahinaaz his son.

54 ¶ Now these are their dwelling places throughout their castles in their coasts, of the sons of Aaron, of the families of the Kohathites: for their's was the lot.

55 And they gave them Hebron in the land of Judah, and the suburbs thereof round about it.

56 But the fields of the city, and the villages thereof, they gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh.

57 And to the sons of Aaron they gave the cities of Judah, *namely*, Hebron, *the city* of refuge, and Libnah with her suburbs, and Jattir, and Esh-temoa, with their suburbs,

sons of Moses and their posterity: he having no ambition to prefer them unto any office, either in church or state.

Ver. 48. *Their brethren also the Levites*] The rest of that tribe, who were not fit to be singers.

Were appointed unto all manner of service of the tabernacle] They performed all the laborious work that was to be done in the tabernacle; being porters, keepers of the vessels of the sanctuary, as well as taking care to prepare the sacrifices, and such-like things. Of which an account is given below in ch. xxiii. and these following.

Ver. 49.] The noblest part of the ministry was reserved for Aaron and his posterity: which is mentioned at large in the book of Leviticus. Which shows that Aaron alone, and his successors in the high-priesthood, ministered in "the place most holy," and made the atonement: but his sons, the priests, offered on the altars "of burnt-offering and of incense."

Ver. 53.] Having mentioned the high-priest's office, he sets down the succession of it from Aaron to the time of David: which he had done before more largely to the time of the captivity (ver. 3, 4, &c.). There was no age like to this of David's, as Victorinus Strigelius observes; which produced so many great men, that he calls it the prophetic age. Wherein God raised up Samuel, Nathan, Gad, Heman, Asaph, and Ethan: who made the word of God dwell plentifully in the church of Israel in all wisdom.

Ver. 54. *Now these are their dwelling places—of the families of the Kohathites:*] Now follows an account of the places where they inhabited: and first of the habitation of the sons of Aaron, who were the noblest of the Kohathites.

For their's was the lot.] That is, the first lot fell to them (see Josh. xxi. 4).

Ver. 55.] See Josh. xxi. 10, 11.

Ver. 56.] See Josh. xxi. 12.

Ver. 57.] Besides the forenamed city of Hebron (which is mentioned again, because the most eminent)

58 And Hilen with her suburbs, Debir with her suburbs,

59 And Ashan with her suburbs, and Bethshemesh with her suburbs:

60 And out of the tribe of Benjamin, Geba with her suburbs, and Alemeth with her suburbs, and Anathoth with her suburbs. All their cities throughout their families were thirteen cities.

61 And unto the sons of Kohath, which were left of the family of that tribe, were cities given out of the half tribe, namely, out of the half tribe of Manasseh, by lot, ten cities.

62 And to the sons of Gershom throughout their families out of the tribe of Issachar, and out of the tribe of Asher, and out of the tribe of Naphtali, and out of the tribe of Manasseh in Bashan, thirteen cities.

63 Unto the sons of Merari were given by lot, throughout their families, out of the tribe of Reuben, and out of the tribe of Gad, and out of the tribe of Zebulun, twelve cities.

64 And the children of Israel gave to the Levites these cities with their suburbs.

65 And they gave by lot out of the tribe of the children of Judah, and out of the tribe of the children of Simeon, and out of the tribe of the children of Benjamin, these cities, which are called by their names.

66 And the residue of the families of the sons of Kohath had cities of their coasts out of the tribe of Ephraim.

67 And they gave unto them, of the cities of refuge, Shechem in mount Ephraim with her suburbs; they gave also Gezer with her suburbs,

68 And Jokmeam with her suburbs, and Bethoron with her suburbs,

69 And Ajalon with her suburbs, and Gathrimmon with her suburbs:

70 And out of the half tribe of Manasseh; Aner with her suburbs, and Bileam with her suburbs, for the family of the remnant of the sons of Kohath.

71 Unto the sons of Gershom were given out of the family of the half tribe of Manasseh, Golan, in Bashan with her suburbs, and Ashtaroth with her suburbs:

72 And out of the tribe of Issachar; Kedesh with her suburbs, Daberath with her suburbs,

73 And Ramoth with her suburbs, and Anem with her suburbs:

74 And out of the tribe of Asher; Mashal with her suburbs, and Abdon with her suburbs,

75 And Hukok with her suburbs, and Rehob with her suburbs:

76 And out of the tribe of Naphtali; Kedesh in Galilee with her suburbs, and Hammon with her suburbs, and Kirjathaim with her suburbs.

77 Unto the rest of the children of Merari were given out of the tribe of Zebulun, Rimmon with her suburbs, Tabor with her suburbs:

78 And on the other side Jordan by Jericho, on the east side of Jordan, were given them out of the tribe of Reuben, Bezer in the wilderness with her suburbs, and Jahzah with her suburbs,

79 Kedemoth also with her suburbs, and Mephaath with her suburbs:

80 And out of the tribe of Gad; Ramoth in Gilead with her suburbs, and Mahanaim with her suburbs,

81 And Heshbon with her suburbs, and Jazer with her suburbs.

they gave them these following, which were in the same tribe of Judah.

Ver. 58. *Hilen*.] Called Holcn in the book of Joshua (ch. xxi. 15).

Debir.] Mentioned in the same place.

Ver. 59. *Ashan*.] Called Ain, Josh. xxi. 16.

Bethshemesh.] Mentioned in the same place.

Ver. 60. *Alemeth*.] Called Almon, Josh. xxi. 18.

Thirteen cities.] Whereof there are only eleven here mentioned: but there are two more added in the book of Joshua, viz. Jutta and Gibeon, which make thirteen, ch. xxi. 16, 17. Perhaps they were not yet rebuilt when this book was written.

Ver. 61. *And unto the sons of Kohath, which were left of the family of that tribe*.] Who were not of the sons of Aaron, but descended from Kohath.

Ten cities.] Some of these cities were taken out of the tribe of Manasseh, and some out of others; as appears from Josh. xxi. But in all they made ten (ver. 26).

Ver. 62.] Their cities were assigned them in these several tribes, because they were too many to be contained in one.

Ver. 64.] To the tribe of Levi, consisting of priests and simple Levites, these cities were given, which are here mentioned in this chapter.

Ver. 65.] These three tribes were very near one to another; and in several places Simeon mixed together with the other two.

These cities, which are called by their names.] Which are recited in the foregoing verses (ver. 57, &c.), and given to the sons of Aaron.

Ver. 66.] By *coasts* here is meant portions: which

were assigned them, though they were not priests, for their support in a lower ministry. These things seem to be mentioned so often, and with such exactness, that it might appear what care was taken by God for the maintenance of his ministers of all sorts; and for the instruction of his people, among whom he dispersed the Levites, who were peculiarly devoted to his service.

Ver. 67.] These were places of great eminence, unto which there was great resort: which gave them the greater opportunity of doing good. They are both expressly mentioned Josh. xxi. 21.

Ver. 70.] The city here called *Bileam* is called *Ibleam* in the book of Joshua; length of time making greater alterations in the names both of persons and places than this is, as appears by several other places here mentioned. For, as Kimchi here well notes (which frivolous cavillers should observe), the divine writers did not affect accuracy in such matters as these; but took names as they found them.

Ver. 71.] From Golan came the Gaulonites.

Ver. 76. *Hammon*.] That place which here is called *Hammon*, is in Josh. xxi. 32, called *Hammoth*: from whence some argue, that one of these places is corrupted, and they fancy this, because the LXX. here hath Χαμθθ. As though the name of some place and person (as I said before) may not be differently pronounced in different times and countries. As Achar and Achar, mentioned above.

Ver. 81. *Heshbon*.] The first of these, Heshbon, was reckoned to be in the tribe of Reuben as well as in Gad. Of which see Josh. xiii. 17.

CHAPTER VII.

1 *The sons of Issachar, 6 of Benjamin, 13 of Naphtali, 14 of Manasseh, 20, 24 and of Ephraim. 21 The calamity of Ephraim by the men of Gath. 23 Beriah is born. 28 Ephraim's habitations. 30 The sons of Asher.*

1 Now the sons of Issachar *were*, Tola, and Puah, Jashub, and Shimrom, four.

2 And the sons of Tola; Uzzi, and Rephaiah, and Jeriel, and Jahmai, and Jibsam, and Shemuel, heads of their father's house, *to wit*, of Tola: *they were* valiant men of might in their generations; whose number *was* in the days of David two and twenty thousand and six hundred.

3 And the sons of Uzzi; Izrahiah: and the sons of Izrahiah; Michael, and Obadiah, and Joel, Ishiah, five: all of them chief men.

4 And with them, by their generations, after the house of their fathers, *were* bands of soldiers for war, six and thirty thousand *men*: for they had many wives and sons.

5 And their brethren among all the families of Issachar *were* valiant men of might, reckoned in all by their genealogies fourscore and seven thousand.

6 ¶ *The sons of Benjamin; Bela, and Becher, and Jedaiel, three.*

7 And the sons of Bela; Ezbon, and Uzzi, and Uzziel, and Jerimoth, and Iri, five; heads of the house of *their* fathers, mighty men of

valour; and were reckoned by their genealogies twenty and two thousand and thirty and four.

8 And the sons of Becher; Zemira, and Joash, and Eliezer, and Elioenai, and Omri, and Jerimoth, and Abiah, and Anathoth, and Alameth. All these *are* the sons of Becher.

9 And the number of them, after their genealogy by their generations, heads of the house of their fathers, mighty men of valour, *was* twenty thousand and two hundred.

10 The sons also of Jedaiel; Bilhan: and the sons of Bilhan; Jeush, and Benjamin, and Ehud, and Chenaanah, and Zethan, and Tharshish, and Abishahar.

11 All these the sons of Jedaiel, by the heads of their fathers, mighty men of valour, *were* seventeen thousand and two hundred *soldiers*, fit to go out for war *and* battle.

12 Shupim also, and Hupim, the children of Iri, *and* Hushim, the sons of Aher.

13 ¶ *The sons of Naphtali; Jahziel, and Guni, and Jezer, and Shallum, the sons of Bilhan.*

14 ¶ *The sons of Manasseh; Ashriel, whom*

CHAP. VII.

Ver. 1.] There is some little difference in the names of two of these, as they are mentioned Gen. xlv. And Jashub seems to have been called Job, for brevity's sake; just as Aram is called Ram, and among us Alexander is called Saunder. See Buxtorf's Anticritica, par. ii. cap. 8, where Rasi gives another account of it, but not so likely.

Ver. 2.] When David numbered the people (2 Sam. xxiv.), there were found thus many descended from the first-born of Issachar; which was a very great increase.

Ver. 3. *The sons of Uzzi; Izrahiah:* He names but one son; therefore all his posterity is comprehended in the name of sons.

The sons of Izrahiah; Michael, and Obadiah, and Joel, Ishiah, five:] Reckoning their father for one, they were five in all; and persons of great authority,

Ver. 4. *And with them,—were bands of soldiers for war.*] As they were numerous, so they were of a warlike spirit; which made them very considerable.

For they had many wives and sons.] They were very fruitful, and propagated the more, because they had many wives, who bare them many sons: and those sons, it is likely, took many wives also, for the greater increase of their family. For this was the cause of polygamy among them, the desire of a numerous offspring (whereby God's promise to Abraham, of making them as the stars of heaven for multitude, might be fulfilled), and of a holy race of people to propagate piety, when the nations of the world were generally corrupted (see ch. viii. 40).

Ver. 5. *Their brethren*] That is, their kindred.

Among all the families of Issachar were valiant men of might,—fourscore and seven thousand.] There was no such great increase of the rest of the families of Issachar, since in all they amounted but to

this number: and from two of his sons sprung above fifty-eight thousand.

Ver. 6.] He mentions no more in this place; but in the next chapter (ver. 1, 2) he mentions five: they were ten in all, as we read in Gen. xlv. 21. But either half of them died without issue, or their families were extinct, or their genealogies lost.

Ver. 7.] There are others mentioned as his sons, chap. viii. 8, therefore it is likely these were his grandsons; who, being more eminent than their fathers, were mentioned as the chief of their several families, from whence they sprung.

Ver. 9.] They were not so many as those descended from the eldest son; and the youngest son had still fewer.

Ver. 10. *The sons also of Jedaiel; Bilhan:*] He mentions but one; who includes all descended from him.

Ver. 12. *Shupim also, and Hupim, the children of Iri,*] Or of Iri, as he is called, ver. 7, the youngest son of Bela; whose sons are called Hupim and Moppim, Gen. xlv. 21. In which book there are other proper names of men in the plural number (Gen. x. 13, 14; xxv. 3).

And Hushim, the sons of Aher.] If he still speak of the sons of Benjamin, this person was called Ahiram, Numb. xxvi. 39. But there being no mention of the tribe of Dan in this genealogy, unless it be here, many take Aher not to be a proper name, but a common word, signifying *other*: and so translate the words thus, *another son*: that is, the son of another tribe or family, viz. of Dan. For Hushim was his only son, Gen. xlv. 23; where the word *sons*, though he speak of one man only, is used as it is in this place.

Ver. 13.] The sons of Bilhan were Naphtali and Dan. Therefore these were her grandsons by the first of them.

Ver. 14. *The sons of Manasseh; Ashriel,*] His great

she bare: (*but his concubine the Aramitess bare Machir the father of Gilead:*)

15 And Machir took to wife *the sister of Huppim and Shuppim*, whose sister's name was Maachah; and the name of the second was Zelophehad: and Zelophehad had daughters.

16 And Maachah the wife of Machir bare a son, and she called his name Peresh; and the name of his brother was Sheresh; and his sons were Ulam and Rakem,

17 And the sons of Ulam; Bedan. *These were the sons of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh.*

18 And his sister Hammoleketh bare Ishod, and Abiezer, and Mahalah.

19 And the sons of Shemidah were, Ahian, and Shechem, and Likhi, and Aniam.

20 ¶ And the sons of Ephraim; Shuthelah, and Bered his son, and Tahath his son, and Eladah his son, and Tahath his son,

21 ¶ And Zabad his son, and Shuthelah his son, and Ezer, and Elead, whom the men of Gath *that were born in that land* slew, because they came down to take away their cattle.

22 And Ephraim their father mourned many days, and his brethren came to comfort him.

23 ¶ And when he went in to his wife, she conceived, and bare a son, and he called his name Beriah, because it went evil with his house.

24 (And his daughter was Sherah, who built Beth-horon the nether, and the upper, and Uzzensherah.)

25 And Rephah was his son, also Resheph, and Telah his son, and Tahan his son,

26 Laadan his son, Ammihud his son, Elishama his son,

27 Non his son, Jehoshuah his son.

28 ¶ And their possessions and habitations were, Beth-el and the towns thereof, and eastward Naaran, and westward Gezer, with the

grandson; for both he and Zelophehad were the sons of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh (see Numb. xxvi. 29, &c. xxvii. 1).

Whom she bare:] That is, whom his wife bare; for his concubine is here opposed to her, in the next words.

But his concubine the Aramitess bare Machir the father of Gilead:] He took a Syrian woman to wife, from whom his chief posterity descended.

Ver. 15. *Machir took to wife the sister of Huppim and Shuppim.*] He married into the tribe of Benjamin, whose sons these were.

The name of the second son was Zelophehad:] This relates to the beginning of ver. 14, where his first son Ashriel is mentioned.

Zelophehad had daughters.] No sons, but only daughters; as we read in the book of Numbers, ch. xxvii.

Ver. 18.] That is, the sister of Gilead, as Kimchi understands it (though some take her to have been the sister of Bedan), who was an illustrious woman, and therefore here mentioned, and, as the Targum imagines, was a queen; that is, governess of a certain tract of land in the country of Gilead. For he takes Hammoleketh not for a proper name, but for an appellative: of which there is no mention neither in the law nor in the prophets, as Kimchi confesses; but they have this by tradition. Which, though it be very groundless, the vulgar Latin follows it, and translates this word *regina*. Which Estius ingeniously acknowledges to be a mistake.

Ver. 19.] There is no mention of Shemidah before. But he is supposed to be another son of Gilead's sister before named.

Ver. 20.] Some will have all these to be the sons of Ephraim: but the most natural sense seems to be that Bered was the son of Shuthelah, and Tahath the son of Bered, &c. and so on to the following descendants of Ephraim, whose genealogy is now related.

Ver. 21.] This piece of history is nowhere else recorded: which in all likelihood fell out before the children of Israel came out of the land of Egypt. For Ephraim, it appears by the next verse, was alive when these children of his were slain. Who, as the Targum thinks, mistook in their computation of the end of the years, wherein they were to be slaves in Egypt, and imagining them to be expired, made an inroad into the land of Canaan to take possession of it before the time they were to enjoy it. But others think it proceeded from their desire of prey and spoil, which

they thought they might lawfully get from those whose country they were to possess: and they presumed the more to make this attempt, because they were valiant men, and proud, perhaps, of the great power and authority which their ancestor Joseph had in Egypt. Though others think it more probable, that the Philistines having infested them in the land of Goshen, these sons of Zabad broke into their country to make reprisals upon their cattle. Dr. Lightfoot (in his conclusion of his Annotations on Genesis), quite contrary, thinks that the men of Gath went to plunder in Egypt, and there slew these Ephraimites, who only stood up in defence of their cattle. And those words, "that were born in the land," he thinks, signify these men of Gath were born in Egypt, though they now dwelt in Gath. So the men of Gath were the plunderers, and not the Ephraimites. But they who take the Ephraimites to have been the invaders, think those words are added, to show that the Philistines were the more incensed against them; because they seemed to come to dispossess them of their land.

Ver. 22. *Ephraim their father*] They were his grandchildren.

Mourned many days, and his brethren came to comfort him.] That is, his kindred (as the word *brethren* often signifies), they that were of his family came to condole with him. This shows Ephraim lived to be a very old man, if this happened near to the time of their going out of Egypt.

Ver. 23.] For so the word *beriah*, imports: his family was in an ill condition.

Ver. 24.] She was, it seems, a very great woman: who restored both those cities of Beth-horon, which were destroyed by the Israelites, when they conquered the land of Canaan, and rebuilt them in the same place, adding another city, which carried her own name in it.

Ver. 25. *Rephah was his son*] i. e. The son of Beriah. *Also Resheph, and Telah his son, and Tahan*] Beriah also had another son, whose name was Resheph, whose son was Telah, &c.

Ver. 26.] Who was the chief commander in the tribe of Ephraim when they were in the wilderness (Numb. i. 10).

Ver. 27.] For whose sake his pedigree seems to be thus largely deduced.

Ver. 28. *Their possessions and habitations were Beth-el*] See Josh. xvi. 1, &c.

Unto Gaza and the towns thereof:] Or rather Ad-

towns thereof; Shechem also and the towns thereof unto Gaza and the towns thereof;

29 And by the borders of the children of Manasseh, Beth-shean and her towns, Taanach and her towns, Megiddo and her towns, Dor and her towns. In these dwelt the children of Joseph the son of Israel.

30 ¶ The sons of Asher; Imnah, and Isnah, and Ishuai, and Beriah, and Serah their sister.

31 And the sons of Beriah; Heber, and Malchiel, who is the father of Birzavith.

32 And Heber begat Japhlet, and Shomer, and Hotham, and Shua their sister.

33 And the sons of Japhlet; Pasach, and Bimhal, and Ashvath. These are the children of Japhlet.

azea, a place so called: for their border did not extend so far as Gaza in the land of the Philistines.

Ver. 29.] That is, the children of Manasseh (see Josh. xvi. 11).

Ver. 30.] See the same account of them in Gen. xli. 17.

Ver. 31.] The first two of these were born before they went into Egypt, as appears from Gen. xli. 18.

Ver. 34.] The father of these was the second brother of Japhlet, called Shomer, ver. 32.

Ver. 35. *The sons of his brother*] That is, of Hotham, who was next brother to Shamer.

Ver. 38.] This Jether is the same that is called in the verse foregoing Ithran; the youngest son but one

34 And the sons of Shamer; Ahi, and Rohgah, Jehubbah, and Aram.

35 And the sons of his brother Helem; Zophah, and Imna, and Shelesh, and Amal.

36 The sons of Zophah; Suah, and Harnepher, and Shual, and Beri, and Imrah,

37 Bezer, and Hod, and Shamma, and Shilshah, and Ithran, and Beera.

38 And the sons of Jether; Jephunneh, and Pispah, and Ara.

39 And the sons of Ulla; Arah, and Haniel, and Rezia.

40 All these were the children of Asher, heads of their father's house, choice and mighty men of valour, chief of the princes. And the number throughout the genealogy of them that were apt to the war and to battle was twenty and six thousand men.

of Zophah: the rest had no sons, or their genealogy was lost.

Ver. 39.] We do not read whose son Ulla was; but it is probable of Jether; whereof there are many examples in the foregoing chapters.

Ver. 40. *All these were the children of Asher,*] Of these only he gives an account, and takes no notice of inferior families: though they are included, I suppose, in the following number.

The number—that were apt to the war and to battle was twenty and six thousand men.] Though they lived in a rich and delicious country, abounding with wine and oil, and other good things, in the best part of Galilee; yet they did not give themselves up to sloth and laziness, but were a warlike and valiant people.

CHAPTER VIII.

1 The sons and chief men of Benjamin. 33 The stock of Saul and Jonathan.

1 Now Benjamin begat Bela his firstborn, Ashbel the second, and Aharah the third,

2 Nohah the fourth, and Rapha the fifth.

3 And the sons of Bela were, Addar, and Gera, and Abihud,

4 And Abishua, and Naaman, and Ahoah,

5 And Gera, and Shephuphan, and Huram.

6 And these are the sons of Ehud: these are

the heads of the fathers of the inhabitants of Geba, and they removed them to Manahath:

7 And Naaman, and Ahiah, and Gera, he removed them, and begat Uzza, and Ahihud.

8 And Shaharaim begat children in the country of Moab, after he had sent them away; Hushim and Baara were his wives.

9 And he begat of Hodesh his wife, Jobab, and Zibia, and Meshah, and Malcham,

CHAP. VIII.

Ver. 1. *Now Benjamin begat Bela*] He goes over the genealogy of this tribe again (which he had begun before in the foregoing chapter, ver. 6) and gives a larger account of it, because it was entirely joined to the tribe of Judah; and likewise, that he might make way for the following history, and touch upon the generations of Saul; and show how this tribe was increased again, after that great calamity which befel them in the time of the judges.

Ashbel the second, and Aharah the third,] His firstborn, Bela, is expressly so called by Moses, Gen. xli. 21, but all the rest are called by very different names. Therefore, either these were his grand-children (who are frequently called *sons*), or they had two names, which I showed before was not unusual (see ch. iii. 1).

Ver. 5. *Gera,*] It is likely this was the son of the forenamed, and so grandson to Bela,

Ver. 6. *These are the sons of Ehud;*] Who is not named before; unless he be the third son of Bela, called Abihud, ver. 3. And some think the three persons last named to have been his sons.

Geba,] Where their first settlement was.

They removed them to Manahath;] That is, Gera removed them, as it follows, ver. 7, to a place mentioned before in the second chapter of this book, ver. 52, 54, Geba being too narrow for them, when they were multiplied: or, this other place being a more commodious habitation.

Ver. 7. *Begat Uzza and Ahihud.*] After his removal.

Ver. 8.] After the removal before mentioned, this person took two wives of the country of Moab; whose names are here set down. To show (say some of the Jews) that though a Moabite was excluded from the congregation of the Lord, yet a Moabitess was not; as appears by the example of Ruth.

Ver. 9. *He begat of Hodesh his wife.*] The Jews

10 And Jeuz, and Shachia, and Mirma. These were his sons, heads of the fathers.

11 And of Hushim he begat Abitub, and Elpaal.

12 The sons of Elpaal; Eber, and Misham, and Shamed, who built Ono, and Lod, with the towns thereof:

13 Beriah also, and Shema, who were heads of the fathers of the inhabitants of Aijalon, who drove away the inhabitants of Gath.

14 And Ahio, Shashak, and Jeremoth,

15 And Zebadiah, and Arad, and Ader,

16 And Michael, and Ispah, and Joha, the sons of Beriah;

17 And Zebadiah, and Meshullam, and Hezeki, and Heber,

18 Ishmerai also, and Jeziah, and Jobab, the sons of Elpaal;

19 And Jakim, and Zichri, and Zabdi,

20 And Elienai, and Zilthai, and Eliel,

21 And Adaiab, and Beraiah, and Shimrath, the sons of Shimhi;

22 And Ishpan, and Heber, and Eliel,

23 And Abdon, and Zichri, and Hanan,

24 And Hananiah, and Elam, and Antothijah,

25 And Iphedeiah, and Penuel, the sons of Shashak;

26 And Shamsheraï, and Shehariah, and Athaliah,

27 And Jaresiah, and Eliah, and Zichri, the sons of Jeroham.

28 These were heads of the fathers, by their generations, chief men. These dwelt in Jerusalem.

29 And at Gibeon dwelt the father of Gibeon; whose wife's name was Maachah:

30 And his firstborn son Abdon, and Zur, and Kish, and Baal, and Nadab,

31 And Gedor, and Abio, and Zacher.

32 And Mikloth begat Shimeah. And these also dwelt with their brethren in Jerusalem, over against them.

33 ¶ And Ner begat Kish, and Kish begat Saul, and Saul begat Jonathan, and Malchishua, and Abinadab, and Esh-baal.

think she is the same with Baara: who was called Hodesh, that is *new*, because he renewed the example of marrying a Moabitish woman: which was first practised in Ruth. But this is an odd fancy of theirs, who misplace the time of Ruth.

Ver. 10. *Heads of the fathers.*] Chief men in their families.

Ver. 11.] On this verse the Jews ground what they say of Hodesh, that she was the same with Baara, mentioned ver. 8, with Hushim as his other wife.

Ver. 12. *Ono, and Lod.*] These two, Ono and Lod, are joined together in other places, being neighbouring cities (see Ezra ii. 33; Neh. vi. 37; xi. 33). They were but three miles distant one from the other, as Dr. Lightfoot computes in his Chorographical Decads before St. Mark, ch. 9. sect. ult. where he shows the Talmudists say, that Ono was a walled city from the days of Joshua; but in the war against Gibeon it was burnt with fire, as other cities were; and rebuilt by this Elpaal: who also re-edified Lod, which is the same with Lydda in the New Testament, as the same Dr. Lightfoot observes in his Chorographical Century before St. Matthew. Where he observes, the author of the maps of the land of Canaan hath placed Lydda not far from Jordan, and Lod near the Mediterranean: whereas they are one and the same place, as he shows at large. And in the other place, mentioned before, he shows that it was also called Laodicea: for sometimes they speak of the *martyrs in Lod*, and in other places call them the *martyrs in Laodicea*.

Ver. 13. *Of the inhabitants of Aijalon.*] That is, of the fields that lay about Aijalon: for the town itself belonged to the tribe of Dan (Josh. xix. 42).

Who drove away the inhabitants of Gath.] In revenge (as Pellicanus thinks) of the slaughter they made long ago of their brethren the Ephraimites (ch. vii. 21): or, finding the men of Gath had possessed themselves of this place, they drove them out after their return from the captivity of Babylon. But we read of no war after their return till the time of the Maccabees: and, therefore, this belongs (as a most judicious friend of mine, Dr. Alix, observes) to what was done in more ancient times, viz. after the division of the country by Joshua.

Ver. 16.] Mentioned before, ver. 13.

Ver. 18.] Of whom we had an account before (ver. 11, 12).

Ver. 21. *Shimhi.*] It is likely that this Shimhi is the same with him who is called Shema, ver. 13.

Ver. 25. *Shashak.*] This Shashak was an eminent person, mentioned ver. 14.

Ver. 26. Here is another instance of the same name being common with men and women.

Ver. 27. *Jeroham.*] He is the same with Jeremoth, mentioned ver. 14 next to Shashak.

Ver. 28.] It is probable that all these mentioned from ver. 14, dwelt at Jerusalem (one part of which belonged to the tribe of Benjamin), as they that are forenamed did at Aijalon.

Ver. 29.] Perhaps Gibeon built this city, and gave his name to it, as Kimchi conjectures. But his proper name was Jehiel (as we read, ch. ix. 35, where this genealogy is repeated); and he is called "the father of Gibeon," because he was the chief ruler or governor of the Benjamites, who inhabited that place.

Ver. 30. Between Baal and Nadab, there is mention of another son called Ner, ch. ix. 36.

Ver. 31. *Zacher.*] Who is called Zachariah, in ch. ix. 37, where another son is added, called Mikloth, whose posterity here follows.

Ver. 32. *Shimeah.*] Who is called Shimeam, ch. ix. 38.

These also dwelt with their brethren in Jerusalem, over against them.] These families likewise were settled at Jerusalem, as well as the forenamed: and dwelt in a part of the city directly over against the other.

Ver. 33. *Ner begat Kish, and Kish begat Saul.*] I observed before, ver. 30, that Ner was one of the sons of Gibeon (or Jehiel), who did not beget (in the common signification of the word) Kish; but educated him, and bred him up. For Kish was the son of Abiel: but different from him mentioned 1 Sam. xiv. 51, who was his brother. The Targum here saith, that Ner and Abiel were the same men, who had two names: Abiel was his proper name, but he was called Ner (which signifies a *light*), because he was illustrious upon some accounts which the Jews mention. See upon 1 Sam. ix. 1, where there is a large account of the ancestors of Abiel, none of which are here mentioned. Upon which Conradus Pellicanus makes this reflection: "That hence we may learn, it is an unnecessary labour scrupulously to inquire after these things, from which we can reap no fruit, and of which

34 And the son of Jonathan *was* Merib-baal; and Merib-baal begat Micah.

35 And the sons of Micah *were*, Pithon, and Melech, and Tarea, and Ahaz.

36 And Ahaz begat Jehoahaz; and Jehoahaz begat Alemeth, and Azmaveth, and Zimri; and Zimri begat Moza.

37 And Moza begat Binea: Rapha *was* his son, Eleasah his son, Azel his son:

38 And Azel had six sons, whose names *are*

these, Azrikam, Bocheru, and Ishmael, and She-ariah, and Obadiah, and Hanan. All these *were* the sons of Azel.

39 And the sons of Eshek his brother *were*, Ulam his firstborn, Jehush the second, and Eli-phetlet the third.

40 And the sons of Ulam *were* mighty men of valour, archers, and had many sons, and sons' sons, an hundred and fifty. All these *are* of the sons of Benjamin.

we may be ignorant without danger. Especially in the matter of these genealogies; the reason of which is long ago expired, together with the tribes to which they belong. As for the certainty of our belief, which depends upon the authority of the holy scriptures, that stands firm and constant, though some things by the length of time be so obscure, that they are not now exactly understood, especially in the difference we find in the proper names of persons and places, which without any prejudice to the faith may be neglected." Thus he.

Esh-baal.] Who is called also Ish-bosheth (see 2 Sam. ii. 8).

Ver. 34. *Merib-baal.*] This son of Jonathan is called commonly Mephibosheth (see in the forenamed place).

Ver. 35.] The third of these is called Tahrea, ch. ix. 41.

Ver. 39.] We read nothing of Eshek before, unless he be the same with Eleasah, ver. 37.

Thus the family of Saul, though he was rejected by God from being king of Israel, was blessed with a numerous progeny, which sprung from his great-grandchild Micah, whose posterity is here largely recorded in honour of Jonathan.

Ver. 40. *Archers.*] In the Hebrew the word for archers is, those that tread the bow, because their steel bows (which were much in use among them) were so strong, that they could not bend them with their arms; but sat down, and pressing them with their feet, pulled the arrow with both hands, that it might fly with greater force.

All these *are* of the sons of Benjamin.] Who, it appears by Judg. xx. were a very valiant tribe: and this family, in particular, were noted to be very great, both in number and valour.

CHAPTER IX.

1 *The original of Israel's and Judah's genealogies, with Nethinims, which dwell in Jerusalem.*

2 *The Israelites, 10 the priests, 14 and the Levites.* 35 *The stock of Saul and Jonathan.*

1 So all Israel were reckoned by genealogies; and, behold, they *were* written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah, *who* were carried away to Babylon for their transgression.

2 ¶ Now the first inhabitants that *dwell* in

their possessions in their cities *were*, the Israelites, the priests, Levites, and the Nethinims.

3 And in Jerusalem dwelt of the children of Judah, and of the children of Benjamin, and of the children of Ephraim, and Manasseh;

CHAP. IX.

Ver. 1. *So all Israel were reckoned by genealogies.*] As much as to say, Thus I have summarily reckoned up the genealogies of all the tribes; as I found them in the public registers.

They were written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah.] For, let it be noted, they were so careful to preserve their genealogies, that they were kept in the public records, not only of the Jews, but of the Israelites: whose kings were not negligent in this matter.

Who were carried away to Babylon] These last mentioned, of the tribe of Judah, were carried thither; as the Israelites had been before into remote countries, upon the same account of their idolatry. In which captivity there was, no doubt, a great confusion made in their families: but Ezra, by the help of the prophets Haggai and Malachi (as the Jews think), undertook to set them right, by giving an account of what he found remaining in his time. Though there is a great difference of names in Neh. xi. from those who are here mentioned: Malachi, also, and Ezra did not live in the same time.

Ver. 2. *Now the first inhabitants—were.*] He speaks of those that came back to their own country with Zerubbabel.

The Israelites, the priests, Levites, and the Ne-

thinims.] The first inhabitants that came and settled in their country, out of which they had been carried captive, he comprehends under four sorts of persons, Israelites, priests, Levites, and Nethinims. The first of these seems to comprehend not only all those of the ten tribes, who were carried captive with Judah and Benjamin, but those also who were carried into Assyria and Media by Tiglath-pileser and Shalmaneser. For the edict of Cyrus extended to them, as well as to Judah and Benjamin; and, as the prophets had foretold (see Jer. v. 3, 4, 10, and xxi.), some of them did return, though too many (as the Jews also did) continued where they were settled in their captivity. But that the word Israelites is here a distinct name from the Jews, is apparent from what follows, ver. 3. The last of these, viz. the Nethinims, are generally thought by the Jewish interpreters to be the same with the Gibeonites, who performed the lower offices in the temple, being hewers of wood and drawers of water (see Josh. ix. 27). But Ezra hath given us a better account of them, ch. viii. 20, where he informs us they were given by David to minister to the Levites (which is the original of their name), as the Levites were given by God to help the priests. And therefore in all places they are mentioned with holy persons.

Ver. 3.] This shows that some of the ten tribes returned with those of Judah and Benjamin. For the

4 Uthai the son of Ammihud, the son of Omri, the son of Imri, the son of Bani, of the children of Pharez the son of Judah.

5 And of the Shilonites; Asaiah the firstborn, and his sons.

6 And of the sons of Zerah; Jeuel, and their brethren, six hundred and ninety.

7 And of the sons of Benjamin; Sallu the son of Meshullam, the son of Hodaviah, the son of Hasenuah,

8 And Ibneiah the son of Jeroham, and Elah the son of Uzzi, the son of Michri, and Meshullam the son of Shephathiah, the son of Reuel, the son of Ibnijah;

9 And their brethren, according to their generations, nine hundred and fifty and six. All these men were chief of the fathers in the house of their fathers.

10 ¶ And of the priests; Jedaiah, and Jehoiarib, and Jachin,

11 And Azariah the son of Hilkiah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of Me-

raioth, the son of Ahitub, the ruler of the house of God;

12 And Adaiah the son of Jeroham, the son of Pashur, the son of Malchijah, and Maasiai the son of Adiel, the son of Jahzerah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Meshillemith, the son of Immer;

13 And their brethren, heads of the house of their fathers, a thousand and seven hundred and threescore; very able men for the work of the service of the house of God.

14 And of the Levites; Shemaiah the son of Hushub, the son of Azrikam, the son of Hashaiah, of the sons of Merari;

15 And Bakbakkar, Heresh, and Galal, and Mattaniah the son of Micah, the son of Zichri, the son of Asaph;

16 And Obadiah the son of Shemaiah, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun, and Berechiah the son of Asa, the son of Elkanah, that dwelt in the villages of the Netophathites.

17 And the porters were, Shallum, and Akkub,

proclamation of Cyrus excepted none, but gave all the people of that nation liberty to return to their own country. And Josephus says expressly, that the edict of Cyrus was sent by Zerubbabel to those of Assyria and Media. Many, indeed, neglected that favour (as I said before), and continued where they were settled; but those that did return were united to the Jews without distinction. Inasmuch, that at Jerusalem, which belonged to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, some of Ephraim and Manasseh were permitted to make their abode. For several of those tribes, being left in the land of Samaria, when the ten tribes were carried away, and joined with Judah (2 Chron. xxxi. 1, xxxii. 1, xxxiv. 9, &c.), and were carried with them to Babylon, and returned with them.

Ver. 4.] Now he sets down their names; and first those of the tribe of Judah, in this and the two following verses. But their names are so different from those in Neh. xi. that it is an argument they speak of quite different persons, who lived in different times.

Ver. 5. *Shilonites*.] Who are called Shelanites in Numb. xxvi. 20.

Asaiah the firstborn, and his sons.] The eldest of that family, and those descended from him.

Ver. 6. *Jeuel, and their brethren.*] By brethren are meant near relations, as ver. 9, 13, 21.

Six hundred and ninety.] This was the whole number of the children of Judah, who dwelt in Jerusalem, after they came out of their captivity.

Ver. 7. *Meshullam.*] This Meshullam is said to be descended from quite different ancestors, than are mentioned Neh. xi. 7. And therefore this is a quite different person from the other, though of the same name. Though some think that one of these authors gives an account of his remote ancestors, and the other of his more immediate: which is not probable.

Ver. 9. *And their brethren.*] By brethren, as I said before, are meant their near kindred.

All these men] That is, the seven mentioned above, (ver. 4, 8).

Were chief of the fathers] They are called chief fathers because they were principal governors in their families. Nehemiah mentions no more than nine hundred twenty and eight, who came with these; therefore gives an account of different persons; or some before his time were dead, or removed to some other place. The first is most likely.

Ver. 10.] These are the second sort of inhabitants

that first settled in their possessions after the captivity, mentioned ver. 2.

Ver. 11. *Azariah the son of Hilkiah.*] Not he in the days of Josiah (2 Kings xxii. 8), but another of the same name; whose son Seraiah lived in the time of Nehemiah, xi. 11.

Ahitub, the ruler of the house of God.] This last person is thought by Pellicanus to be the high-priest; but both Ezra and Haggai tell us Jeshua (or Joshua) was high-priest (Ezra iii. 2; Hag. i. 1). This therefore was not the ruler, but a ruler in God's house (as the words should be translated); not the principal ruler, but one in great authority under him; perhaps he that was called the sagan (who was vicar to the high-priest; and performed his office when he was sick, or otherwise hindered), or he was the head of one of the courses of the priests that attended in their turns, at the house of God. Here it is to be noted, that by "the house of God" in this place, we are taught by ver. 23, to understand "the house of the tabernacle." For as, before the first temple was built, there was a tabernacle for divine service; so, after the second was founded, they erected a tabernacle, till this temple could be finished; without which they could not have performed the several parts of the worship of God, which were annexed to the several parts of the holy places, according to the law.

Ver. 12.] There were three between that Jeroham and Pashur mentioned in Nehemiah: and therefore he was either his great-grandson, or they were different persons, though of the same name.

Ver. 13.] In the Hebrew they are called "mighty men of valour." For the service of the house of God required not only great strength of body, but great courage and resolution of mind; especially at that time when they were newly come out of captivity. There was a famous instance of this courage before the captivity, in Azariah: who resisted the king himself, when he would have profaned the holy place (2 Chron. xxvi. 17, 18, &c.).

Ver. 14.] These are the third sort of persons, mentioned ver. 2.

Ver. 15.] This last was descended, it is likely, from that Asaph who lived in David's time (2 Chron. xx. 14).

Ver. 16.] He speaks of Elkanah, not of Berechiah; for he dwelt at Jerusalem. But there was not room

and Talmon, and Ahiman, and their brethren: Shallum was the chief;

18 Who hitherto waited in the king's gate eastward: they were porters in the companies of the children of Levi.

19 And Shallum the son of Kore, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, and his brethren, of the house of his father, the Korahites, were over the work of the service, keepers of the gates of the tabernacle: and their fathers, being over the host of the Lord, were keepers of the entry.

20 And Phinehas the son of Eleazar was the ruler over them in time past, and the Lord was with him.

for them all there; therefore Elkanah, and those that belonged to him, dwelt in these villages, till their own cities were rebuilt. They were in the tribe of Judah (ch. ii. 54), and waited at Jerusalem in their courses, though they did not dwell there.

Ver. 17. *The porters*] Or rather the *guards*, as the Hebrew word signifies, and not *porters*.

Were, Shallum, &c.] The next verse tells us, at what places these guards exercised their office.

Ver. 18. *Who hitherto waited in the king's gate eastward:*] That is, where the king's gate formerly was; which shows that the tabernacle they had erected was not on mount Moriah, but in Zion, since their return from captivity.

They were porters] That is, the four persons above mentioned.

In the companies of—Levi.] That were at the four sides of the tabernacle, Jerusalem being without walls.

Ver. 19. *And Shallum*] Mentioned ver. 17.

Of the house of his father,] That is, the rest of that family.

Keepers of the gates of the tabernacle:] Their service was to be keepers of the porches of the tabernacle. From which it appears again, that the Jews (as I said before) did pitch a tabernacle upon mount Zion, till they had rebuilt the temple on mount Moriah.

Being over the host of the Lord,] Here the principal person among them attended, taking care of the tabernacle and all its appurtenances, which some think is meant by the "host of the Lord."

Were keepers of the entry.] More especially they took care of the court, that none should enter into it but such as the law allowed.

Ver. 20. *Phinehas the son of Eleazar was the ruler over them in time past.*] So we rightly translate the last word *lepanim*; which as R. David Gauz observes in his *Tzemoth David* (ad A. M. 2892), doth not signify that Phinehas was now living, but he was ruler of them "in time past" when he was living. And thus that Hebrew word is rendered, Ruth iv. 7; Ps. cii. 26. But that he should be ruler over this sort of officers seems unlikely, being the son of the high-priest, and after Eleazar high-priest himself; which raised him far above such a low employment. Besides, it is evident he is here speaking of the Levites, not of the priests, and therefore it is probable this Phinehas was only a Levite, called, as his father was, by the ancient name of a high-priest (see Selden, *De Success. in Pontificatum*, lib. i. cap. 2. fol. 117, 119).

The Lord was with him.] In the Targum, "the Word of the Lord was his helper." From which Beckius frames this argument against the present Jews. That if he who was with Phinehas was Jehovah the true God, and this Word was with Phinehas, then the Word, in the opinion of this paraphrast, was Jehovah the true God.

21 And Zechariah the son of Meshelemiah was porter of the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

22 All these which were chosen to be porters in the gates were two hundred and twelve. These were reckoned by their genealogy in their villages, whom David and Samuel the seer did ordain in their set office.

23 So they and their children had the oversight of the gates of the house of the Lord, namely, the house of the tabernacle, by wards.

24 In four quarters were the porters, toward the east, west, north, and south.

25 And their brethren, which were in their vil-

Ver. 21.] Here again the *tabernacle* is mentioned, which, as I said, the first inhabitants of the country, after their return from captivity, erected, till the temple could be built. For they would not be without the public worship of God, and a place was necessary for it. By "the door of the tabernacle," I suppose, is meant the door which let into the court of the priests: for the Levites might not go into that court; and therefore this is not meant of the door of the sanctuary, as some have thought.

Ver. 22. *All these which were chosen to be porters in the gates were two hundred and twelve.*] Who came in their turns to discharge this office.

These were reckoned by their genealogy] See ver. 16.

Whom David and Samuel the seer did ordain] All things (that is, after their return from captivity), were put into that order at the house of God, which Samuel projected, and David, when he was settled in peace, put in execution (see ch. xxiii. 5). For there had been very great confusion, no doubt, in the service of God, in the days of the judges, as there had been in all other things. But when Samuel came to govern, he designed to put things in good order: and especially to make the attendance of God's ministers at his house more regular than it had been. For which end he contrived, in all likelihood, that method of the priests and Levites waiting in their courses; which (Saul being rejected by God), he imparted unto David, whom he anointed by God's appointment to be king over Israel. Who accordingly, in the latter end of his reign, disposed their services at the tabernacle.

In their set office.] Or rather (as it is in the margin) "in their trust;" for the Hebrew word signifies *fidelity*; importing that their attendance at the house of God was no longer confused and disorderly (as it had been formerly, when there were sometimes too many, and sometimes too few waiting there; or, they had no certain work assigned them, or were negligent for want of overseers), but they every one in their course obediently went about their proper work, and faithfully discharged it.

Ver. 23. *So they and their children had the oversight of the gates of the house of the Lord,*] This verse plainly instructs us that they built a tabernacle for the worship of God (as I noted ver. 10), after their return from Babylon, till the temple was finished: and here the priests and Levites attended; as "in the house of the Lord."

By wards.] According to the courses that David appointed; as it is explained, ver. 25.

Ver. 24.] On the four sides of the tabernacle, as I observed on ver. 18. After the temple was built, these guards were kept, as Dr. Lightfoot notes, on the four quarters of the outward wall. For the wall that encompassed the courts had no gate on the west (see *Prospect of the Temple*, ch. 4, sect. 3).

lages, *were* to come after seven days from time to time with them.

26 For these Levites, the four chief porters, were in *their* set office, and were over the chambers and treasuries of the house of God.

27 ¶ And they lodged round about the house of God, because the charge *was* upon them, and the opening thereof every morning *pertained* to them.

28 And *certain* of them had the charge of the ministering vessels, that they should bring them in and out by tale.

29 *Some* of them also *were* appointed to oversee the vessels, and all the instruments of the sanctuary, and the fine flour, and the wine, and the oil, and the frankincense, and the spices.

30 And *some* of the sons of the priests made the ointment of the spices.

31 And Matthithiah, one of the Levites, who *was* the firstborn of Shallum the Korahite, had the set office over the things that were made in the pans.

32 And *other* of their brethren, of the sons of the Kohathites, *were* over the shewbread, to prepare it every sabbath.

Ver. 25. *Their brethren,—were to come after seven days*] Every week a new course came to attend the service of the house of God, and to relieve their brethren.

From time to time with them.] They came to wait their week under the government of the chief porters: who seem to have constantly dwelt at Jerusalem, to see the courses disposed according as David had ordained. So it here follows.

Ver. 26. *The four chief porters were in their set office.*] The principal porters were four, one at each gate (ver. 24), to whom was committed the care of the rest of their brethren to see that they did their duty.

And were over the chambers and treasuries] This I shall explain upon ch. xxvi. 20, where it is more distinctly mentioned.

Ver. 27. *They lodged round about the house of God.*] Round about the outward wall before mentioned, ver. 24. For, as the same learned man observes, neither priests nor Levites had any lodgings in the gates of the courts; nor did the Levites open those doors, but the priests.

Ver. 28.] For the use of the priests when they ministered: who returned, when they had done their work, the same number to the Levites, which they had received from them. This was another duty of the Levites.

Ver. 29.] See upon ch. xxvi. 20.

Ver. 30.] Or rather, "but some of the sons of the priests," &c. For though the Levites had the custody of the spices of which the ointment was made, yet none but the *priests* could compound them and make the ointment.

Ver. 31.] To prepare fine flour and oil for the *mincha*, or meat-offering that was offered every morning and evening, as we read Lev. ii. 5, 6. The LXX. (who herein follow the Talmudists) will have this peculiarly refer to the *mincha* offered by the high-priest for himself and his family: which was the tenth part of an *ephah*; half in the morning, and half in the evening (Lev. vi. 20, &c.).

Ver. 32.] When it was set new upon the table in the holy place, and the old taken away (see upon Exod. xxv. 30).

Ver. 33. *These are the singers, chief of the fathers of the Levites, who remaining in the chambers were*

33 And these *are* the singers, chief of the fathers of the Levites, *who remaining* in the chambers *were* free: for they were employed in that work day and night.

34 These chief fathers of the Levites *were* chief throughout their generations; these dwelt at Jerusalem.

35 ¶ And in Gibeon dwelt the father of Gibeon, Jehiel, whose wife's name *was* Maachah:

36 And his firstborn son Abdon, then Zur, and Kish, and Baal, and Ner, and Nadab,

37 And Gedor, and Ahio, and Zechariah, and Mikloth.

38 And Mikloth begat Shimeam. And they also dwelt with their brethren at Jerusalem, over against their brethren.

39 And Ner begat Kish: and Kish begat Saul; and Saul begat Jonathan, and Malchi-shua, and Abinadab, and Esh-baal.

40 And the son of Jonathan *was* Merib-baal: and Merib-baal begat Micah.

41 And the sons of Micah *were*, Pithon, and Melech, and Tahrea, and Ahaz.

42 And Ahaz begat Jarah; and Jarah begat

free:] Others of the Levites, and principal persons among them, were appointed to be singers, and attended nothing else: but dwelt in some chambers about the temple, free from all other employment. And the reason why they dwelt there was that they might not be defiled, and so made unfit at any time for that ministry: and that they might be ready at hand to attend upon it.

For they were employed in that work day and night.] In learning and teaching to sing, and to play upon instruments both wind and stringed: as appears from ch. xxvi. This was wholly a new thing, Moses having ordained nothing concerning singing and music in the house of God, and seems (as it is objected in the book of Cosri) to be contrary to what he commanded, Deut. xii. 32, "Thou shalt not add unto it (that is, to the law), nor take from it:" but they answer very well, that this command concerned the people only, who were forbidden out of their own heads, as we speak, to innovate any thing, and frame laws to themselves out of their own reasonings. But it did not oblige prophets and divine men, such as Moses was: and therefore David had authority from God (who had not bound up himself to add nothing) to do what he did; as Solomon afterward had to set up another altar in the midst of the court, upon a special occasion (2 Chron. vii. 7—9), and Nehemiah to require but a third part of a shekel of the people, ch. x. 32 (thus Sopher Cosri, par. iii. sect. 11, 12).

Ver. 34. *These chief fathers of the Levites were chief throughout their generations:*] These were principal persons, among whose families had always been eminent men, who were chosen for this service.

These dwelt at Jerusalem.] They were settled there, for the greater convenience of attending the morning and evening service at the temple, without much trouble. But these words seem to comprehend a great deal more; viz. that not only these chief of the Levites, but all those whom he hath mentioned from ver. 3, unto this verse, lived at Jerusalem, and came back with Zerubbabel.

Ver. 35.] From hence to the end of the chapter the same genealogy is set down again, which we had in the foregoing chapter (ver. 29, 30, &c.), and in the same words: and therefore I shall not here transcribe them. Of this I can give no account, but that this

Alemeth, and Azmaveth, and Zimri; and Zimri begat Moza;

43 And Moza begat Binea; and Rephaiah his son, Eleasah his son, Azel his son.

narrative of the descent and family of Saul is repeated, the better to join the following history to it, concerning the death of that king. But if we could give no account of it, Conradus Pellicanus thinks it is not irreligious to acknowledge that in these Jewish genealogies, which are very long and useless to us,

44 And Azel had six sons, whose names are these, Azrikam, Bocheru, and Ishmael, and Sheariah, and Obadiah, and Hanan: these were the sons of Azel.

some errors may have crept in by the negligence of transcribers. Who, in copying of them might not attend sometimes, but be drowsy, as we are apt to be, when we are about any tedious work and not very profitable, in which, if there be any error, the church suffers no damage by it. But there is no need of this.

CHAPTER X.

1 *Saul's overthrow and death.* 8 *The Philistines triumph over Saul.* 11 *The kindness of Jabesh-gilead towards Saul and his sons.* 13 *Saul's sin, for which the kingdom was translated from him to David.*

1 Now the Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa.

2 And the Philistines followed hard after Saul, and after his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Malchi-shua, the sons of Saul.

3 And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him, and he was wounded of the archers.

4 Then said Saul to his armour-bearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and abuse me. But his armour-bearer would not; for he was sore afraid. So Saul took a sword, and fell upon it.

5 And when his armour-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise on the sword, and died.

6 So Saul died, and his three sons, and all his house died together.

7 And when all the men of Israel that were in the valley saw that they fled, and that Saul

and his sons were dead, then they forsook their cities, and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them.

8 ¶ And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his sons fallen in mount Gilboa.

9 And when they had stripped him, they took his head, and his armour, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to carry tidings unto their idols, and to the people.

10 And they put his armour in the house of their gods, and fastened his head in the temple of Dagon.

11 ¶ And when all Jabesh-gilead heard all that the Philistines had done to Saul,

12 They arose, all the valiant men, and took away the body of Saul, and the bodies of his sons, and brought them to Jabesh, and buried their bones under the oak in Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

13 ¶ So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, even against the

CHAP. X.

Ver. 1.] This verse, and those that follow to ver. 13, have been explained upon 1 Sam. xxxi. where the same history is related; in the same words, and with very little difference. And it is repeated here, to make way for the history of David (which is mainly intended in the rest of this book), who by Saul's death was advanced to the crown.

Ver. 6.] That, is, all that were present with him in the battle: and his family had such a blow by their fall, that it never recovered itself. For though Ishbosheth reigned over a part of the country, yet it was not in any splendour; such a deadly wound being given to the house of Saul, that it did not long survive him in the kingly authority.

Ver. 7. By the valley is meant the towns in the open country, which were not fortified (see 1 Sam. xxxi. 7).

Ver. 9. *They took his head,*] Which they cut off from his body, as we read 1 Sam. xxxi. 9.

And sent into the land of the Philistines round about,] That public thanksgiving might be given by them to their gods for this victory.

Ver. 10. *They put his armour in the house of their gods,*] In the temple of Ashtaroth, as the same book tells us (1 Sam. xxxi. 10).

And fastened his head in the temple of Dagon.] These two, Dagon and Ashtaroth, were the principal gods of the country of the Philistines; unto whom they sent these trophies of their victory. And the plate forenamed informs us where they fastened his body, after they had separated his head from it, and stripped off the skin and the hair; for the Hebrew word signifies a skull.

Ver. 11.] By Jabesh-gilead, is meant the people of the city, and of the territory round about it.

Ver. 12.] This was a noble instance of their courage, and of their love and gratitude to their prince: who had some excellent qualities in him, and had highly obliged this city in the beginning of his reign: as I have observed on the book of Samuel. If we may believe Josephus, there was a law among the Jews, that they who killed themselves should be denied burial: for this was all the punishment that could be inflicted on them after they were dead, for so great a sin. Yet David highly approved this fact of the men of Jabesh-gilead, who buried Saul: and therefore the Jews make this exception to the rule, that if they killed themselves merely to avoid that reproach which might be cast upon them if they lived, they might be buried: and they instance in Samson and Saul. Who they fancy repented of his many sins, after Samuel had appeared to him, and told him of his sad fate. But the two following verses seem to contradict this

word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking *counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it;*

(see Grotius, in his book *De Jure Belli et Pacis*. lib. ii. cap. 19, sect. 5).

Ver. 13.] His two great transgressions (one against the express order and command of God by Samuel, and the other against a known law of Moses) were his sparing the Amalekites, and his consulting the witch of Endor; which were plain proofs that he did not mind God, as it follows in the next verse.

Ver. 14. *And enquired not of the Lord:*] He did not regard him as he ought to have done: for other-

14 And enquired not of the LORD: therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse.

wise he did inquire of him (1 Sam. xxviii. 6), but not with a religious mind.

Turned the kingdom unto David] Kingdoms are never translated from one family to another, but injustice and impiety go before, as Grotius here notes. Which the son of Sirach expresses admirably, Ecclus. x. 8. "Because of unrighteous dealings, injuries, and riches got by deceit, the kingdom is translated from one people to another."

CHAPTER XI.

1 *David by a general consent is made king at Hebron.* 4. *He winneth the castle of Zion from the Jebusites by Joab's valour.* 10 *A catalogue of David's mighty men.*

1 THEN all Israel gathered themselves to David unto Hebron, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh.

2 And moreover in time past, even when Saul was king, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the LORD thy God said unto thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be ruler over my people Israel.

3 Therefore came all the elders of Israel to the king to Hebron; and David made a covenant with them in Hebron before the LORD; and they anointed David king over Israel, according to the word of the LORD by Samuel.

4 ¶ And David and all Israel went to Jerusalem, which is Jebus; where the Jebusites were, the inhabitants of the land.

5 And the inhabitants of Jebus said to David, Thou shalt not come hither. Nevertheless David

took the castle of Zion, which is the city of David.

6 And David said, Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites first shall be chief and captain. So Joab the son of Zeruiah went first up, and was chief.

7 And David dwelt in the castle; therefore they called it the city of David.

8 And he built the city round about, even from Milo round about; and Joab repaired the rest of the city.

9 So David waxed greater and greater: for the LORD of hosts was with him.

10 ¶ These also are the chief of the mighty men whom David had, who strengthened themselves with him in his kingdom, and with all Israel, to make him king, according to the word of the LORD concerning Israel.

CHAP. XI.

Ver. 1. *Then*] That is, after the death of Ish-bosheth: for many things passed after the death of Saul which are here omitted. As, the coming of the Amalekite to David with the news of it; his lamentation over Saul and Jonathan; his anointing at Hebron over the tribe of Judah; the death of Abner, and then of Ish-bosheth. After which this author relates the promotion of David to be king of all the tribes of Israel, by the full consent of all the people.

All Israel] By *all Israel* is meant the elders of all their tribes, 2 Sam. v. 1, where this verse is explained.

Ver. 2.] See 2 Sam. v. 2, where there are the very same words.

Ver. 3. *They anointed David*] See there, 2 Sam. v. 3.

According to the word of the Lord by Samuel.] These words are added unto those in the book of Samuel to show how the people came to know that God told David (as they say in the foregoing verse) he should govern Israel. Samuel declared it to him, and published it, no doubt, among the people.

Ver. 4. *Jebus;*] See concerning this place, Judg. xix. 10.

Where the Jebusites were,] See 2 Sam. v. 6.

Ver. 5.] The insolent language of the Jebusites is recorded more largely in 2 Sam. v. 6, where see what I have noted.

Ver. 6.] It is evident Joab was before this in a great

station, commanding all the forces of Judah: as may be gathered from 2 Sam. ii. 13, 14; iii. 22, 23. But now he was a commander-in-chief of all the forces both of Judah and Israel; which made him very powerful: or, perhaps, Abishai being his elder brother, was general of the forces before; and this place gives an account how Joab came to have the pre-eminence, by this great achievement.

Ver. 7.] Because here he chose to have his constant residence: in order to which he enlarged and adorned it with many buildings, as it here follows.

Ver. 8. *He built the city*] See 2 Sam. v. 9.

Joab repaired the rest of the city.] He repaired, perhaps, the fortifications, which had been, in the time of the siege, much shattered. And, as Conradus Pellicanus thinks, built some houses, for the quartering of his soldiers.

Ver. 9.] The word of the Lord was his help, as the Targum expresses it (see 2 Sam. v. 10).

Ver. 10. *These also are the chief of the mighty men whom David had,*] Having touched upon David's promotion to the throne, and his settlement in Zion, he next thought fit to relate who those valiant men were that assisted him in his advancement, and helped to establish him in his authority. They were such, in all likelihood, as had accompanied him during his persecution, when they gave David many proofs of their valour and affection, as they also did afterward.

And with all Israel, to make him king,] A great

11 And this is the number of the mighty men whom David had; Jashobeam, an Hachmonite, the chief of the captains; he lifted up his spear against three hundred slain *by him* at one time.

12 And after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo, the Ahohite, who *was one* of the three mighties.

13 He was with David at Pas-dammim, and there the Philistines were gathered together to battle, where was a parcel of ground full of barley; and the people fled from before the Philistines.

14 And they set themselves in the midst of *that* parcel, and delivered it, and slew the Philistines; and the Lord saved *them* by a great deliverance.

15 ¶ Now three of the thirty captains went down to the rock to David, into the cave of Adullam; and the host of the Philistines encamped in the valley of Rephaim.

16 And David *was* then in the hold, and the Philistines' garrison *was* then at Beth-lehem.

17 And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Beth-lehem, that is at the gate!

18 And the three brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Beth-lehem, that *was* by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David: but David would not drink of it, but poured it out to the Lord,

many of the Israelites, as is related in the next chapter, came to David before the death of Saul, believing he was designed by God to be their king.

According to the word of the Lord] That David should be king over all Israel: which word was delivered by Samuel, and known to all the people, as well as to Saul and Jonathan.

Ver. 11.] I have explained this upon 2 Sam. xxiii. 8, where I observed, how Kimchi reconciles this place to that, which saith he slew eight hundred. But I now think it plainer to say, that he slew three hundred with his own hand, and thereby routed the enemy, and put them to flight, in which five hundred more were killed in the pursuit. All which might be said to be slain by him; because the slaughter he made was the cause the rest were slain. Or, as Mayerus (upon Seder Olam) interprets it; After he had slain three hundred, he was so little tired, that he slew as many more as made eight hundred.

Ver. 12. Eleazar the son of Dodo, the Ahohite.] The son of Ahothi, as Kimchi understands it; for this is not the name of a country, but of a family.

One of the three mighties.] See 2 Sam. xxiii. 9.

Ver. 13. Pas-dammim,] The same with Ephes-dammim, 1 Sam. xvii. 1.

Ver. 14.] All this is related, and hath been explained in 2 Sam. xxiii. 9—12.

Ver. 15.] See there, ver. 13.

Ver. 16.] See there, ver. 14.

Ver. 17.] See ver. 15. He did not desire any one should venture to fetch him some of this water, but in a very hot day, said, as we sometimes do, What would I not give for a draught of those cool and refreshing waters! which he remembered he had drunk of freely in his youth.

Ver. 19.] See all this explained in that place, ver. 16, 17.

19 And said, My God forbid it me, that I should do this thing: shall I drink the blood of these men that have put their lives in jeopardy? for with *the jeopardy* of their lives they brought it. Therefore he would not drink it. These things did these three mightiest.

20 ¶ And Abishai the brother of Joab, he was chief of the three: for lifting up his spear against three hundred, he slew *them*, and had a name among the three.

21 Of the three, he was more honourable than the two; for he was their captain: howbeit he attained not to the *first* three.

22 Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man of Kabzeel, who had done many acts; he slew two lionlike men of Moab: also he went down and slew a lion in a pit in a snowy day.

23 And he slew an Egyptian, a man of *great* stature, five cubits high; and in the Egyptian's hand *was* a spear like a weaver's beam; and he went down to him with a staff, and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and slew him with his own spear.

24 These *things* did Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and had a name among the three mighties.

25 Behold, he was honourable among the thirty, but attained not to the *first* three: and David set him over his guard.

26 ¶ Also the valiant men of the armies *were*, Asahel the brother of Joab, Elhanan the son of Dodo of Beth-lehem,

Ver. 20.] See 2 Sam. xxiii. 18. There are but two here mentioned; the third, Abarbinel thinks, was Adina the son of Shiza, mentioned ver. 42, who is said to be a captain of the Reubenites, and thirty with him.

Ver. 21. Of the three, he was more honourable than the two;] Perhaps he was the first, and led them on, in that bold exploit at Beth-lehem.

Howbeit he attained not to the first three.] But came short of them in their great achievements.

Ver. 22.] See 2 Sam. xxiii. 20.

Ver. 23.] The country of Egypt was famous for men of vast bigness, as we learn from Herodotus, lib. ii. cap. 130, 143, 153, 175, 176. See Huetius, in his Questiones Alnetanæ, lib. ii. p. 180, where he observes, out of Pliny, that in Ethiopia there was a people that were eight cubits high (lib. vi. cap. 30, lib. vii. cap. 2).

Ver. 24.] See all this explained in the forenamed book, 2 Sam. xxiii. 21, 22.

Ver. 25. He was honourable among the thirty, but attained not to the first three:] He sets a mark of honour upon him as a man of great reputation among the thirty, though he did not rise up to the pitch of the first three, nor of Abishai, though it is likely he excelled the third (see there, ver. 23).

David set him over his guard.] The Cherethites, and Pelethites. Or, as some take it, he made him president of his council, as the Hebrew word imports (so Kimchi), there being a rare conjunction in him of wisdom with valour.

Ver. 26.] See there, ver. 24. These were chief commanders in the army, either colonels, as we speak, or captains; and they were under the command of the three foregoing great men, who were over them, as they were over the soldiers. But these great men were below the first three: who are said, in the tenth

27 Shammoth the Harorite, Helez the Pelonite,
 28 Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite, Abiezer the Antothite,
 29 Sibbecai the Hushathite, Hlai the Aholite,
 30 Maharai the Netophathite, Heled the son of Baanah the Netophathite,
 31 Ithai the son of Ribai of Gibeah, *that pertained* to the children of Benjamin, Benaiah the Pirathonite,
 32 Hurai of the brooks of Gaash, Abiel the Arbathite,
 33 Azmaveth the Baharumite, Eliahba the Shaalbonite,
 34 The sons of Hashem the Gizonite, Jonathan the son of Shage the Hararite,
 35 Ahiam the son of Sacar the Hararite, Eliphai the son of Ur,
 36 Hephher the Mecherathite, Ahijah the Pelonite,

37 Hezro the Carmelite, Naarai the son of Ezbai,
 38 Joel the brother of Nathan, Mibhar the son of Haggeri,
 39 Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Berothite, the armour-bearer of Joab the son of Zeruiah,
 40 Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite,
 41 Uriah the Hittite, Zabad the son of Ahlai,
 42 Adina the son of Shiza the Reubenite, a captain of the Reubenites, and thirty with him.
 43 Hanan the son of Maachah, and Josphath the Mithnite,
 44 Uzziah the Ashterathite, Shama and Jehiel the sons of Hothan the Aroerite,
 45 Jedaiel the son of Shimri, and Joha his brother, the Tizite,
 46 Eliel the Mahavite, and Jeribai, and Josphaviah, the sons of Elnaam, and Ithmah the Moabite,
 47 Eliel, and Obed, and Jasiel the Mesobaite.

verse of this chapter, to be *mighty men to David* (as the words are in the Hebrew), because they attended upon him continually, as the keepers of his body, and had no other command.

Ver. 27.] See 2 Sam. xxiii. 25.

Ver. 28.] See there, ver. 26. All the rest that follow are mentioned in that chapter of the second book of Samuel, with some difference in their names, as I have there noted. Some others also are added, being men of great note, though not equal to the above-named. Particularly he relates who were the chief commanders, in the borders of the kingdom beyond Jordan (ver. 42, &c). This appears by the names of their country, which was beyond that river.

There is a little difficulty in the thirty-eighth verse, where Joel, who is called Igal in 2 Sam. xxiii. 36 (there being nothing more common than such alterations in names), is said to be the brother of Nathan, which seems not to consist with what is said in the other place, that he was the son of Nathan. But the account of this is easy, for he might be both, if he was his adopted son, for want of children: the word *son* often signifying no more than a nephew, as the word *brother* doth one near of kin. As for the rest of the variations, Conradus Pellicanus resolves, that we need not trouble ourselves about the errors of transcribers, which we may acknowledge, in such matters as these, without any prejudice of faith, truth, or good manners. So he concludes this chapter.

CHAPTER XII.

1 *The companies that came to David at Ziklag.* 23 *The armies that came to him at Hebron.*

1 Now these *are* they that came to David to Ziklag, while he yet kept himself close because of Saul the son of Kish: and they *were* among the mighty men, helpers of the war.

2 *They were* armed with bows, and could use both the right hand and the left in *hurling* stones and *shooting* arrows out of a bow, *even* of Saul's brethren of Benjamin.

3 The chief *was* Abiezer, then Joash, the sons

of Shemaah the Gibeathite; and Jeziel, and Pelet, the sons of Azmaveth; and Berachah, and Jehu the Antothite,

4 And Ismaiah, the Gibeonite, a mighty man among the thirty, and over the thirty; and Jeremiah, and Jahaziel, and Johanan, and Josabab the Gederathite,

5 Eluzai, and Jerimoth, and Bealiah, and Sheariah, and Shephatiah the Haruphite,

CHAP. XII.

Ver. 1.] This author thought fit to do those the honour of being remembered (which is omitted in the book of Samuel), who came and joined themselves to David, when he was in exile: and were afterward very assistant to him in his wars. They are said to come to him, while he "kept himself close because of Saul:" because they, pitying David's condition, who was forced to skulk in secret places to secure himself from Saul's fury, designed to help him, and it is likely left their habitations, and went to seek him; though they did not actually join him till he came to Ziklag.

Ver. 2. *And could use both the right hand and the left* Which gave them a great advantage in war; and made them more valuable soldiers (see Judg. xx. 16).

In hurling stones and shooting arrows] They were excellent slingers as well as archers.

Even of Saul's brethren] There was some extraordinary cause which moved some of Saul's kindred, as well as of his tribe, to desert him, and go over to David. Either the great virtue of David attracted them, or they abhorred to see an innocent person so violently persecuted; or, perhaps, they were pious persons, who had a great regard to the words of Samuel, concerning David's right to the kingdom.

Ver. 3.] There is mention before of Azmaveth (ch. viii. 36), as descended from Michah the son of Mehiboseth, the grandson of Saul.

Ver. 4. *Ismaiah the Gibeonite,*] I suppose there were thirty Benjamites came over to David at one time, and this was their leader.

6 Elkanah, and Jesiah, and Azareel, and Jo-ezer, and Jashobeam, the Korhites,

7 And Joelah, and Zebadiah, the sons of Jeroham of Gedor.

8 And of the Gadites there separated themselves unto David into the hold to the wilderness men of might, and men of war fit for the battle, that could handle shield and buokler, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and were as swift as the roes upon the mountains;

9 Ezer the first, Obadiah the second, Eliab the third,

10 Mishmannah the fourth, Jeremiah the fifth,

11 Attai the sixth, Eliel the seventh,

12 Johanan the eighth, Elizabad the ninth,

13 Jeremiah the tenth, Machbanai the eleventh.

14 These were of the sons of Gad, captains

of the host: one of the least was over an hundred, and the greatest over a thousand.

15 These are they that went over Jordan in the first month, when it had overflowed all his banks; and they put to flight all them of the valleys, both toward the east, and toward the west.

16 And there came of the children of Benjamin and Judah to the hold unto David.

17 And David went out to meet them, and answered and said unto them, If ye be come peaceably unto me to help me, mine heart shall be knit unto you: but if ye be come to betray me to mine enemies, seeing there is no wrong in mine hands, the God of our fathers look thereon, and rebuke it.

18 Then the spirit came upon Amasai, who was chief of the captains, and he said, Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse: peace,

Ver. 7. These were the principal persons among the thirty, mentioned ver. 4; the rest, perhaps, were not of such note.

Ver. 8. *Of the Gadites there separated themselves*] From their countrymen and families, which they left to follow them.

Unto David into the hold to the wilderness] There are several holds, or inaccessible places mentioned, where David secured himself from Saul's persecution (see 1 Sam. xxii. 4; xxiii. 14; xxiv. 22). But some think he still speaks of those that came to David at Ziklag: which may be called a hold, they think, as the city of David is, ch. xi. 7, because he fortified it.

That could handle shield and buokler,] Under these are comprehended all weapons of war, which they could manage skilfully; being bred to it, and wanting no courage to engage any enemy.

Whose faces were like the faces of lions, and were as swift as the roes upon the mountains;] They had a fierceness in their countenances, which terrified their enemies; who durst not look them in their face, but ran away as soon as they saw them. But they could not save themselves by flight, being pursued so swiftly by these men, that they overtook them and slew them. Bochart observes out of Aristotle, that lions have faces more like men than any other creature, but very stern and terrible.

Ver. 9.] They are reckoned up thus distinctly, according to the dignity and precedence which they had in their own country; or according to the order wherein they came to David.

Ver. 14.] They did not bring a host of men with them, but they had heen commanders of the army in their own country. Or, when David came to the crown, he thought them worthy to be preferred, and the lowest of them was made a centurion.

Ver. 15. *These are they that went over Jordan in the first month, when it had overflowed all his banks;*] This is an instance of their fearless valour, that they ventured over Jordan in the most dangerous season: and perhaps swam over, when the stream was most rapid and violent, to help their brethren (see Josh. iii. 15).

And they put to flight all them of the valleys,] When Saul was engaged to attend the motions of the Philistines, it is likely some people both of the eastern and western countries which bordered upon Jordan, laid hold of this opportunity to invade and spoil the land thereabout; which moved these men to go to their relief, and God gave them a great victory over

them. Where these valleys lay, and what enemies these men encountered, is nowhere recorded.

Ver. 16.] Besides those of Saul's kindred before mentioned, there were others of that tribe, together with some of Judah, who came to him when he was in the hold, mentioned ver. 8, which I conjectured might be Ziklag; but I rather think it was some of the holds he was in, when he lay in the wilderness.

Ver. 17. *David went out to meet them,*] They were so considerable, either for their number, or quality, that David went out (attended, no doubt, with some of his men) to meet them, before they came to the hold.

And answered] After the first salutation which they made him, he replied in the following words.

If ye be come peaceably unto me to help me, mine heart shall be knit unto you:] As much as to say, If you be really friends, you are welcome, and I will make a league with you.

But if ye be come to betray me to mine enemies, seeing there is no wrong in mine hands, the God of our fathers look thereon, and rebuke it.] He knew himself to be so innocent, both with respect to Saul and all other men, whom he had no way injured, that he doubted not God would protect him, and do him right against these men, if they came with bad intentions to him. What should make him suspect there might possibly be some treachery designed, is not now to be known. Perhaps some had before this come with pretences of great kindness to him, whom he had found to be false; which made him now more cautious whom he entertained.

Ver. 18. *Then the spirit came upon Amasai,*] The Spirit of power, saith the Targum: That is, God powerfully moved him with an heroidal boldness, and resolution, in the name of them all, to profess their fidelity to David, in such pathetic words, as convinced him they were friends. Rasi compares with this those words in Judg. vi. 34. But none hath discoursed so well upon these words as Maimonides, who observes, that by the spirit in such places as this, is not to be understood a power to speak or declare any thing; but only to excite those who felt it, to do some excellent thing either for particular persons, or the whole church. With this power Moses was endued, when he came to man's estate, and was moved to smite the Egyptian, who injured one of his brethren. Which power did not leave him, but remained still with him when he fled into Midian (see Exod. ii. 17). This power exerted itself in David after he was anointed, 1 Sam. xv. 13, xvii. 34 (see More Nevoch. par. ii. cap. 45).

peace *be* unto thee, and peace *be* to thine helpers; for thy God helpeth thee. Then David received them, and made them captains of the band.

19 And there fell *some* of Manasseh to David, when he came with the Philistines against Saul to battle: but they helped them not: for the lords of the Philistines upon advisement sent him away, saying, He will fall to his master Saul to the *jeopardy* of our heads.

20 As he went to Ziklag, there fell to him of Manasseh, Adnah, and Jozabad, and Jediael, and Michael, and Jozabad, and Elihu, and Zilthai, captains of the thousands that *were* of Manasseh.

21 And they helped David against the band of the *rovers*: for they *were* all mighty men of valour, and were captains in the host.

22 For at *that* time day by day there came to

David to help him, until *it was* a great host, like the host of God.

23 ¶ And these *are* the numbers of the bands that *were* ready armed to the war, and came to David to Hebron, to turn the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the word of the LORD.

24 The children of Judah that bare shield and spear *were* six thousand and eight hundred, ready armed to the war.

25 Of the children of Simeon, mighty men of valour for the war, seven thousand and one hundred.

26 Of the children of Levi four thousand and six hundred.

27 And Jehoiada *was* the leader of the Aaronites, and with him *were* three thousand and seven hundred:

28 And Zadok, a young man mighty of valour,

And he said, Thine are we, David, and on thy side.] He seems to have broken out into this speech with a sudden violence, being unable to hear with patience their fidelity questioned. For the words, *and he said*, are not in the Hebrew text; nor those *are we*: but only, *thine David*, &c. Which is a broken speech, expressing great passion.

Peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thine helpers.] He most affectionately wishes all happiness to him, and to all that came to his assistance: which implies a desire they might not prosper, if they did not now sincerely come to his help.

For thy God helpeth thee.] God they saw was on his side, who, by his marvellous deliverances of him, had shown he had a special affection to him, and care of him: and therefore they believed would bless those that came to his help.

Then David received them, and made them captains of the band.] He preferred them to considerable commands in his army, when he came to be king: for it is not likely he would set them above those, who had served him all the time of his exile; they being but new comers.

Ver. 19. *And there fell some of Manasseh to David, when he came with the Philistines against Saul to battle: but they helped them not.*] It seems they offered their service to David, when he was going with the Philistines to help them against Saul, in the last battle which he fought. This shows a strange zeal for David, and abhorrence of Saul's enmity to him, that they should then join their forces with him, when he took part with the Philistines. But neither they, nor the rest of David's men were admitted to fight in that battle.

He will fall to his master Saul to the jeopardy of our heads.] First kill them, and then flee to Saul and make peace with him, at the cost of their heads (see 1 Sam. xxix. 3, &c.).

Ver. 20.] These came to him, in that nick of time, when he went from the Philistines, in his return to Ziklag. Which fell out very opportunely, for they, being valiant men, assisted him against that band of robbers, the Amalekites, who had burnt Ziklag, and carried captive their wives and children. He had indeed only six hundred men with him in that expedition, but these were of the number, who, as it follows, did him great service in recovery of his losses.

Ver. 21. *They helped David against the band of the rovers.*] They were not at all disheartened, when they found David in such exceeding great distress; but being most valiant captains, offered their service to him in the pursuit of his enemies.

And were captains in the host.] In their own country they had been commanders of a company of men; many of which, it is likely, they brought over to David with them: or, they followed after them, as is intimated in the following words.

Ver. 22. *For at that time day by day there came to David to help him.*] After the battle wherein Saul was slain, so many resorted to him every day, that his forces grew very considerable.

Until it was a great host, like the host of God.] A very formidable host. Which he compares to the host of heaven (the stars or the angels), because they were numerous, and many of them illustrious persons.

Ver. 23. *And these are the numbers of the bands that were ready armed to the war, and came to David to Hebron.*] The great resort to him at Ziklag, mentioned in the foregoing verse, made greater numbers flock to him, when by God's direction he went to Hebron: and they brought their arms with them, that they might be ready to fight for him.

To turn the kingdom of Saul to him.] They remembered what Samuel had said, and resolved to anoint him king (2 Sam. ii. 4).

Ver. 24.] In the place before named we read, "the men of Judah came" and anointed him king: which signifies the whole tribe consented to it. Therefore these six thousand and eight hundred men were only the first that came, and perhaps appeared in the name of the rest.

Ver. 25.] Though David was anointed king only over the tribe of Judah (one of Saul's posterity reigning over Israel), yet some of other tribes came and owned David for their king; particularly a great number of the tribe of Simeon, who were near neighbours to Judah.

Ver. 26.] Those came out of several tribes, into which they were dispersed; yet all agreed to show their affection to David.

Ver. 27. *Jehoiada was the leader of the Aaronites.*] He was not the high-priest, for Abiathar held that place; but he was chief, as Jarchi thinks, of one of the courses of the priests; and now the chief commander of those of the family of Aaron, who came to invite David to take the government upon him. He was a man of war also, and brought these priests armed with him: for, it is said, of all that came to David to Hebron (ver. 23), that they were ready armed for the war, in case any should oppose their design (see Selden, De Successione. ad Pontificatum, lib. i. cap. 3).

With him were three thousand and seven hundred.] Besides those of the Levites before named.

and of his father's house twenty and two captains.

29 And of the children of Benjamin, the kindred of Saul, three thousand: for hitherto the greatest part of them had kept the ward of the house of Saul.

30 And of the children of Ephraim twenty thousand and eight hundred, mighty men of valour, famous throughout the house of their fathers.

31 And of the half tribe of Manasseh eighteen thousand, which were expressed by name, to come and make David king.

32 And of the children of Issachar, *which were men* that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them *were* two hundred; and all their brethren *were* at their commandment.

33 Of Zebulun, such as went forth to battle,

Ver. 28.] It is likely, he is the same person who was made high-priest in Solomon's time, who was now very young, but had a great deal of courage; whom two-and-twenty of his family followed, who were commanders of so many companies.

Ver. 29. *And of the children of Benjamin, the kindred of Saul, three thousand:*] We read of several of this tribe, and of Saul's kindred, that came to David before this (ver. 1, 2, 16), but now a greater number came over to him; which shows his interest to be considerably grown among them.

For hitherto the greatest part of them had kept the ward of the house of Saul.] But still a multitude of them (as it is in the Hebrew) adhered to the house of Saul, and endeavoured to keep the crown in that family. And, as Solomon Jarchi, and D. Kimchi, and others, understand it, the *three thousand* before mentioned, being of Saul's kindred, were of that mind, looking upon his grandson as the lawful heir of the kingdom, who ought to succeed in it. But now they altered their opinion, and came to David.

Ver. 30.] This was so great a number, that by their defection from the house of Saul, it must needs be extremely weakened; especially since they were men of such great account in that tribe.

Ver. 31. *And of the half tribe of Manasseh eighteen thousand.*] He speaks of those on this side Jordan, for of those beyond it on the other side he speaks afterward (ver. 37).

Which were expressed by name, to come and make David king.] These were appointed to go in the name of the rest of their brethren, and assure David of their affection to him; being picked (as we speak) out of the whole tribe, for this purpose. And some think the names of these men were set down in the public register of the kings of Judah: from which this author transcribed it.

Ver. 32. *And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times.*] The Targum, and many of the Jews (particularly Maimonides in Rosch Hashanah), take this to signify their skill, in computing the beginning of their years, and months, and intercalations, that it might be certainly known when their feasts were to be celebrated. Others think they were great astronomers; whence the Hebrew doctors say, that the name of this tribe was engraven in the sapphire in the high-priest's breast-plate, and that their banner was of a sky colour, having the figures of the sun, moon, and stars, wrought in it, because of their skill in the motions of the heavenly bodies. Others take it to signify their skill in the weather, whereby they knew the proper season for sowing, planting, reaping, and navigation. Many such-like fancies there are, which seem impertinent

expert in war, with all instruments of war, fifty thousand, which could keep rank: *they were* not of double heart.

34 And of Naphtali a thousand captains, and with them with shield and spear thirty and seven thousand.

35 And of the Danites expert in war twenty and eight thousand and six hundred.

36 And of Asher, such as went forth to battle, expert in war, forty thousand.

37 And on the other side of Jordan, of the Reubenites, and of the Gadites, and of the half tribe of Manasseh, with all manner of instruments of war for the battle, an hundred and twenty thousand.

38 All these men of war, that could keep rank, came with a perfect heart to Hebron, to make

to the present business, which required men of great abilities in political affairs, who could discern what was fit to be done in the various cases of human life, and particularly what was good for the commonwealth in all turns of affairs. Thus Solomon Jarchi himself: "They knew how to advise and give counsel, according to the nature and circumstances of all cases: which sort of men David stood in great need of at this time, to consult the best means to confirm him in his kingdom."

To know what Israel ought to do;] These words show they were men skilful in secular affairs; and now, I suppose, told the Israelites it was the proper time to think of David, and make him their king; after the Philistines had gained so great a victory over Saul, and destroyed his family. For none was so likely to quell the Philistines as he, who had so often beaten them.

The heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment.] These two hundred were eminent persons among them; and were of such known wisdom and judgment, that they had all the rest of their tribe at their beck.

Ver. 33. *Of Zebulun, such as went forth to battle, —fifty thousand.*] This is the greatest number of any tribe that went over to David; that is, gave him assurance of their readiness to assist him to make him king of Israel. For it is not likely, that so many as are here mentioned went to Hebron, as soon as David came thither.

Which could keep rank:] Men well disciplined; or, as some understand it, men that would stand their ground, and not flinch when they were assaulted by their enemies.

They were not of double heart.] But all sincerely affected to David, though there were so many of them. Thus some understand it; but others think, it rather relates to the foregoing words, that they had not a counterfeit courage, but would stand to it (as we speak) with a firm resolution, to die rather than stagger in their undertaking. For this is affirmed of them all, that they "came with a perfect heart unto David" (ver. 38), and therefore needs not to be said of these in particular, there being no reason to suspect their loyalty.

Ver. 34—37.] Here were so many thousands of valiant men, expert in war, reckoned up in the several tribes of Israel; That Saul could not well have been overthrown in battle by the Philistines, if God had not forsaken him, and the hearts of his people had not been alienated from him.

Ver. 38.] After the death of Ish-bosheth (see 2 Sam. v.) all Israel, *communi concilio*, "with one consent" (as Maimonides explains this phrase, "with

David king over all Israel: and all the rest also of Israel were of one heart to make David king.

39 And there they were with David three days, eating and drinking: for their brethren had prepared for them.

40 Moreover they that were nigh them, even

unto Issachar and Zebulun and Naphtali, brought bread on asses, and on camels, and on mules, and on oxen, and meat, meal, and cakes of figs, and bunches of raisins, and wine, and oil, and oxen, and sheep abundantly: for there was joy in Israel.

one heart," More Nevochim, par. i. cap. 39), came and joined with their brethren, who were gone over to him. And they were such a number, men of such undaunted spirits and expert in war, who crowded in to him, that the like is not to be found in any history. For as Herodotus saith in his Polyhymnia, in the army of Xerxes there were πολλοὶ μὲν ἄνθρωποι, ὀλίγοι δὲ ἄνδρες, "a world of people, but few men;" that is, men of courage and conduct; with which David's army so abounded, that every one of this vast number seems to have been fit to command in an army.

Ver. 39. *And there they were with David three days eating and drinking:*] The famous historian Dion (as Victorinus Strigelius here observes) saith he never saw a more splendid and pompous show than that was, when the emperor Severus entered Rome. But here was a far more noble feast, which lasted three days, for three hundred forty-eight thousand and eight hundred brave men.

For their brethren had prepared for them.] They who were before actually gone over to David, and others about Hebron, hearing of such a great concourse of people, had made a preparation for their entertainment.

Ver. 40. *Moreover they that were nigh them, even unto Issachar and Zebulun and Naphtali,*] All the neighbouring countries brought in provisions for those who dwelt more remote: their common concerns begetting great love and kindness (as there ought always to be, especially on such occasions) for all their brethren, though never so distant from them.

Brought bread on asses, and on camels, and on mules, and on oxen,] Whom they employed, in that country, in carrying burdens; for horses were very scarce among them. So Bochart observes, that they did not only ride upon mules, but some of them were ἀχθοφόροι, "employed in carrying burdens," as these were. Others were ζυγίται, "yoked to draw chariots," (lib. ii. Hieroz. par. i. cap. 19). The same he observes of oxen, that though they seem made rather for the plough, yet they made them serve for the other purpose also, of bearing burdens.

And meat, meal, and cakes of figs.] All sort of provisions for a great feast.

For there was joy in Israel.] Their hearts were enlarged with joy to see an end of their division, by their union under such a king; as they might reasonably hope would procure great happiness to them.

CHAPTER XIII.

1 David fetcheth the ark with great solemnity from Kirjath-jearim. 9 Uzza being smitten, the ark is left at the house of Obed-edom.

1 AND David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, and with every leader.

2 And David said unto all the congregation of Israel, If it seem good unto you, and that it be of the LORD our God, let us send abroad unto our brethren every where, that are left in all the land of Israel, and with them also to the priests

and Levites which are in their cities and suburbs, that they may gather themselves unto us:

3 And let us bring again the ark of our God to us: for we inquired not at it in the days of Saul.

4 And all the congregation said that they would do so: for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people.

CHAP. XIII.

Ver. 1.] With all the principal persons in authority who had any command over others. For it is a dangerous thing for a prince, especially in the beginning of his reign, to rely wholly upon himself alone, and not advise with others.

Ver. 2. *David said unto all the congregation*] Who were represented by those great men, whom he had called together for their advice.

If it seem good unto you, and that it be of the Lord our God] Whom, I suppose, he intended to consult, as well as them.

Let us send abroad unto our brethren every where, that are left] Who were not there present.

And with them also to the priests and Levites] Whose assistance was very necessary in the sacred work which he intended.

Ver. 3. *Let us bring again the ark of our God to us:*] In the book of Samuel this is said to have been done after that which here follows in the next chapter, concerning Hiram and David's wars with the Philistines; and so it was. Only David (as became a good king, whose first care is about religion) took

advice with the elders of the people, as soon as he came to the crown, concerning the bringing up the ark of God. Which was put in execution afterward, when they had gone to their several countries, and spoken with the people about it; and a time was appointed for their meeting to do it. In the mean time Hiram sent his ambassadors to him, and the Philistines came twice to disturb him, and were beaten by him; and then all the people met in a vast number (it is probable at some solemn festival) to bring the ark to its place.

For we inquired not at it in the days of Saul.] They were not solicitous in his days to find a fit place for the residence of the ark of God, where they might conveniently attend upon his worship and service. For they were hindered by perpetual wars, and contented themselves with going to Gibeon, where the tabernacle was; though without the presence of God in it. But it is probable, that Saul, after David fled from him, and he was haunted by that evil spirit, that often came upon him, grew so profane that he was not concerned about religion. So the words are in the Hebrew, "We inquired not of it, or about it."

Ver. 4.] They were convinced of their negligence,

5 So David gathered all Israel together, from Shihor of Egypt even unto the entering of Hemath, to bring the ark of God from Kirjath-jearim.

6 And David went up, and all Israel, to Baalah, *that is*, to Kirjath-jearim, which *belonged* to Judah, to bring up thence the ark of God the LORD, that dwelleth *between* the cherubims, whose name is called *on it*.

7 And they carried the ark of God in a new cart out of the house of Abinadab: and Uzza and Ahio drave the cart.

8 And David and all Israel played before God with all *their* might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets.

9 ¶ And when they came unto the threshing-floor of Chidon, Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark; for the oxen stumbled.

10 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzza, and he smote him, because he put his hand to the ark: and there he died before God.

11 And David was displeased, because the LORD had made a breach upon Uzza: wherefore that place is called Perez-uzza to this day.

12 And David was afraid of God that day, saying, How shall I bring the ark of God *home* to me?

13 So David brought not the ark *home* to himself to the city of David, but carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite.

14 And the ark of God remained with the family of Obed-edom in his house three months. And the LORD blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that he had.

and piously disposed to comply with the king's desire.

Ver. 5. *So David gathered all Israel together,*] Some chosen persons out of all the tribes, with their attendants (who represented all the rest): which were thirty thousand (2 Sam. vi. 1).

From Shihor of Egypt even to the entering of Hemath,] The former of these, Shihor, was the southern bounds, as Hemath was the northern of the land of Canaan. And by Sihor (called in other places the river of Egypt) the Targum, and most of the Jews, even Abarinel himself, understand the river Nile. But there is great reason to take it for a little branch of that river, as I have shown upon Gen. xv. 18, and see upon Numb. xxxiv. 5, Josh. xiii. 3.

To bring the ark of God from Kirjath-jearim.] Where it had been a long time, ever since it returned out of the land of the Philistines (see 1 Sam. vi. ult. vii. 1).

Ver. 6.] See 2 Sam. vi. 1.

Ver. 7.] They had so long been without it, that

they had forgot how it ought to be carried (see 2 Sam. vi. 3.).

Ver. 8.] See there, ver. 5.

Ver. 9—11.] All this hath been explained in the forenamed place, ver. 6—8.

Ver. 12.] See there, ver. 9. It is an old observation, that *pœna ad unum, metus ad plures pervenit*; "punishment falls upon one, the fear of it falls upon all;" which justifies the severity of God, as not contrary to his mercy, in such cases.

Ver. 13.] See there also, ver. 10.

Ver. 14.] See there ver. 11. The Targum here pretends to give us an account how God blessed this family, by increasing it prodigiously with a numerous issue; of which the Jews were so desirous, that they could think of no greater blessing. For his wife and eight daughters (says that paraphrast), the wives of his sons, brought each of them at one birth eight sons: so that fathers and sons made up fourscore and one. But though history acquaints us with wondrous births of many children at a time, yet there is no ground to believe this of so many in one family.

CHAPTER XIV.

1 *Hiram's kindness to David.* 2 *David's felicity in people, wives, and children.* 8 *His two victories against the Philistines.*

1 Now Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and timber of cedars, with masons and carpenters, to build him an house.

2 And David perceived that the LORD had confirmed him king over Israel, for his kingdom was lifted up on high, because of his people Israel.

3 ¶ And David took more wives at Jerusalem: and David begat more sons and daughters.

4 Now these *are* the names of *his* children which he had in Jerusalem; Shammua, and Shobab, Nathan, and Solomon,

5 And Ibhaz, and Elishua, and Elpalet,
6 And Nogah, and Nepheg, and Japhia,

CHAP. XIV.

Ver. 1, 2.] See both these verses explained in 2 Sam. v. 11, 12, where the same thing is related, almost in the same words.

Ver. 3.] After he came from Hebron, and had possessed himself of Jerusalem, he took more wives and concubines also, as we read 2 Sam. v. 13. But they are all here called *wives*, for so they were: though not principal wives (as Pellicanus notes); that is, not such as governed the family, for that the concubines did not.

Ver. 4—7.] In 2 Sam. v. 14—16, there are but eleven mentioned, whereas here are thirteen; of

which I gave some account in that place. To which I shall here add, that some of them died in their childhood, which are reckoned here, but not in the other place. For here are two Eliphalets, the first of which dying young, the last was so called to preserve his memory. So Kimchi writes very judiciously; perhaps neither the first Eliphalet, nor Nogah, are mentioned in the book of Samuel, because they were not then living; but they are recorded here, because the author of this book proposed to himself to give an account of all David's sons born at Jerusalem, as saith ver. 4. As for the difference between Elpalet, ver. 5, and Eliphalet in this verse, Simeon De Muis hath well observed, it ought not to make any

7 And Elishama, and Beeliada, and Eliphalel.

8 ¶ And when the Philistines heard that David was anointed king over all Israel, all the Philistines went up to seek David. And David heard of it, and went out against them.

9 And the Philistines came and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim.

10 And David inquired of God, saying, Shall I go up against the Philistines? and wilt thou deliver them into mine hand? And the LORD said unto him, Go up; for I will deliver them into thine hand.

11 So they came up to Baal-perazim; and David smote them there. Then David said, God hath broken in upon mine enemies by mine hand like the breaking forth of waters: therefore they called the name of that place Baal-perazim.

12 And when they had left their gods there,

David gave a commandment, and they were burned with fire.

13 And the Philistines yet again spread themselves abroad in the valley.

14 Therefore David inquired again of God; and God said unto him, Go not up after them; turn away from them, and come upon them over against the mulberry trees.

15 And it shall be, when thou shalt hear a sound of going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt go out to battle: for God is gone forth before thee to smite the host of the Philistines.

16 David therefore did as God commanded him: and they smote the host of the Philistines from Gibeon even to Gazer.

17 And the fame of David went out into all lands; and the LORD brought the fear of him upon all nations.

one think there is an error either here or in any other place: for that king of France who is commonly called Clodoveus, is called by Cassiodore Luduinus, Ludovicus, and, in Hincmar, Hludovicus: such differences there are in the pronunciations of the same name, the examples of which are infinite, as he speaks in his *Varia Sacra*.

Ver. 8.] See 2 Sam. v. 17.

Ver. 9.] This phrase *spread themselves*, seems to import that they were very numerous, and assured themselves of victory (see there, ver. 18).

Ver. 10, 11.] See these verses explained in 2 Sam. v. 19, 20.

Ver. 12.] No wonder they could not preserve such gods as could not preserve them. Which David would not honour, as they had done the ark when they took it, but burnt them (see there, ver. 21).

Ver. 16.] See there, 2 Sam. v. 22—25.

Ver. 17.] Upon all those upon whom the fame of him came; that is, all the neighbouring countries.

CHAPTER XV.

1 David, having prepared a place for the ark, ordereth the priests and Levites to bring it from Obed-edom. 25 He performeth the solemnity thereof with great joy. 29 Michal despiseth him.

1 AND David made him houses in the city of David, and prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched for it a tent.

2 Then David said, None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites; for them hath the LORD chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him for ever.

3 And David gathered all Israel together to Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the LORD unto his place, which he had prepared for it.

4 And David assembled the children of Aaron, and the Levites:

5 Of the sons of Kohath; Uriel the chief, and his brethren an hundred and twenty:

6 Of the sons of Merari; Asaiah the chief, and his brethren two hundred and twenty:

7 Of the sons of Gershon; Joel the chief, and his brethren an hundred and thirty:

8 Of the sons of Elizaphan; Shemaiah the chief, and his brethren two hundred:

9 Of the sons of Hebron; Eliel the chief and his brethren fourscore:

10 Of the sons of Uzziel; Amminadab the chief, and his brethren an hundred and twelve.

11 And David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites, for Uriel, Asaiah, and Joel, Shemaiah, and Eliel, and Amminadab;

CHAP. XV.

Ver. 1. *David made him houses*] He had need of many houses, because he had many wives and children as we read before: who could not all well live in one house, unless we suppose it to be very large, and to contain many apartments, which may be called houses.

And prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched for it a tent.] As we read in 2 Sam. vi. 17. For he did not think fit to bring the tabernacle from Gibeon, because he intended shortly to build a house for the ark. Or, as Conradus Pellicanus thinks, the tabernacle of Moses, having been long neglected, was grown ruinous: and he thought it better to prepare a new tabernacle than repair the old.

Ver. 2.] The former miscarriage when they brought

up the ark from Kirjath-jearim, had taught him to use it with greater reverence, according to the prescription of the law: which ordered the Levites to carry it upon their shoulders (see Numb. vi. 15; vii. 9).

Ver. 3.] See 2 Sam. vi. 15.

Ver. 4.] Whom he ordered should be sent for before, when he first attempted to bring up the ark, but we do not read that they came (ch. xiii. 2, 5), therefore now he actually got them together.

Ver. 5.] The sons of Kohath are mentioned in Ex. vi. 17, 18, and Uriel is none of them: therefore he was his grandson, who proved so famous, that his descendants are reckoned in the first place.

Ver. 8.] He was the son of Uzziel, the youngest son of Kohath (see Exod. vi. 18, 23; Numb. iv. 3).

Ver. 10.] These two last named were the sons of Kohath.

12 And said unto them, *Ye are* the chief of the fathers of the Levites: sanctify yourselves, *both ye* and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel unto *the place that I* have prepared for it.

13 For because ye *did it* not at the first, the LORD our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order.

14 So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel.

15 And the children of the Levites bare the ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves thereon, as Moses commanded according to the word of the LORD.

16 And David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren *to be* the singers

Ver. 11. *David called for Zadok and Abiathar*] I have observed here before, that Zadok was in the greatest favour with David: and therefore is mentioned first, though Abiathar was the high-priest, and Zadok only the second priest (see upon 2 Sam. xv. 27, 29).

For *Uriel, &c.*] The six persons mentioned in the foregoing verses.

Ver. 12.] This sanctification was by washing their bodies and garments, abstaining from their wives, and other purifications (see Exod. xix. 10, 15).

Ver. 13. *For because ye did it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us.*] It seems the priests and Levites were not well acquainted with the law: or, the ark having been very long in one place, they had forgot how it ought to be removed: and did not sanctify themselves and seriously consider their duty. At least, they that were then present for the chief were not then assembled, as I said ver. 4), were ignorant, or careless.

For that we sought him not after the due order.] This good king doth not wholly excuse himself, and lay all the blame on them: but put himself into the number of those who were negligent in this matter. For it was his duty as well as theirs to look into the law; and pray to God for his direction. There were four faults committed: First, in putting the ark into the cart, which should have been carried by the Levites on their shoulders. Secondly, the Levites were not permitted to touch the ark, as Uzza did. Thirdly, he was no Levite, and therefore more grievously offended (Num. xvi. 28). Lastly, he wanted faith, that God would take care of the ark. This last David could not help: but the first three he might have prevented.

Ver. 14.] From this place, and some others (as Josh. iii. 3), Buxtorf truly infers, I think, that all the tribe of Levi had a right to carry the ark, the priests as well as the others. But while they were in the wilderness, they that were bare Levites commonly did it, because the priests were few, and had other employment. But the priests, being Levites, might do it when they pleased, or were appointed to it (see *Histor. Arcæ*. cap. 8, sect. 2).

Ver. 15.] The children of Kohath had this peculiar privilege: who are the Levites here mentioned (Num. iv. 4).

Ver. 16. *David spake to the chief of the Levites*] To those six persons before mentioned, ver. 5, 6, &c. *To appoint their brethren to be the singers with instruments, &c.*] They that were chief among them knew who could sing well, and play upon such instruments as are here mentioned: the best of which were to be ordered to perform this service.

with instruments of musick, psalteries, and harps and cymbals, sounding, by lifting up the voice with joy.

17 So the Levites appointed Heman the son of Joel; and of his brethren, Asaph the son of Berechiah; and of the sons of Merari their brethren, Ethan the son of Kushaiah;

18 And with them their brethren of the second degree, Zechariah, Ben, and Jaaziel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Unni, Eliab, and Benaiah, and Maseiah, and Matthiah, and Elipheleh, and Mikneiah, and Obed-edom, and Jeiel, the porters.

19 So the singers, Heman, Asaph, and Ethan, were appointed to sound with cymbals of brass;

20 And Zechariah, and Aziel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Unni, and Eliab, and Maa-

Sounding, by lifting up the voice with joy.] Singing so loud that all might hear, and have their hearts lifted with joy in God (see 2 Chron. xx. 19). Here it may be observed, that though David did not build the temple, yet he ordered how the service of God should be performed there, in a more solemn manner than it had been hitherto, with singing and musical instruments. Which began now when the ark was brought to the place prepared for it; and was ordered afterward to be constantly performed every day (ch. xvi. 4, 42). And indeed there was scarce any solemn service performed to their gods, either by Greeks or barbarians, without both vocal and instrumental music, so the illustrious Ezekiel Spanhemius hath observed out of Strabo, lib. x. p. 467. See him upon Callimachus's hymn to Diana, ver. 245, where he notes out of Plutarch, that their musical instruments were three (as they were here); and that music was thought to be a thing so heavenly, that their gods were accounted the inventors of the principal instruments of it (see upon ver. 295). Certain it is that the Greeks were not the inventors of them, but they had them out of the east, as he shows upon ver. 249. Which appears by the names of some of them, which are plainly extant in the Bible, as Bochartus hath observed.

Ver. 17.] These three were the principal, who were appointed to govern the rest.

Ver. 18. *Zechariah, Ben, and Jaaziel.*] The LXX. take *Ben* for an appellative, and join it with the next, as if he had said, "Zechariah the son of Jaaziel." But the Jews take it for a proper name of one of the singers (as we do), and David Kimchi thinks this is the person to whom David directed the ninth psalm, to be sung by him upon the occasion of the death of Saul: for it is said to be *laben*, which he understands to be *to Ben* the singer.

And Shemiramoth, &c. the porters.] This was the office of these of the second degree; who were also, when their attendance was over, instructed in music, and assisted in it when they were not in the other employment.

Ver. 20. *And Zechariah, &c.*] Here is no mention made of Ben; which some imagine is, because, before they came to execute their office, he fell sick, or died: and Azaziah, who was not mentioned before, came in his room: but was not so eminent as he, and therefore put in the last place.

With psalteries on Alamoth;] Or, "with Alamoth." Which being joined with psalteries, is thought by some to be a musical instrument. But Strigelius, from the derivation of the word, thinks that Alamoth

seiah, and Benaiah, with psalteries on Alamoth;

21 And Mattithiah, and Elipheh, and Mikneiah, and Obed-edom, and Jeiel, and Azaziah, with harps on the Sheminith to excel.

22 And Chenaniah, chief of the Levites, was for song; he instructed about the song, because he was skilful.

23 And Berechiah and Elkanah, were door-keepers for the ark.

24 And Shebaniah, and Jehoshaphat, and Nethaneel, and Amasai, and Zechariah, and Benaiah, and Eliezer, the priests, did blow with the trumpets before the ark of God; and Obed-edom and Jehiah were doorkeepers for the ark.

25 ¶ So David, and the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands, went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the house of Obed-edom with joy.

signifies that these men sung the *bass*, as those in the next verse did the *treble*.

Ver. 21. *Sheminith*] Some take *sheminith* to signify a harp with eight strings.

To *excel*.] The Hebrew word *lenatzach*, coming from *natzach*, "to overcome," is thought by Strigelius to signify a voice higher than all the rest.

Ver. 22. *Chenaniah, chief of the Levites*.] A principal person among them, but not before mentioned: so that it doth not appear of what family he was.

Was for song:] Or, as it is translated in the margin, "was for carriage;" that is, for managing of the voice. He taught them how to sing, as the following words tell us, "he instructed about the song, because he was skilful." Being a great artist in singing, he was the precentor: for, ver. 27, he is called "master of the song." Which Lud. Capellus thinks signifies as much as that he guided them to keep time by the elevation of his hand, or of a wand. So the LXX. ἀρχων τῶν ψάλλον, who is properly called "the precentor" among us: who among the ancient Sallii was called *vates*: he being the prime singer while they were dancing; as Gutherletius observes in his book De Sallii, cap. 11.

Ver. 23.] Their office at present was to guard the ark as it passed along, that none might touch it.

Ver. 24. *The priests did blow with the trumpets before the ark*] For this was the office of the priests, as we read in Numb. x., the beginning.

Obed-edom and Jehiah were door-keepers] When it was settled at Jerusalem, they kept the door of the tent prepared for it, that none might approach it but the high-priest at proper seasons.

Ver. 25.] With music and dancing (see 2 Sam. vi. 5, 12, 15).

Ver. 26.] Some understand this of the strength that God gave them to carry the ark without fainting, though they went up a steep hill, to settle it in the place where it was to rest. But it is not likely God imposed such great burdens on them in his service, that it was hard to bear them, without an extraordinary assistance. I think the meaning rather is, that he preserved them from committing any error, so that

26 And it came to pass, when God helped the Levites that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, that they offered seven bullocks and seven rams.

27 And David was clothed with a robe of fine linen, and all the Levites that bare the ark, and the singers, and Chenaniah the master of the song with the singers: David also had upon him an ephod of linen.

28 Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouting, and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps.

29 ¶ And it came to pass, as the ark of the covenant of the LORD came to the city of David, that Michal the daughter of Saul looking out at a window saw king David dancing and playing: and she despised him in her heart.

they carried it without offence. Or, as Junius takes it, God gave them ease, and others were ordered to take their place, when they had gone some part of the way. For, though it was not a heavy burden, yet they could not but proceed with fear and trembling, lest they should incur God's displeasure, as Uzzah did. Then *they*, that is, the Levites, offered upon their own account the sacrifices here mentioned; besides those which the king offered, as we read 2 Sam. vi. 13. And seven bullocks, and as many rams, being offered, some think, that every time the ark rested, for the Levites to rest themselves, a bullock was offered with a ram: which was seven times between the house of Obed-edom and the city of David.

Ver. 27. *David was clothed with a robe of fine linen*.] Pure white garments were proper (as Grocius here notes) in divine ministrations. And Kimchi thinks, that the Levites, who bare the ark, and the singers, being thus clothed upon this solemn occasion, David being musical, and bearing his part among them, chose to appear in the very same habit. Just, saith he, as, among Christians, their kings and princes, when they go in procession with the clergy, are clothed like them. And by this, perhaps, may be understood what Michal meant when she found fault with David for *uncovering himself*: which does not signify that he appeared naked, but put off his royal robes, and put on those that did not belong to him. But it must be confessed, that fine linen was the apparel of kings and great men.

All the Levites—with the singers:] These were all clothed in fine linen.

An ephod of linen.] Which was an honorary vestment allowed to those who were not Levites, as I have shown upon 1 Sam. ii. 18 (see my notes there, and upon 2 Sam. vi. 14).

Ver. 28.] See upon 2 Sam. vi. 15.

Ver. 29.) And expressed as much, when he came to his house, in words of great contempt (see 2 Sam. vi. 16, 20). She was a proud woman, and it is likely had no great sense of religion, which in the reign of Saul (as we read before, xiii. 3), was much neglected.

CHAPTER XVI.

1 *David's festival sacrifice.* 4 *He ordereth a choir to sing thanksgiving.* 7 *A psalm of thanksgiving.* 37 *He appointeth ministers, porters, priests, and musicians, to attend continually on the ark.*

1 So they brought the ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tent that David had pitched for it: and they offered burnt sacrifices and peace offerings before God.

2 And when David had made an end of offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD.

3 And he dealt to every one of Israel, both man and woman, to every one a loaf of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine.

4 ¶ And he appointed certain of the Levites to minister before the ark of the LORD, and to record, and to thank and praise the LORD God of Israel:

5 Asaph the chief, and next to him Zechariah, Jeiel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Mattithiah, and Eliab, and Benaiah, and Obed-edom: and Jeiel with psalteries and with harps; but Asaph made a sound with cymbals;

6 Benaiah also and Jahaziel the priests with trumpets continually before the ark of the covenant of God.

7 ¶ Then on that day David delivered first *this psalm* to thank the LORD into the hand of Asaph and his brethren.

8 Give thanks unto the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people.

9 Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works.

10 Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD.

11 Seek the LORD and his strength, seek his face continually.

12 Remember his marvellous works that he hath done, his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth;

13 O ye seed of Israel his servant, ye children of Jacob, his chosen ones.

CHAP. XVI.

Ver. 2. *In the name of the Lord.*] The Targum translates it, "in the name of the Word of the Lord." Which shows that interpreter took the Word to be Jehovah.

Ver. 3.] These three verses have been explained upon 2 Sam. vi. 17—19 (see there).

Ver. 4. *He appointed—Levites.*] In their courses. *To record, and thank and praise the Lord*] To declare unto the people the wonderful works God had done for Israel (for that is to record), and to give him thanks, and to extol his almighty goodness, and all his glorious perfections. As none could sacrifice but the priests of the seed of Aaron; so none could minister in the temple but the Levites: which was unalterably established by the law of God. But it was in the power of their king to assign the priests or Levites several functions in the service of God, as Grotius observes from this place. They were appointed to be singers, with instruments of music, by the prophets, as we are told in 2 Chron. xxix. 25, and David, as a prophet, not as a king, appointed this divine service, xxiii. 2. But the application of persons to their several places is every where ascribed to king David, and afterward to Solomon; and Jehoshaphat, who was no prophet, ordered the priests and Levites to go and teach the people. So David here appointed who should sing, who should be porters, and discharge other duties (see De Imper. Sum. Protest. circa Sacra, cap. 10, p. 270, edit. Paris).

Ver. 5. *Asaph the chief.*] Some of whose divine composes we have in the book of Psalms.

But *Asaph made a sound with cymbals*;) By whom all the rest were directed to take their several parts in this service.

Ver. 6.] At the morning and evening service these priests attended with trumpets, as the Levites did with other musical instruments.

Ver. 7. *Then on that day David delivered first this psalm*] Or, as it may be plainly translated out of the Hebrew, "This David appointed (or ordained) in the first place at that time;" viz. that God should be praised by Asaph and his colleagues in the manner following. Which solemn service began on the day

when he brought up the ark, and ever after was continued.

To thank the Lord] To give him thanks (as Conradus Pellicanus well glosses) for all his benefits he had bestowed on his people Israel, and which he intended to bestow upon all the people of this world by his son Christ.

Ver. 8.] Out of Ps. xvi. and cv. which, I suppose, David had made before this time, he now composed one hymn to be daily used in the divine service: wherein the divine perfections are admirably set forth, that the people might be excited to his fear, love, and obedience. I have sufficiently explained the sense of every verse in my paraphrase upon the Psalms; but shall here touch upon them again, out of that good and truly great man now mentioned, who thus glosses upon this verse: O ye ministers and worshippers of the Most High, celebrate with heart and voice all the benefits you have received from him the fountain of all good; and if you suffer any evil, or want any thing, pray to him for relief; and being taught by happy experience how good he is, proclaim to all the world, and teach them that all things depend upon his pleasure and order.

Ver. 9.] Praise him with heart and voice: declare his wonderful works, wherein he hath testified his omnipotence, and his wisdom to the faithful.

Ver. 10.] Look upon this as your highest happiness, and make your boast of it, that he is your God: and let their heart rejoice who seek his favour as their chiefest good.

Ver. 11.] Being sensible of your own weakness, depend upon his power for help: and seek his clemency and mercy with humble prayer on all occasions. The ark is called *God's strength* in other places, 2 Chron. vi. 41, Ps. lxxviii. 61, and therefore here they are exhorted to fall down before it and implore his mercy.

Ver. 12. *Remember his marvellous works that he hath done.*] For the preservation of his people, and the punishment of their enemies.

His wonders and the judgments of his mouth;) He would have them reflect upon the plagues of Egypt, which came upon them in a wonderful manner, at the command of Moses. Or, perhaps, he means by

14 He is the Lord our God; his judgments *are* in all the earth.

15 Be ye mindful always of his covenant; the word *which* he commanded to a thousand generations;

16 *Even of the covenant* which he made with Abraham, and of his oath unto Isaac;

17 And hath confirmed the same to Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant,

18 Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance;

19 When ye were but few, even a few, and strangers in it.

20 And *when* they went from nation to nation, and from *one* kingdom to another people;

21 He suffered no man to do them wrong: yea, he reproved kings for their sakes,

22 *Saying*, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.

judgments the laws he gave them at Mount Sinai (Exod xxi. 1.)

Ver. 13.] This is your duty, as you are the offspring of a most faithful servant of his: O ye posterity of Jacob, whom God hath chosen for his people; not for your merits, but out of his free love to one that loved him.

Ver. 14.] The great Lord of all things, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is our God: who rules the whole world by his providence.

Ver. 15.] Never forget his most gracious covenant, wherein he promises to be ever propitious to you, if you keep his law.

Ver. 16.] This covenant he made with your fathers, and confirmed it with an oath, that it should never fail.

Ver. 17.] And what he first promised to Abraham, and confirmed to Isaac by a solemn oath, he established to Jacob by an inviolable law, to endure for ever (see Gen. xvii. 1, 2, xxii. 16, &c. xxvi. 3, xxviii. 13.)

Ver. 18.] He gave him an undoubted title to that good land; and afterward put his posterity into actual possession of it.

Ver. 19.] Remember your former condition, when you were the smallest of all nations, poor and little esteemed; were strangers in the land, which now you enjoy.

Ver. 20.] When you wandered up and down, from one country to another: having no settled dwelling-place.

Ver. 21. *He suffered no man to do them wrong.*] Though they were in danger to be oppressed by those who had not the fear of God before their eyes, yet they were safe every where under the divine protection.

Yea, he reproved kings for their sakes.] When great princes did but attempt to offer any violence to them, he presently made them feel his hand against them.

In Seder Olam Rabba they say, thus far they sung in the morning.

Ver. 22.] So that they durst not so much as touch them, but used them as if they had been kings and lords of the land. So precious were they in his eyes, as if to do them the least harm had been the crime of treason against the divine majesty.

Grotius thinks they are called God's *anointed*, because they had in their family *jus regium*; and therefore Nicolaus Damascenus and Justin call them

23 Sing unto the LORD, all the earth; show forth from day to day his salvation.

24 Declare his glory among the heathen; his marvellous works among all nations.

25 For great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised: he also *is* to be feared above all gods.

26 For all the gods of the people *are* idols: but the LORD made the heavens.

27 Glory and honour *are* in his presence; strength and gladness *are* in his place.

28 Give unto the LORD, ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength.

29 Give unto the LORD the glory *due* unto his name; bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

30 Fear before him, all the earth: the world also shall be stable, that it be not moved.

31 Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice: and let *men* say among the nations, The LORD reigneth.

kings. Kimchi more plainly translates the word "anointed, my great men," or princes:" for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were honoured by kings, Abimelech and Pharaoh, as if they had been anointed kings. Whence the children of Heth say to Abraham, thou art a *prince of God*, that is, a great prince, *in the midst of us* (Gen. xxiii. 6.) St. Jerome thinks, that all the Israelites when they came out of Egypt were called *God's anointed*, because they were under his special protection, by the cloud that covered them; as Cyrus was called his *anointed*, because he was chosen by him to a special office, to be the deliverer of his people, and restore them to their own land.

Ver. 23.] Let not only the Israelites praise him, but all the people of the earth acknowledge their great Creator; proclaim his promised salvation by Christ, without intermission.

Here began the song between the two evenings (if we may believe the Jews in Seder Olam Rabba) unto those words (ver. 36.) "Let all the people say, Amen."

Ver. 24.] Let them spread his fame among all nations, and celebrate every where his astonishing works.

Ver. 25.] He is the great Creator of all things, and the donor of all good, who therefore cannot be sufficiently magnified and praised: and none ought to share with him in his worship and service.

Ver. 26.] For all the gods which the heathen worship are empty names, who can do nothing: it is the Lord God of Israel who made the sun, moon, and stars (which the gentiles worship,) and therefore only is to be adored.

Ver. 27.] To him only we ought to ascribe glory, honour and power: in him alone we ought to confide, to him we ought to cleave, and in his clemency and favour perpetually rejoice.

Ver. 28.] Let not his worship be confined to the people of Israel, but let all sorts of people, from one end of the world to the other, acknowledge him to be the great God, who governs the whole world.

Ver. 29.] Acknowledge all his glorious attributes, wherein he excels all beings: offer unto him the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; prostrate yourselves before him in the humblest manner, and adore his most holy and gracious majesty.

Ver. 30. *Fear before him, all the earth.*] Let all the inhabitants of the earth tremble before him, and humble themselves unto him,

32 Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof: let the fields rejoice, and all that is therein.

33 Then shall the trees of the wood sing out at the presence of the Lord, because he cometh to judge the earth.

34 O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.

35 And say ye, Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather us together, and deliver us from the heathen, that we may give thanks to thy holy name, and glory in thy praise.

36 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel for ever and ever. And all the people said, Amen, and praised the Lord.

37 ¶ So he left there before the ark of the covenant of the Lord Asaph and his brethren, to minister before the ark continually, as every day's work required:

The world also shall be stable, that it be not moved.] For if they humbly submit themselves to his gospel, and implore his grace, he will amend the world, and confirm them in all that is good; and not suffer so many nations to wander in such labyrinths of error.

Ver. 31.] Let all the inhabitants in heaven and earth be glad and rejoice: for the Lord will not only be known in Judea, but most gloriously reign in all nations.

Ver. 32.] By the fulness of it, is meant its swelling to the very top of the banks, as Bochartus observes.

Ver. 33.] These two verses he thus paraphrases: "Let the vast sea, and all that live in the waters triumph; let the dry land, and all the living creatures therein exult for joy: let the trees, and all the fruit that grows on them, sing to the Lord for his benefits." For the Creator of all comes to restore mankind, and resume them into his favour: for whom all these things acknowledge they were created.

Ver. 34.] Whatsoever we are or can do, we owe it to his divine bounty: unto whom we ought to give perpetual thanks, and hope in his mercy for ever.

Ver. 35.] Let all, both Jews and gentiles, say, Save us, O Lord our God, most just, merciful, and powerful; and gather those who now are distant from, and opposite to one another, by variance and hatred, into the unity of faith and charity: that all nations may unanimously give thanks unto thee, and glory in this, that they are always praising thee.

Some have imagined that Ezra added these words after they came out of captivity: but David rather uttered them by the spirit of prophecy, concerning the happy union of Jews and gentiles.

Ver. 36. *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel for ever and ever.]* Unto the great Creator and Sovereign of the world, God most blessed for ever, let all men every where never cease to give blessing and praise.

And all the people said, Amen, and praised the Lord.] At the end of this hymn (the last two verses of which are the conclusion of Ps. evi. 47, 48) all the people expressed their desire that God might be for ever praised in this manner, by saying, *Amen*. From whence Vitringa observes the antiquity of this sacred rite of saying *Amen* at the conclusion of all our prayers and benedictions: which was continued after the captivity, as we find Neh. viii. 6. And he notes three rules which the Jewish doctors give concerning the pronunciation of this word by the people; first, that it be not pronounced too hastily and swiftly, but with a grave and distinct voice: and then, not louder than the tone of him that blessed: and lastly, it was to be expressed in faith; with a certain persuasion, that

38 And Obed-edom, with their brethren, three score and eight: Obed-edom also the son of Jeduthun and Hosah to be porters:

39 And Zadok the priest, and his brethren the priests, before the tabernacle of the Lord in the high place that was at Gibeon.

40 To offer burnt offerings unto the Lord upon the altar of the burnt offering continually morning and evening, and to do according to all that is written in the law of the Lord, which he commanded Israel;

41 And with them Heman and Jeduthun, and the rest that were chosen, who were expressed by name, to give thanks to the Lord, because his mercy endureth for ever;

42 And with them Heman and Jeduthun with trumpets and cymbals for those that should make a sound, and with musical instruments

God would bless them and hear their prayers (De Synag. Veteri, lib. iii. par. ii. cap. 18.)

Ver. 37.] To sing hymns proper to the season.

Ver. 38. *Obed-edom with their brethren.]* He was one of the principal singers under Asaph (ver. 5.)

Obed-edom also the son of Jeduthun.] This is another Obed-edom: who is joined with Jehiah as door-keeper for the ark, xv. 24. But Jehiah, I suppose, was also called Hosah.

Ver. 39. *Zadok the priest.]* He was the second priest, as I have often noted, deputy to the high-priest.

In the high place that was in Gibeon.] As Asaph and his brethren ministered at Jerusalem; so others were appointed to minister at Gibeon: where the tabernacle of Moses was, and the altar of burnt-offering, ever since the slaughter of the priests by Saul (see 2 Chron. i. 3.) Here the ordinary worship of God was performed, and therefore the priests attended at this place to offer sacrifice, which the Levites could not do (ver. 40.) But the extraordinary worship was where the ark was placed, at Jerusalem: where Abiathar the high-priest attended upon David: that if he had any occasion to consult the divine majesty (which could be done only before the ark,) he might be ready to do it for him. But Zadok, the chief of the secondary priests, always attended at Gibeon.

Ver. 40.] For this part of the divine service could be performed nowhere but there where the altar was, nor by any body but by the priests: and therefore David took care it should be constantly performed here, though he was not present every day at those sacrifices, which were offered for all the people of Israel, wheresoever they were. The priests also took care to trim the lamps, and set the show-bread on the table, and to do all other things which the law required.

Ver. 41.] As Asaph and his brethren took care of the music at Jerusalem, where no sacrifices were offered, but only hymns sung and prayers made; so did Heman and Jeduthun (who were with Zadok) at Gibeon, where they sung and played on instruments when the morning and evening sacrifices were offered.

Ver. 42. *And with them Heman and Jeduthun, with trumpets and cymbals.]* It should be translated, "with them (Heman and Jeduthun) there were trumpets and cymbals."

For those that should make a sound, and with musical instruments of God.] All the utensils of the tabernacle and temple were sacred and set apart for that use: not only those of the altar, but even these instruments of music, which David ordained to praise the Lord withal. They were not common, but

of God. And the sons of Jeduthun were porters.
43 And all the people departed every man to

his house: and David returned to bless his house.

consecrated to God to be used in his service alone: and therefore called "musical instruments of God," both here and in 2 Chron. vii. 6, that is, sacred ones: whence those that sung the song of victory over the beast, Rev. xv. 2, are said to have in their hands "the harps of God:" that is, not profane or common, but

sacred harps, the harps of the temple, for there they sang their anthem, as Mr. Mede observes, book I. discourse 2.

The sons of Jeduthun were porters.] To the tabernacle, as others of them were to the ark (ver. 38). Ver. 43.] See 2 Sam. vi. 19, 20.

CHAPTER XVII.

1 Nathan first approving the purpose of David, to build God an house, 3 after by the word of God forbiddeth him. 11 He promiseth him blessings and benefits in his seed. 16 David's prayer and thanksgiving.

1 Now it came to pass, as David sat in his house, that David said to Nathan the prophet, Lo, I dwell in an house of cedars, but the ark of the covenant of the LORD remaineth under curtains.

2 Then Nathan said unto David, Do all that is in thine heart: for God is with thee.

3 ¶ And it came to pass the same night, that the word of God came to Nathan, saying,

4 Go and tell David my servant, Thus saith the LORD, Thou shalt not build me an house to dwell in:

5 For I have not dwelt in an house since the day that I brought up Israel unto this day; but have gone from tent to tent, and from one tabernacle to another.

6 Wheresoever I have walked with all Israel, spake I a word to any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people, saying, Why have ye not built me an house of cedars?

7 Now therefore thus shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the sheepecote, even from following the sheep, that thou shouldest be ruler over my people Israel:

8 And I have been with thee whithersoever thou hast walked, and have cut off all thine enemies from before thee, and have made thee a name like the name of the great men that are in the earth.

9 Also I will ordain a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, and they shall dwell in

their place, and shall be moved no more; neither shall the children of wickedness waste them any more, as at the beginning.

10 And since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel. Moreover I will subdue all thine enemies. Furthermore I tell thee that the LORD will build thee an house.

11 ¶ And it shall come to pass, when thy days be expired that thou must go to be with thy fathers, that I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom.

12 He shall build me an house, and I will establish his throne for ever.

13 I will be his father, and he shall be my son, and I will not take my mercy away from him, as I took it from him that was before thee:

14 But I will settle him in mine house and in my kingdom for ever: and his throne shall be established for evermore.

15 According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.

16 ¶ And David the king came and sat before the LORD, and said, Who am I, O LORD God, and what is mine house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?

17 And yet this was a small thing in thine eyes, O God; for thou hast also spoken of thy servant's house for a great while to come, and hast regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree, O LORD God.

CHAP. XVII.

Ver. 1—4.] These four verses have been explained before, 2 Sam. vii. in the first five verses.

Ver. 5.] This verse is the very same with the sixth verse of that chapter in Samuel: only there it is said, "I have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle;" and here, "I have gone from tent to tent, and from one tabernacle to another." Both which signify, that he had no settled place wherein to dwell, but walked or went, where the tent, or tabernacle, was pitched for him. For the words may be translated, "I went out of the tent into the tent:" that is, when they marched in the wilderness, the ark was taken out of the tent, and when they rested it was put into the tent again: and not into a house built of cedar. Or, this may refer to the translation of the ark from the tabernacle made by Moses, unto the tent made for it by David.

Ver. 6.] See 2 Sam. vii. 7.

Ver. 9.] He speaks here, as if now, and not before,

they were possessed of the land of Canaan: for under David's government they were settled and flourished; whereas under the judges they had no rest.

Ver. 10—13.] All these verses, which are set down almost in the same words in 2 Sam. vii. from ver. 7 to ver. 16, are there explained.

Ver. 14.] That is, *in my church*, which is the house of God, wherein he dwelt; and which he governed, ruled, and protected as his peculiar people. It is very observable that in 2 Sam. vii. 16, speaking to David, he calls them, *thine house*, and *thy kingdom*: but here, *mine house* and *my kingdom*. Which confirms, what I noted upon the former place, that this principally belongs to the Messiah, of whom David was but a figure.

Ver. 15.] See there, 2 Sam. vii. 17.

Ver. 16.] He came and took his place before the ark, and then stood up, and made the following prayer to God, as I have explained it 2 Sam. vii. 18.

Ver. 17.] This is likewise explained there, —

18 What can David *speak* more to thee for the honour of thy servant? for thou knowest thy servant.

19 O LORD, for thy servant's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all this greatness, in making known all these great things.

20 O LORD, *there is none* like thee, neither is *there any* God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears.

21 And what one nation in the earth is like thy people Israel, whom God went to redeem *to be* his own people, to make thee a name of greatness and terribleness, by driving out nations from before thy people, whom thou hast redeemed out of Egypt?

22 For thy people Israel didst thou make thine own people for ever; and thou, LORD, becamest their God.

19, but the latter part of that verse is expressed in different words, for there he saith, "Is this the manner of men, O Lord?" but here, "thou hast regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree, O Lord God." This was not after the manner of men, to treat a poor shepherd, as if he were a great prince: but so he had dealt with David. But Victorinus Strigelius thinks, the Hebrew words will bear this translation, which in his opinion is better than our own, "Thou hast looked upon me in the form of a man, who art in the highest the Lord God." Which he looks upon as a prophecy of the Messiah, who was really the Lord God, but appeared in the form of a man. The LXX. come near this sense in the former part of the words, *ἰκειδές με ὡς ὄρασις ἀνθρώπου*, "Thou hast looked upon me as the aspect of a man." So Christophorus Helvicus interprets it in his Elenchus Judæorum.

Ver. 18.] He could desire no more for the increase of his honour: which is an explication of what is said 2 Sam. vii. 20 (see there).

Ver. 19.] In 2 Sam. vii. 21 it is said "for thy word's sake," that is, for the sake of thy promise to thy servant, as this place explains it. He had passed

23 Therefore now, LORD, let the thing that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant and concerning his house be established for ever, and do as thou hast said.

24 Let it even be established, that thy name may be magnified for ever, saying, The LORD of hosts is the God of Israel, *even a God to Israel*: and let the house of David thy servant be established before thee.

25 For thou, O my God, hast told thy servant that thou wilt build him an house: therefore thy servant hath found *in his heart* to pray before thee.

26 And now, LORD, thou art God, and hast promised this goodness unto thy servant:

27 Now therefore let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may be before thee for ever: for thou blessest, O LORD, and *it shall be* blessed for ever.

his word to David by his prophets out of his own mere goodness, without any other motive (see there). It may also be thought to signify, "for the sake of the Messiah," who is, "the Word of God:" and by way of eminence is called his servant. Isa. xlii. 1. xlix. 5.

Ver. 20.] This is more fully expressed in 2 Sam. vii. 23.

Ver. 21.] See 2 Sam. vii. 23. As in the former verse he acknowledges his happiness, in being beloved of God; so in this, the great honour God had done him, in making him king of such a people.

Ver. 22, 23.] See there, ver. 24, 25.

Ver. 24.] See ver. 20, where the same thing is said, only the title of God is a little here enlarged. For there it is only said, "The Lord of hosts is the God of Israel;" but here "The Lord of hosts is the God of Israel, even a God to Israel." Or, as it may be translated, "The Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, is a God to Israel;" that is, most gracious and merciful as appeared in many things, particularly in bestowing such a king upon them.

Ver. 25, 26.] See there, ver. 27, 28.

Ver. 27.] This is delivered a little more largely in 2 Sam. vii. 29 (see there).

CHAPTER XVIII.

1 David subdueth the Philistines and the Moabites. 3 He smiteth Hadarezer and the Syrians. 9 Thou sendeth Hadoram with presents to bless David. 11 The presents and the spoil David dedicateth to God. 13 He putteth garrisons in Edom. 14 David's officers.

1 Now after this it came to pass, that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them, and took Gath and her towns out of the hand of the Philistines.

2 And he smote Moab; and the Moabites became David's servants, and brought gifts.

3 ¶ And David smote Hadarezer king of Zobah unto Hamath, as he went to establish his dominion by the river Euphrates.

4 And David took from him a thousand chariots, and seven thousand horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen: David also houghed all the

chariot horses, but reserved of them an hundred chariots.

5 And when the Syrians of Damascus came to help Hadarezer king of Zobah, David slew of the Syrians two and twenty thousand men.

6 Then David put garrisons in Syria-damascus; and the Syrians became David's servants, and brought gifts. Thus the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went.

7 And David took the shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadarezer, and brought them to Jerusalem.

CHAP. XVIII.

Ver. 1.] This chapter hath been fully explained in 2 Sam. viii. What differences there are in any expression is there noted, and an account given of them

to which I refer the reader. Only it may be observed upon this verse, that in the book of Samuel it is said, he took Metheg-amnah out of their hand; but here "Gath and her towns:" which are all one in Abarbanel's account, who takes Metheg-amnah for a region

8 Likewise from Tibhath, and from Chun, cities of Hadarezer, brought David very much brass, wherewith Solomon made the brasen sea, and the pillars, and the vessels of brass.

9 ¶ Now when Tou king of Hamath heard how David had smitten all the host of Hadarezer king of Zobah;

10 He sent Hadoram his son to king David, to inquire of his welfare, and to congratulate him, because he had fought against Hadarezer, and smitten him; (for Hadarezer had war with Tou;) and *with him* all manner of vessels of gold and silver and brass.

11 ¶ Them also king David dedicated unto the LORD, with the silver and the gold that he brought from all *these* nations; from Edom and from Moab, and from the children of Ammon, and from the Philistines, and from Amalek.

or province which comprehended Gath and her towns. We may observe also in ver. 11 the great piety of David, who had in his heart to build a splendid house for God's habitation: and when he was prohibited by God to do it (because he had been engaged in so many wars, and shed a great deal of blood) he could not satisfy himself without doing something towards it: by preparing materials for it, and consecrating a great deal of treasure to be employed in the building, and to no other use. For that is the meaning of what is

12 Moreover Abishai the son of Zeruiah slew of the Edomites in the valley of Salt eighteen thousand.

13 ¶ And he put garrisons in Edom; and all the Edomites became David's servants. Thus the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went.

14 ¶ So David reigned over all Israel, and executed judgment and justice among all his people.

15 And Joab the son of Zeruiah *was* over the host; and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, recorder.

16 And Zadok the son of Ahitub, and Abimelech the son of Abiathar, *were* the priests; and Shavsha was scribe;

17 And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was* over the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and the sons of David *were* chief about the king.

here said, That he dedicated unto the Lord the gold and silver which he brought from several nations: that is, he consecrated, or solemnly deputed them to this holy use, that it might not be lawful hereafter to employ them to any other.

Ver. 16.] It is observed by Drusius, that there were two Abimelechs; one the grandson of Ahitub, the other the son of Abiathar: who by the change of a letter, is here called, Abimelech (Misecl. Cent. i. cap. 46.)

CHAPTER XIX.

1 *David's messengers, sent to comfort Hanun the son of Nahash are villainously entreated. 6 The Ammonites, strengthened by the Syrians, are overcome by Joab and Abishai. 16 Shophach, making a new supply of the Syrians, is slain by David.*

1 Now it came to pass after this, that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon died, and his son reigned in his stead.

2 And David said, I will show kindness unto Hanun the son of Nahash, because his father shewed kindness to me. And David sent messengers to comfort him concerning his father. So the servants of David came into the land of the children of Ammon to Hanun, to comfort him.

3 But the princes of the children of Ammon said to Hanun, Thinkest thou that David doth honour thy father, that he hath sent comforters unto thee? are not his servants come unto thee for to search, and to overthrow, and to spy out the land?

4 Wherefore Hanun took David's servants, and shaved them, and cut off their garments in the midst, hard by their buttocks, and sent them away.

5 Then there went *certain*, and told David how the men were served. And he sent to meet

them: for the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, Tarry at Jericho until your beards be grown, and *then* return.

6 ¶ And when the children of Ammon saw that they had made themselves odious to David, Hanun and the children of Ammon sent a thousand talents of silver to hire them chariots and horsemen out of Mesopotamia, and out of Syria-maachah, and out of Zobah.

7 So they hired thirty and two thousand chariots, and the king of Maachah and his people; who came and pitched before Medeba. And the children of Ammon gathered themselves together from their cities, and came to battle.

8 And when David heard *of it*, he sent Joab, and all the host of the mighty men.

9 And the children of Ammon came out, and put the battle in array before the gate of the city; and the kings that were come *were* by themselves in the field.

10 Now when Joab saw that the battle was set

CHAP. XIX.

This chapter also hath been so fully explained in 2 Sam. x. that there is no need of adding any thing. Unless, I observe, that the country which there is called simply Maachah, is here called, ver. 6. Aram-maachah. Which is the foundation of their opinion who think this was in Syria, as I there observed: but it is

plain the scripture makes Maachah a city of Canaan (see Dent. iii. 14, Josh. xii. 4, 5, and other places.) But it lying beyond Jordan on the borders of Syria, it had the name of Aram added to it; because the people were in their manners more Syrians than Canaanites, as Bochartus conjectures. In like manner, Aram-bethrehab he thinks belonged to Canaan, in the north part of it, not far from Emath, that is, Epiph-

against him before and behind, he chose out of all the choice of Israel, and put *them* in array against the Syrians.

11 And the rest of the people he delivered unto the hand of Abishai his brother, and they set *themselves* in array against the children of Ammon.

12 And he said, If the Syrians be too strong for me, then thou shalt help me: but if the children of Ammon be too strong for thee, then I will help thee.

13 Be of good courage, and let us behave ourselves valiantly for our people, and for the cities of our God: and let the LORD do *that which is good* in his sight.

14 So Joab and the people that *were* with him drew nigh before the Syrians unto the battle; and they fled before him.

15 And when the children of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fled, they likewise fled before Abishai his brother, and entered into the city. Then Joab came to Jerusalem.

(see Numb. xiii. 41.) And Maachah was in the tribe of Manasseh, as Rehob in the tribe of Asher (Josh. xiii. 11, xix. 28. As for what is said here, that "they hired thirty-two thousand chariots," the meaning must be, so many men who fought in chariots, when they saw cause. For in the book of Samuel, it is said expressly that they hired twenty thousand

16 ¶ And when the Syrians saw that they were put to the worse before Israel, they sent messengers, and drew forth the Syrians that *were* beyond the river: and Shophach the captain of the host of Hadarezer *went* before them.

17 And it was told David; and he gathered all Israel, and passed over Jordan, and came upon them, and set *the battle* in array against them. So when David had put the battle in array against the Syrians, they fought with him.

18 But the Syrians fled before Israel; and David slew of the Syrians seven thousand *men which fought* in chariots, and forty thousand footmen, and killed Shophach the captain of the host.

19 And when the servants of Hadarezer saw that they were put to the worse before Israel, they made peace with David, and became his servants: neither would the Syrians help the children of Ammon any more.

footmen from Zoba, and twelve thousand men of Ish-tob: which make up the thirty-two thousand here mentioned. Which if it should be understood of such a number of chariots, there would have been no footmen in their whole army, which is incredible: as it is that they should have so many chariots (see I Sam. xiii. 5.)

CHAPTER XX.

1 *Rabbah is besieged by Joab, spoiled by David, and the people thereof tortured.* 4 *Three giants are slain in three several overthrowes of the Philistines.*

1 AND it came to pass, that after the year was expired, at the time that kings go out to battle, Joab led forth the power of the army, and wasted the country of the children of Ammon, and came and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried at Jerusalem. And Joab smote Rabbah, and destroyed it.

2 And David took the crown of their king from off his head, and found it to weigh a talent of gold, and *there were* precious stones in it: and it was set upon David's head: and he brought also exceeding much spoil out of the city.

3 And he brought out the people that *were* in it, and cut *them* with saws, and with harrows of iron, and with axes. Even so dealt David with all the cities of the children of Ammon. And David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

4 ¶ And it came to pass after this, that there

arose war at Gezer with the Philistines; at which time Sibbechai the Hushathite slew Sippai *that was* of the children of the giant: and they were subdued.

5 And there was war again with the Philistines; and Elhanan the son of Jair slew Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, whose spear staff *was* like a weaver's beam.

6 And yet again there was war at Gath, where was a man of *great* stature whose fingers and toes *were* four and twenty, six *on each hand*, and six *on each foot*: and he also was the son of the giant.

7 But when he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimea David's brother slew him.

8 These were born unto the giant in Gath; and they fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants.

CHAP. XX.

Ver. 1.] See 2 Sam xi. 1, where the history of David's adultery with Bath-sheba, and the murder of Uriah follows: which is here omitted, it being there so largely related, that nothing could be added to it.

Ver. 2, 3.] See 2 Sam. xii. 30, 31, where these two verses are explained.

Ver. 4.] An account is given of this in 2 Sam. xxi. 18, where this giant is called Saph; who was, as I

observed there, of the race of the Anakims (see Deut. ix. 2).

Ver. 5.] See there, 2 Sam. xxi. 19.

Ver. 6—8.] These three verses are explained in the forenamed place, 2 Sam. xxi. 20—23. After which follows the hymn which David composed in commemoration of his many deliverances from these and other enemies, especially from Saul; which is here omitted, because not only there largely recorded, but also in the book of Psalms.

CHAPTER XXI.

1 *David, tempted by Satan, forceth Joab to number the people.* 5 *The number of the people being brought, David repenteth of it.* 9 *David having three plagues propounded by Gad, chooseth the pestilence.* 14 *After the death of seventy thousand, David by repentance preventeth the destruction of Jerusalem.* 18 *David, by Gad's direction, purchaseth Ornan's threshing-floor: where having built an altar, God giveth a sign of his favour by fire, and stayeth the plague.* 25 *David sacrificeth there, being restrained from Gibeon by fear of the angel.*

1 AND Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.

2 And David said to Joab and to the rulers of the people, Go, number Israel from Beer-sheba even to Dan; and bring the number of them to me, that I may know it.

3 And Joab answered, The LORD make his people an hundred times so many more as they be: but, my lord the king, are they not all my lord's servants? why then doth my lord require this thing? why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel?

4 Nevertheless the king's word prevailed against Joab. Wherefore Joab departed, and went throughout all Israel, and came to Jerusalem.

5 ¶ And Joab gave the sum of the number of the people unto David. And all *they* of Israel were a thousand thousand and an hundred thousand men that drew sword: and Judah was four hundred threescore and ten thousand men that drew sword.

6 But Levi and Benjamin counted he not among them: for the king's word was abominable to Joab.

7 And God was displeased with this thing therefore he smote Israel.

8 And David said unto God, I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing: but now, I beseech thee, do away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.

9 ¶ And the LORD spake unto Gad, David's seer, saying,

10 Go and tell David, saying, Thus saith the LORD, I offer thee three things: choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee.

11 So Gad came to David, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Choose thee

12 Either three years' famine; or three months to be destroyed before thy foes, while that the sword of thine enemies overtaketh thee; or else three days the sword of the LORD, even the pestilence, in the land, and the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the coasts of Israel. Now therefore advise thyself what word I shall bring again to him that sent me.

13 And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let me fall now into the hand of the LORD; for very great are his mercies: but let me not fall into the hand of man.

CHAP. XXI.

Ver. 1.] It is said in 2 Sam. xxiv. 1, that God being angry with Israel, moved David, that is suffered Satan to move him. This is sufficiently explained there, only here the phrase *stood up* is to be observed. Which was the posture of those who charged and accused any person of a crime in a court of justice (see 1 Kings xxii. 21). Thus Satan is represented as the accuser of the brethren, in the book of the Revelation: and here to lay some sin to the charge of the Israelites, which he represented to God as a reason to punish them: for it is the way of the holy scriptures thus to bring down these things, and accommodate them to the lowest capacities.

Ver. 2. *David said to Joab, and to the rulers of the people.*] Who, it is plain by 2 Sam. xxiv. 4, were with Joab when the king gave this command.

Ver. 3.] See what I have noted upon 2 Sam. xxiv. 3. It is something strange that Joab should see the danger of this, and David not think of it; no, not when it was so plainly represented to him. But the best men are sometimes very drowsy, and apprehend not those things which plainly appear to those who are not so good.

Ver. 4.] Unto which they came at the end of nine months and twenty days, as is more largely related in 2 Sam. xxiv. from ver. 4 to 9.

Ver. 5.] This account of their number differs much from that given in 2 Sam. xxiv. 9, concerning which see what I have there noted.

Ver. 6. *But Levi and Benjamin counted he not among them.*] Some think he took no account of Levi

because they were not warriors, and only such as were fit for war, David desired to be satisfied how many they were. And Benjamin they think was so diminished in the time of the Judges, that they were to be spared. But these, it were easy to show, are not good reasons, and no other reason is to be sought for, than that given here in the very next words.

For the king's word was abominable to Joab.] He did all this against his will, and at last the work was so odious to him, that he was quite tired with it; and therefore broke off before he took the number of these two tribes.

Ver. 7.] He resolved to punish them because it was for their sins that God permitted David to indulge himself in this vanity.

Ver. 8.] See 2 Sam. xxiv. 10, where I have explained this, and given the best account I could of the nature of this sin.

Ver. 9.] This is expressed a little more largely in 2 Sam. xxiv. 11 (see there).

Ver. 10.] He speaks to him so solemnly in the name of the Lord, that he might attend the more seriously to what he said, and look upon it as peremptorily resolved.

Ver. 12.] In the book of Samuel it is said, the prophet propounded seven years of famine, and here but three. Of which difference I have given an account in 2 Sam. xxiv. 13.

Ver. 13.] See there, upon ver. 14. I only add here that the pestilence is more properly called the *hand of the Lord*, than other common calamities: for they have visible causes, but none know whence this sudden destruction comes, but immediately from the hand

14 ¶ So the LORD sent pestilence upon Israel: and there fell of Israel seventy thousand men.

15 And God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it: and as he was destroying, the LORD beheld, and he repented him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed, It is enough, stay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD stood by the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

16 And David lifted up his eyes, and saw the angel of the LORD stand between the earth and the heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders of Israel, who were clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces.

17 And David said unto God, *Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed; but as for these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, O LORD my God, be on me, and on my father's house; but not on thy people, that they should be plagued.*

18 ¶ Then the angel of the LORD commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up, and set up an altar unto the LORD in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

19 And David went up at the saying of Gad, which he spake in the name of the LORD.

20 And Ornan turned back, and saw the angel;

and his four sons with him hid themselves. Now Ornan was threshing wheat.

21 And as David came to Ornan, Ornan looked and saw David, and went out of the threshing-floor, and bowed himself to David with his face to the ground.

22 Then David said to Ornan, Grant me the place of *this* threshing-floor, that I may build an altar therein unto the LORD: thou shalt grant it me for the full price: that the plague may be stayed from the people.

23 And Ornan said unto David, Take it to thee, and let my lord the king do that which is good in his eyes: lo, I give thee the oxen also for burnt offerings, and the threshing instruments for wood, and the wheat for the meat offering; I give it all.

24 And king David said to Ornan, Nay; but I will verily buy it for the full price: for I will not take that which is thine for the LORD, nor offer burnt offerings without cost.

25 So David gave to Ornan for the place six hundred shekels of gold by weight.

26 And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called upon the LORD; and he answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt offering.

God; when there is no alteration that we can see in the air, or other elements (as we call them). And therefore the angel of the Lord is said to have smote the army of Sennacherib with such a pestilence, as Josephus reasonably conjectures.

Ver. 14.] This is more largely expressed in 2 Sam. xxiv. 15 (see my annotations there).

Ver. 15. *And God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it.*] This seems to import that there were more angels than one employed to destroy in several places of the country; and that the angel sent to Jerusalem had begun to slay some of the inhabitants: but God took pity of them; beholding, perhaps, their serious repentance.

And the angel of the Lord stood by the threshing-floor of Ornan.] See there upon ver. 16.

Ver. 16. *David lifted up his eyes, and saw the angel of the Lord—having a drawn sword in his hand.*] Whence the pestilence is called (ver. 12), “the sword of the Lord.”

Stretched out over Jerusalem.] As ready to do execution upon the people there.

Then David and the elders of Israel, who were clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces.] It appears by their habit that they (and the people of Jerusalem with them, ver. 15), were humbling themselves before God for their sins, and deprecating his displeasure; for mourners were wont to clothe themselves in sackcloth.

Ver. 17.] See 2 Sam. xxiv. 17.

Ver. 18.] This seems to signify that Gad was sent upon his former message (ver. 9), by an angel, who came with that command from God. See there, ver. 18.

Ver. 19.] See there, ver. 19.

Ver. 20. *And Ornan turned back, and saw the angel.*] Or, when he saw the angel, he turned his face from him, (as he did his four sons, who likewise saw him); being afraid at so glorious an appearance.

This book, as I observed in the beginning, supplies some things omitted in the book of Samuel, among which this is one. For nothing is said there of Arau-

nah's seeing the angel, but only of David's seeing him.

Ornan was threshing wheat.] For the greatest persons did not, in those days, disdain such employments.

Ver. 21.] See 2 Sam. xxiv. 20.

Ver. 22. *David said to Ornan, Grant me the place of this threshing-floor, that I may build an altar.*] This he said, after Ornan had first desired to know the cause of his coming to him.

That the plague may be stayed.] By offering a sacrifice to appease the divine anger (see ver. 21).

Ver. 23.] He offered the ground to the king, as a free gift; with every thing that was necessary for sacrifice (see 2 Sam. xxiv. 22, 23).

Ver. 25.] This confutes their opinion, who think there were no shekels but of silver. See 2 Sam. xxiv. 24, where I have shown that this account of the sum of money which he paid, doth not disagree with that which is given there in that place.

Ver. 26. *David built there an altar.*] See there, ver. 25.

Called upon the Lord.] By thanksgivings for his mercy, beseeching the continuance of it.

He answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar.] This was the highest token of God's gracious acceptance of any sacrifice (see Lev. ix. 24). The Jews say, thus God consumed the sacrifices of Abel, and of Noah, and of Abraham, when they first dedicated altars to him. It is certain from the holy scriptures, thus God testified his acceptance of the sacrifices of Gideon and Elijah in ancient times: which Julian himself had not the hardness to deny (see St. Cyril, contra Julianum, lib. x.). And indeed this was known by the heathens: for Servius upon Virg. Æneid. xii. ver. 200, saith, that in the old temples sacrifices were no otherways consumed, quam igne divino precibus impetrato, “than by divine fire obtained by prayers” (see other testimonies out of heathen antiquity, in Huëtius's Quest. Alnetanæ, p. 216. &c.).

27 And the LORD commanded the angel; and he put up his sword again into the sheath thereof.

28 ¶ At that time when David saw that the LORD had answered him in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite, then he sacrificed there.

29 For the tabernacle of the LORD, which

Moses made in the wilderness, and the altar of the burnt offering, were at that season in the high place at Gibeon.

30 But David could not go before it to inquire of God: for he was afraid because of the sword of the angel of the LORD.

Ver. 27.] Which, it seems, was brandished over Jerusalem, till this sacrifice was offered.

Ver. 28.] That is, he continued to offer his sacrifices in that place, where there was such a manifest appearance of God, and a testimony of his acceptance of his sacrifices. So that from this time he did not go to Gibeon, where sacrifices were wont to be offered upon the brazen altar: which, as it follows, was then there, together with the table, the candlestick, and the fire that came down from heaven in the days of Moses (as Seder Olam Rabba saith, cap. 14), and here Zadok and his brethren ministered, while the ark was in Zion, and with them Heman and others (xiv. 39—41).

Ver. 29.] The Targum calls this high place, “the sanctuary in Gibeon:” for this word comprehended the whole sacred house, as in 1 Sam. ix. 13.

Ver. 30. *David could not go before it to inquire of God:*] He thought it not fit to go thither at this time, though that was the place to which they always resorted to beg mercy of God by sacrifice.

For he was afraid] As he thought God had consecrated this place for his service, and that he ought immediately to sacrifice here, and not stay till he could go to Gibeon: so perhaps he thought there might still be danger, that the angel might smite Jerusalem, if he did not continue to worship God here: where he knew, by some means or other, God intended his temple should be built for his perpetual honour in this place. The altar also now erected here was set up by the command of God, as well as that of Moses; so that he thought he might most acceptably serve God here.

CHAPTER XXII.

1 *David, foreknowing the place of the temple, prepareth abundance for the building of it. 6 He instructeth Solomon in God's promises, and his duty in building the temple. 17 He chargeth the princes to assist his son.*

1 THEN David said, This is the house of the LORD God, and this is the altar of the burnt offering for Israel.

2 And David commanded to gather together the strangers that were in the land of Israel; and he set masons to hew wrought stones to build the house of God.

3 And David prepared iron in abundance for the nails for the doors of the gates, and for the joinings; and brass in abundance without weight;

4 Also cedar trees in abundance: for the Zido-

nians and they of Tyre brought much cedar wood to David.

5 And David said, Solomon my son is young and tender, and the house that is to be builded for the LORD must be exceeding magnifical, of fame and of glory throughout all countries: I will therefore now make preparation for it. So David prepared abundantly before his death.

6 ¶ Then he called for Solomon his son, and charged him to build an house for the LORD God of Israel.

CHAP. XXII.

Ver. 1. *David said, This is the house of the Lord God.*] He seems to have been inspired by God with this thought, that here he would have his temple to be built. At least, he concluded this, because the angel bade him build an altar here, which was for sacrifice: and here God testified his presence, as he did at the erection of the first altar, Lev. ix. 24. He seems to have respect to the words of Jacob, Gen. xxviii. 16, 17.

This is the altar of the burnt offering for Israel.] That is, here all his sacrifices shall be offered, when the temple is built. From which words Maimonides concludes, it was utterly unlawful to build God a house any where else, or to offer sacrifice in any other place but this.

Ver. 2. *David commanded to gather together the strangers that were in the land of Israel;*] That is, those they called *proselytes*, who perhaps were better skilled in such works, as here follow, than the children of Israel. Or, as R. Solomon Jarchi thinks, these being servile works, he would not employ the free people of Israel therein: which example Solomon afterward followed (1 Kings v. 15; ix. 22; 2 Chron. ii. 1; viii. 7). But we must not from hence infer, as some have done, that proselytes were not as

free as other subjects: for they did not settle among the Jews upon any condition of being under any kind of servitude.

He set masons to hew wrought stones to build the house of God.] Though God had forbidden him to build him a house, yet he thought he might prepare materials for the building: which God so much approved, that he was pleased to show him a model of such a house as he would have, as we read ch. xxviii. 19.

Ver. 3.] The word which we translate *joinings*, the Targum translates *hinges*.

Ver. 4.] There being great friendship between them and David.

Ver. 5.] He considered with himself these two things, the youth of Solomon (of which see 1 Kings iii. 7), and then the magnificence of the structure that was to be built; both which he thought required his care, to make what preparation he could for such an undertaking. For young men are wont to be careless, and are rarely capable of great designs. Learned men have observed, that this temple was so stately and rich, that it exceeded all others in the world: the famous temple of Diana at Ephesus, being not to be compared with it (see Dr. Spenser, lib. iii. De Leg. Hebr. cap. 2. dissert. 6).

Ver. 6.] By this it was apparent, and, I suppose,

7 And David said to Solomon, My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build an house unto the name of the LORD my God:

8 But the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars: thou shalt not build an house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight.

9 Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days.

10 He shall build an house for my name; and he shall be my son, and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel for ever.

11 Now, my son, the LORD be with thee; and prosper thou, and build the house of the LORD thy God, as he hath said of thee.

12 Only the LORD give thee wisdom and understanding, and give thee charge concerning Israel, that thou mayest keep the law of the LORD thy God.

well known, that he intended him for his successor; which made the crime of Adonijah the greater, who endeavoured to put him by.

Ver. 7.] See in 2 Sam. vii. 1, 2.

Ver. 8.] This reason is not mentioned in the book of Samuel, but here is recorded to show, that though David's wars were warranted, and succeeded by God in an extraordinary manner, yet it did not suit so well with the divine majesty, to have a house built him by one who had shed so much blood, as by one that reigned in peace and quietness; that he might be an emblem of the King of peace, the Lord of the church, who was prefigured in all such great transactions. There might be respect here to the blood of Uriah, and those worthy men slain together with him, by the contrivance of David: which made him unworthy to be honoured with such an undertaking as this. David himself takes notice of this blood-guiltiness, as a thing which was always in God's eye, Ps. li. 4, where he saith, "I have done this evil in thy sight:" as God here saith, "Thou hast shed blood in my sight" (see more below, ch. xxviii. 3).

Ver. 9.] Here are two reasons, why his son should have this honour: because God would give him rest from all his enemies, and Israel should live in peace and quietness in his days. Which made his reign a proper season for this great work.

Ver. 10.] This can belong to none, in the proper and full sense of the word, but Christ alone. For Solomon reigned but forty years, and after that his kingdom was torn in pieces: therefore to Christ the author of the Hebrews applies them (Heb. i. 5).

Ver. 11.] He would not have him doubt, but be as confident as he was, that God would prosper him in this work; because he ordered him to undertake it.

Ver. 12.] When he committed Israel to his care.

Ver. 13.] Nothing gives a man such an undaunted courage, as a conscience of well-doing, in exact obedience to God's commands.

Ver. 14.] *Now, behold, in my trouble*] In a tumultuous reign, full of various troubles.

I have prepared for the house of the Lord an hundred thousand talents of gold, &c.] His heart was so bent to show his gratitude to God, that he would have done a great deal more for him, if he had been able. Though this was such a vast treasure which he

13 Then shalt thou prosper, if thou takest heed to fulfil the statutes and judgments which the LORD charged Moses with concerning Israel: be strong, and of good courage; dread not, nor be dismayed.

14 Now, behold, in my trouble I have prepared for the house of the LORD an hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver; and of brass and iron without weight; for it is in abundance: timber also and stone have I prepared; and thou mayest add thereto.

15 Moreover *there are* workmen with thee in abundance, hewers and workers of stone and timber, and all manner of cunning men for every manner of work.

16 Of the gold, the silver, and the brass, and the iron, *there is* no number. Arise *therefore*, and be doing, and the LORD be with thee.

17 ¶ David also commanded all the princes of Israel to help Solomon his son, *saying*,

18 *Is not the LORD your God with you?* and hath he *not* given you rest on every side? for he hath given the inhabitants of the land into mine

amassed (not out of covetousness, but purely for the honour and service of God), that it hath seemed to some incredible. For if we take this to be meant of the greater talent, it makes such an immense sum, that it exceeds the riches of any of the Roman emperors, or other former monarchs. For in the time of Trajan, when that empire was largest, the money that was in his treasury did not exceed seventy-three thousand talents, as Bodinus observes in his book *De Republ. lib. vi. cap. 2*. But a better man than he, our Brerewood, hath computed these talents to make so many millions, that he thinks the word *kikkar* should not be translated *talent* in this place; but only a *mass*, or *cake* of gold and silver. And so Guil. Budæus observes in his book *De Asse*, that there was in Homer's time a talent of lesser value: for he speaks of two talents, which were given, with other things, as a reward of a victory obtained in some exercises. Such talents, he thinks, we are to understand in this place: for David reigned about the time of the kingdom of the Assyrians, which was near the time of Homer (see Beckius upon the Targum in this place). Of the same opinion is Jacobus Capellus, and Junius, and Tremellius, as appears by the sum to which they make these talents to amount, viz. five hundred thousand dollars of gold, and as much of silver. And more lately Hermannus Witsius hath computed, that half so many talents of the sanctuary (as some call them) amounts to twenty thousand five hundred eighty-five tons of gold: which he shows David had opportunity to heap together, in his *Miscell. Sacra*, tom. ii. exerc. x. sect. 17, 18.

Ver. 15.] Who were all to be paid, as well as the labourers, and carriers of burdens, out of this money; which required a very great sum.

Ver. 16.] *Of the gold, the silver, and the brass, and the iron, there is no number.*] The meaning is, the quantity of brass and iron was not numbered, as that of the gold and silver was.

Arise therefore, and be doing, and the Lord be with thee.] He would not have him now go about the work, but begin it when he was settled on his throne: nothing doubting the Lord would prosper it.

Ver. 17.] By advising him, and encouraging the people in their labours.

Ver. 18. *Is not the Lord your God with you?*]

hand; and the land is subdued before the LORD, and before his people.

19 Now set your heart and your soul to seek the LORD your God; arise therefore, and build ye

the sanctuary of the LORD God, to bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and the holy vessels of God, into the house that is to be built to the name of the LORD.

What God hath already done for them, was a ground of hope he would further them in this work; which was for his service.

For he hath given the inhabitants of the land into mine hand;] For God was the author of all those wars, and gave them all their victories.

Ver. 19.] He beseeches them not to neglect this opportunity, which he spake of in the foregoing verse; viz. the time of peace which God had given them,

which was fit for such a work. Strigelius compares these words with those of Christ, "While ye have the light, walk in the light." And, indeed, the ark and the tabernacle had been too long separated, and therefore such preparation being made for it, it was time to bring the ark, with all the holy vessels in the tabernacle, together into a settled place, by building the sanctuary for them.

CHAPTER XXIII.

1 David in his old age maketh Solomon king. 2 The number and distribution of the Levites. 7 The families of the Gershonites. 12 The sons of Kohath. 21 The sons of Merari. 24 The office of the Levites.

1 So when David was old and full of days, he made Solomon his son king over Israel.

2 ¶ And he gathered together all the princes of Israel, with the priests and the Levites.

3 Now the Levites were numbered from the age of thirty years and upward; and their number

by their polls, man by man, was thirty and eight thousand.

4 Of which, twenty and four thousand were to set forward the work of the house of the LORD: and six thousand were officers and judges:

5 Moreover four thousand were porters; and

CHAP. XXIII.

Ver. 1.] Declared him his successor, but did not resign his throne to him, nor make him his coadjutor.

Ver. 2.] It is likely he took this opportunity to declare before them all, that Solomon should be king after his decease. But the principal end of this assembly was, that he might acquaint them with a new regulation of the priests and Levites in their ministrations: which he intended to establish by a divine direction, as we read xxviii. 12, 13. This was a work becoming his elder years, after he had long observed and weighed the inconveniences of their present method, and the necessity of putting things into a better order. For nothing is more useful or more beautiful than good order, as Strigelius observes out of Xenophon in his *Economics*. And therefore the church of God was highly obliged to David, for distinguishing the degrees and offices of the Levites: appointing some to take care of the divine rites and ceremonies (as his words are); others to govern the public judgments; others to watch and guard the temple; others to celebrate the praises of God with singing and instruments of music.

Ver. 3. *Now the Levites were numbered from the age of thirty years and upward:*] So Moses appointed Numb. iv. 3, for then they were come to their full strength and fit for service; which lasted till they were fifty years old, and no longer. For then they generally began to decay, and grew less able to bear burdens: which was their work then, to carry the tabernacle when it was to be removed, and all the utensils belonging to it. Which work being now at an end, they seem to have continued till their death to discharge their business at the temple; which was more easy, after that was built, and required less labour.

And their number by their polls, man by man, was thirty and eight thousand.] The priests are not included in this number: which is so great, that it may very well incline us to think, that many of them served rather for state and ornament, than for necessity. Abarbinel here cries out, "See whether in all the countries there were so many singers and musi-

cians, and other officers employed in their temples, as there were in the house of the sanctuary. Who ever saw the like? Who ever beheld such sanctity, such ornaments, and such praising of God?"

Ver. 4. *Of which twenty and four thousand were to set forward the work of the house of the Lord:*] These were employed about the sacrifices and offerings, which they killed, and flayed, and washed; and served the priests in all other parts of their ministry about them. Which being very numerous, there were the greater number of Levites to attend this work; viz. a thousand every week: for they took their courses, which being twenty and four, in so many weeks they came about again (see their business, ver. 28, 29).

Six thousand were officers and judges:] God appointed judges and officers to be settled in all their gates (Deut. xvi. 18); but many think, there had been a long neglect in this matter; and that David himself could not restore their judicatures to their ancient order and dignity till the latter end of his reign. For being hindered by perpetual wars, he was forced to be content with such judicatures as had been wont to be executed (which in many things was very defective), only reserving appeals to himself, in cases of great moment (2 Sam. xv. 2). But now he takes care of this so necessary a part of government, and having numbered the Levites, appointed them their certain business, which had been before unsettled and undetermined: employing them both in ecclesiastical, and civil affairs, as Bertram discourses in his book *De Republ. Jud.* p. 124. But a late writer makes a doubt, whether the Israelites observed that command of Moses at all, when they came into the land of Canaan: the heads of their tribes taking upon them for a long time, to determine all controverted matters. But now the Levites were constituted, in the cities where they dwelt, to be both officers and judges. All agree, that *shoterin* commonly signify such officers as execute the sentence of the judges (see my notes upon Deut. xvi. 18, and other places). But here, being placed before judges, we are not to take them for such inferior persons, but for men of greater authority; whom the Targum calls governors, such

four thousand praised the LORD with the instruments which I made, said David, to praise *therewith*.

6 And David divided them into courses among the sons of Levi, *namely*, Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

7 ¶ Of the Gershonites *were*, Laadan, and Shimei.

8 The sons of Laadan; the chief *was* Jehiel, and Zetham, and Joel, three.

9 The sons of Shimei; Shelomith, and Haziel, and Haran, three. These *were* the chief of the fathers of Laadan.

10 And the sons of Shimei *were*, Jahath, Zina, and Jeush, and Beriah. These four *were* the sons of Shimei.

11 And Jahath *was* the chief, and Zizah the second; but Jeush and Beriah had not many sons; therefore they *were* in one reckoning, according to *their father's* house.

12 ¶ The sons of Kohath; Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, four.

13 The sons of Amram; Aaron and Moses: and

Aaron *was* separated, that he should sanctify the most holy things, he and his sons for ever, to burn incense before the LORD, to minister unto him, and to bless in his name for ever.

14 Now *concerning* Moses, the man of God, his sons *were* named of the tribe of Levi.

15 The sons of Moses *were*, Gershom, and Eliezer.

16 Of the sons of Gershom, Shebuel *was* the chief.

17 And the sons of Eliezer *were*, Rehabiah the chief. And Eliezer had none other sons: but the sons of Rehabiah *were* very many.

18 Of the sons of Izhar; Shelomith the chief:

19 Of the sons of Hebron; Jeriah the first, Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third, and Jekameam the fourth.

20 Of the sons of Uzziel; Micah the first, and Jesiah the second.

21 ¶ The sons of Merari; Mahli, and Mushi. The sons of Mahli; Eleazar, and Kish.

22 And Eleazar died, and had no sons, but

Aaron was separated, that he should sanctify the most holy things, he and his sons for ever, to burn incense] The business of Aaron and his sons was very different from the rest of the Levites: for they *were* set apart for the special services of the priesthood; to *sanctify*, that is, to minister in a holy manner the most holy things. His sons burnt incense every day; and the high-priest went into the most holy place on the great day of expiation, with the blood of expiation; and when he came out, blessed the people, as the priest who offered incense did every day, at the conclusion of the sacrifice.

Ver. 14.] Though Moses was so great a man, the supreme governor of the people while he lived, and had such familiarity with the divine majesty, yet his sons *were* not advanced to any dignity, but he left them simple Levites, not so much as priests. Such was the wonderful humility and modesty of this holy man, that he did not aim at great things for his posterity. Which perhaps is here noted, that none might presume, because of their noble descent, to meddle with the priesthood, which was settled in the family of Aaron; as the civil government of the people was left to Joshua, a man of another tribe, and Moses's servant.

Ver. 15.] See Exod. xviii. 3, 4.

Ver. 16.] Who is called Shobael, xxiv. 20.

Ver. 17. *The sons of Eliezer were Rehabiah the chief.*] The word for *chief* in the Hebrew is, the *first*: that is, the first-born, after whom he had no other son; but a great many grandsons, who are frequently called *sons*.

But the sons of Rehabiah were very many.] Which in the Hebrew is thus expressed, "were highly multiplied." From whence the Targum took a conceit (as several Jewish doctors have done) that they *were* multiplied to above six hundred thousand: merely because the same phrase is used of the children of Israel in Exod. i. 7, that they *multiplied exceedingly* in Egypt; that is, to this number, Exod. xii. 17. Whereby they imagine God fulfilled his intentions to Moses, if he would not intercede for the Israelites, that he would make him a great nation. But these are idle speculations; wherein they abound, since they *were* abandoned by God.

Ver. 18.] Who is called Shelomoth, xxiv. 22.

as our justices of the peace are, who saw good order kept according to the law; as the judges *were* such as decided causes in their several courts (see Campegius Vitringa, in his book De Synag. Veteri, lib. i. par. ii. cap. 8).

Ver. 5. *Four thousand were porters;*] Who *were* to take care that no unclean person entered into the temple; or any thing brought into it which ought not to be there; or any thing carried out of it which belonged only to that place; and that nothing was done about the door of the court which might disturb the people at their prayers.

Four thousand praised the Lord with the instruments] Thus he hath given an account how the whole thirty-eight thousand (mentioned ver. 3), *were* disposed of to their offices. And this last four thousand had some among them that *were* more eminent than the rest; being their instructors, both in singing and playing upon instruments: and perhaps some of them, being very skilful in music, contrived instruments, and commanded them to be made.

Ver. 6.] They took their turns of waiting, some going off, and others coming on, to perform all the forementioned duties, which David, the man of God, ordered (as he speaks, 2 Chron. viii. 14), by the direction of Gad and of Nathan the prophets, who had a command for it from God, as we read in this book, xxix. 25.

Ver. 7.] Who *were* their immediate ancestors is not said, nor is it material to be known.

Ver. 8.] It is likely they *were* not his sons, but some of his posterity; for so the word *sons* signifies in the verses following.

Ver. 9.] This Shimei *was* descended from one of the three sons of Laadan.

Ver. 10.] That is, the sons of that Shimei, brother of Laadan, mentioned ver. 7.

Ver. 11. *Zizah*] He is called Zina in the foregoing ver. *Jeush and Beriah had not many sons;*] As their two elder brothers had.

Therefore they were in one reckoning.] They *were* accounted but as one family, and not called by the name of their fathers, Jeush and Beriah, but by the name of Shimei their grandfather.

Ver. 12.] See Exod. vi. 18.

Ver. 13. *The sons of Amram;*] See Exod. vi. 18.

daughters: and their brethren the sons of Kish took them.

23 The sons of Mushi; Mahli, and Eder, and Jeremoth, three.

24 ¶ These were the sons of Levi after the house of their fathers; even the chief of the fathers, as they were counted by number of names by their polls, that did the work for the service of the house of the LORD, from the age of twenty years and upward.

25 For David said, The LORD God of Israel hath given rest unto his people, that they may dwell in Jerusalem for ever:

26 And also unto the Levites; they shall no more carry the tabernacle, nor any vessels of it for the service thereof.

27 For by the last words of David the Levites were numbered from twenty years old and above:

Ver. 22.] Their cousins married them, as the Targum expounds it.

Ver. 21.] They were numbered twice, as they were in the time of Moses: the first time all from thirty, the second time from twenty. And these here mentioned were of the last sort; who were fit to minister in some things belonging to the service of the Levites at twenty years old, though they were not employed in the rest till thirty. See upon Num. viii. 21, where they are ordered to begin at five-and-twenty, though they did not completely minister till thirty.

Ver. 25.] That is, constantly attend upon the service of God there settled. Which was the reason for this new order, that the Levites should begin their ministry at twenty years of age: because Israel having rest was very much multiplied, and there being greater resort to Jerusalem, the Levites had more work to do at the temple. But it must here be noted, that those words, *for ever*, suppose their obedience to God (as in ch. xxviii. 4), in which, if they failed, they were not to continue in Jerusalem, but be expelled out of it.

Ver. 26.] It should rather be translated, "As concerning the Levites:" they were no longer to have that burdensome work of carrying the tabernacle and its vessels when they were removed; but had a much easier service, which they might begin sooner than formerly, it requiring not so much strength of body as readiness of mind.

Ver. 27.] This was his last will about this matter; after he had well considered what they had to do, and what number was necessary to perform every part of this duty. For some of which they were able enough at twenty years of age; when they might be called *probationers* till they were thirty. And there would not have been a sufficient number for all the work, unless they had come to it at the age of twenty.

Ver. 28. *Their office was to wait on the sons of Aaron*] Which the Levites were able to do at the age of twenty years. To attend, for instance, at the tabernacle; but not to carry the ark or the tabernacle.

For the service of the house of the Lord.] This is a general expression of what they were to do, the particulars of which follow: to assist in the courts, and in the chambers, in making clean the holy vessels, and cleansing the courts, and taking care nothing was wanting for the service of the sanctuary.

Ver. 29. *Both for the show-bread, and for the fine flour*] They were to prepare the show-bread, to be set on the table every week by the priests; and to

28 Because their office was to wait on the sons of Aaron for the service of the house of the LORD, in the courts, and in the chambers, and in the purifying of all holy things, and the work of the service of the house of God;

29 Both for the show-bread, and for the fine flour for meat offering, and for the unleavened cakes, and for that which is baked in the pan, and for that which is fried, and for all manner of measure and size;

30 And to stand every morning to thank and praise the LORD, and likewise at even;

31 And to offer all burnt sacrifices unto the LORD in the sabbaths, in the new moons, and on the set feasts, by number, according to the order commanded unto them, continually before the LORD:

32 And that they should keep the charge of

see that there was a just quantity of fine flour for the meat offering morning and evening; and that the unleavened cakes were rightly made: with every thing that was to be baked or fried. Of which in the second chapter of Leviticus.

And for all manner of measure and size;] They were to see also that the just measure for things liquid, and the just size for things dry, were exactly kept, and not altered. For all measures and weights (by which all that were used in the country were to be made) were kept in the sanctuary, in the custody of the Levites. Hence it is, that we read often of the "shekel of the sanctuary:" not that there were two sorts of shekels, one sacred and another civil; but because weights and measures were reckoned inter sacra, "among holy things:" the examples, as I said, of them all being kept in the sanctuary. And so they were in the temples of the pagans, and afterward in Christian churches; as appears by Justinian's Novels, cxxviii. cap. 15. So Viallandus and our bishop Walton have observed. Unto which may be added, that Constantine the Great had gone before him in this; for he commanded the cubit whereby the Egyptians measured the increase of Nilus, and was kept in the temple of Serapis, to be translated into one of the Christian churches, that there it might be preserved the safer by true religion: as both Socrates and Sozomen testify in their Ecclesiastical History, lib. i. cap. 18, lib. v. cap. 3. Julian, indeed, caused it to be restored to Serapis; but that temple being burnt, Rufinus tells us the church had it again in its possession. All which shows, that this ancient piece of religion, to preserve weights and measures as sacred things, continued after the time of David, and perhaps was before it.

Ver. 30.] At the time when the priests offered the morning and evening sacrifice.

Ver. 31. *To offer all burnt sacrifices unto the Lord,—by number.*] It was no part of their business to offer burnt-sacrifices, which belonged to the priests alone. Therefore the meaning is, to praise and give thanks to God at the offering of sacrifices at those solemnities, as well as every morning and evening, and to see there were a just number of sacrifices then offered as the law prescribed.

Continually before the Lord:] That is, in their courses, wherein they were commanded to wait continually when their turn came.

Ver. 32.] These words belong to those that went just before; signifying, that in their order, when their course came to attend, they served either about the tabernacle, or preparing the show-bread in the holy

the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the holy *place*, and the charge of the sons of

Aaron their brethren, in the service of the house of the LORD.

place, or in any other things wherein the priests had occasion to employ them: and the rest of their time

they spent at home in their several cities, where they studied and taught the law.

CHAPTER XXIV.

1 *The divisions of the sons of Aaron by lot into four and twenty orders.* 20 *The Kohathites, 27 and the Merarites divided by lot.*

1 Now *these are* the divisions of the sons of Aaron. The sons of Aaron; Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

2 But Nadab and Abihu died before their father, and had no children: therefore Eleazar and Ithamar executed the priest's office.

3 And David distributed them, both Zadok of the sons of Eleazar, and Ahimelech of the sons of Ithamar, according to their offices in their service.

4 And there were more chief men found of the sons of Eleazar than of the sons of Ithamar; and

thus were they divided. Among the sons of Eleazar *there were* sixteen chief men of the house of *their* fathers, and eight among the sons of Ithamar according to the house of their fathers.

5 Thus were they divided by lot, one sort with another; for the governors of the sanctuary, and governors of the house of God, were of the sons of Eleazar, and of the sons of Ithamar.

6 And Shemaiah the son of Nethaneel the scribe, one of the Levites, wrote them before the king, and the princes, and Zadok the priest, and Ahimelech, the son of Abiathar, and before the

CHAP. XXIV.

Ver. 1.] To avoid all confusion, now that they were much increased, David distributed the priests, as he had done the Levites, into several courses: which no doubt was by a divine direction, as well as the other; or rather, there was greater reason he should have God's order for it; they being higher ministers of his than the Levites were.

Ver. 2.] From these two all the families of the priests descended, who were now to be disposed into a regular performance of their duty.

Ver. 3. *Zadok,—and Ahimelech.*] These two (*Zadok* and *Ahimelech*) were the chief persons in David's days, of the posterity of those sons of Aaron, Eleazar and Ithamar.

According to their offices in their service.] He determined when they and those priests who depended on them should perform their office in the temple-service.

Ver. 4. *And there were more chief men found of the sons of Eleazar than of the sons of Ithamar; and thus were they divided.*] Accordingly David divided them into certain classes and courses, as the Targum expounds it.

Among the sons of Eleazar there were sixteen chief men of the house of their fathers, and eight among the sons of Ithamar] He appointed therefore sixteen courses of the sons of Eleazar, under as many heads of their families: and half as many of the posterity of Ithamar. Which *Kimchi* and other Hebrew doctors explain in this manner: In the days of Moses there were but eight courses in the whole: four of Eleazar's family, and four of Ithamar's. But in *Samuel's* days they were grown to sixteen: eight of the one, and as many of the other. But in the end of David's reign they were enlarged to twenty-four courses; two-thirds of which were assigned to the sons of Eleazar, because they were more numerous than the other: and the sons of Ithamar continued as they were before, having eight courses. But the holy scriptures never mention any settled courses till this time (as *Dr. Lightfoot* observes in his *Temple Service*, chap. 6), though their doctors assert it to explain that precept, Deut. xxviii. 6.

Ver. 5. *Thus were they divided by lot.*] That there might be no occasion for complaint; when all was ordered by a divine disposition, according to very ancient custom. For the choice of persons by lot into sacred offices was used from the beginning of the world, as *Grotius* observes, in his book *De Imper. Sum. Potest. circa Sacra*, cap. 10, sect. 5.

One sort with another;] Both the sons of Eleazar and of Ithamar were thus chosen, who should wait together.

For the governors of the sanctuary.] The words in the Hebrew are *share kodesh*: which signify the principal ministers about holy things.

And governors of the house of God.] There is no word for *house* in the Hebrew; where we only read *share Elohim*: which seem to signify the chief judges.

Were of the sons of Eleazar, and of the sons of Ithamar.] These two families had obtained the chief functions both in the temple and in the civil government, wherein they could not be distributed so well any way as by lot, without danger of envy among themselves.

Ver. 6. *And Shemaiah the son of Nethaneel the scribe, one of the Levites, wrote them before the king, &c.*] In perpetual memory of the thing (as *Conradus Pellicanus* thinks), this divine writer sets down the name of the public notary by whom their names were written, and put into the urn out of which the lots were to be drawn. Which, that there might be no suspicion of fraud, were drawn before the king, the princes, both the chief priests (the high-priest and the sagan), and before the chief persons of the several families of priests and Levites. Whence it is reasonable to conclude, that David did not make this regulation by his mere royal power, but by a divine direction; which he had in this, as in the order he gave about the temple (ch. xxviii.); and he seems here not to have acted by an absolute authority, but to have advised with the high-priest, and other persons of great note, how to proceed.

One principal household being taken for Eleazar, and one taken for Ithamar.] These words are something obscure: but the meaning is, that one of the principal families of Eleazar was first taken, and then one of Ithamar's; and after that, one of Eleazar's again, and so by turns till all was done: that is, till

chief of the fathers of the priests and Levites: one principal household being taken for Eleazar, and one taken for Ithamar.

7 Now the first lot came forth to Jehoiarib, the second to Jedaiah,

8 The third to Harim, the fourth to Seorim,

9 The fifth to Malchijah, the sixth to Mijamin,

10 The seventh to Hakkoz, the eighth to Abijah,

11 The ninth to Jeshuah, the tenth to Shecaniah,

12 The eleventh to Eliashib, the twelfth to Jakim,

13 The thirteenth to Huppah, the fourteenth to Jeshebeab,

14 The fifteenth to Bilgah, the sixteenth to Immer,

15 The seventeenth to Hezir, the eighteenth to Aphses,

16 The nineteenth to Pethahiah, the twentieth to Jhezekel,

17 The one and twentieth to Jachin, the two and twentieth to Gamul,

18 The three and twentieth to Delaiah, the four and twentieth to Maaziah.

19 These were the orderings of them in their service to come into the house of the LORD, ac-

there were eight of each. After which, those of Eleazar alone were distributed under their several heads.

Ver. 7.] The first lot that was drawn out of the urn had the name of Jehoiarib upon it: so that his family had the precedence, and waited in the first place. This was esteemed a great honour; for Josephus reckons himself noble, not only because he was descended ἐξ ἱερέων, "from the priests," but ἐκ τῆς πρώτης ἐπιμεριδος τῶν εἰκοσιτεσσάρων, "from the first course of the four-and-twenty." For this made a great difference: Mattathias also, the father of the Maccabees, descended from Jehoiarib, as we read I Mac. ii. 54.

Ver. 8.] I have nothing to observe concerning these and the rest that follow to ver. 19, but only that Zachariah the father of John the Baptist, was of the eighth course of these priests, viz. that of Abijah, mentioned ver. 10, as we read in the first of St. Luke. For, as Josephus testifies, this order of the courses continued till his time; that is, till the destruction of the second temple.

Ver. 19. *These were the orderings of them in their service to come into the house of the Lord, according to their manner, under Aaron their father.* Under the inspection of the high-priest, who, being the successor of Aaron, is called by his name. He took care that this order should be observed in such manner, as is here prescribed; none of them anticipating their course, nor trusting in themselves to attend before their time, but waiting till their time came. And then every course served a week, coming in on the sabbath: and going out the next before the burning of the incense at the morning sacrifice, when the show-bread was set on the table, as Scaliger observes out of the Jewish writers, in his notes upon the Fragments at the end of his book De Emend. Temporum, p. 54. Upon the three great festivals, indeed, when all priests, as well as others, were bound to appear before God, they came out of their course, and, that they might not be idle, officiated in such things as

according to their manner, under Aaron their father, as the LORD God of Israel had commanded him.

20 ¶ And the rest of the sons of Levi were these: Of the sons of Amram; Shubael: of the sons of Shubael: Jehdeiah.

21 Concerning Rehabiah: of the sons of Rehabiah, the first was Isshiah.

22 Of the Izharites; Shelomoth: of the sons of Shelomoth; Jahath.

23 Of the sons of Hebron; Jeriah the first, Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third, Jekameam the fourth.

24 Of the sons of Uzziel; Michah: of the sons of Michah; Shamir.

25 The brother of Michah was Isshiah: of the sons of Isshiah; Zechariah.

26 The sons of Merari were Mahli and Mushi: the sons of Jaaziah; Beno.

27 ¶ The sons of Merari by Jaaziah; Beno, and Shoham, and Zaccur, and Ibrî.

28 Of Mahli came Eleazar, who had no sons.

29 Concerning Kish: the son of Kish was Jerahmeel.

30 The sons also of Mushi; Mahli, and Eder, and Jerimoth. These were the sons of the Levites after the house of their fathers.

31 These likewise cast lots over against their

properly belonged to those solemnities. But the ordinary business, for the daily burnt-sacrifice, and the freewill-offerings, was managed by those only whose course it was to wait. And thus the Jews understand those words, Deut. xviii. 6, 7, "The Levite (i. e. the priests who were of that tribe) that shall come to the place which the LORD his God shall choose (that is, at the three solemn feasts), that he shall minister in the house of the LORD his God, as all his brethren the Levites do (which is meant of the priests, for they only ministered before God, not the Levites): they shall have like portions to eat;" that is, of the sacrifices which were then offered at those solemn times they were to have their share, with the priests then in attendance, but the Levites did not eat of them; "beside that which cometh by the sale of his patrimony;" or, as it is in the Hebrew, by "the sale of his fathers." That is, say they, except the portion of the daily sacrifices, and freewill-offerings, which by the ordinance of their fathers, Moses and Aaron, belonged only to those priests, who were in their ordinary attendance in their week.

As the Lord God of Israel had commanded him.] By his servant David.

Ver. 20.] Now he speaks of the rest of the Levites who were not priests, who are mentioned in the foregoing ch. xxiii. 16, 17, &c. and here named again to distinguish them from the priests, and to show that they also had their places assigned them by lot, ver. 31. I have nothing to note concerning those that follow between this verse and that, but only this: that several are mentioned as descended from Merari, who are not mentioned in the foregoing chapters, nor any where else. For which, no question, the author of this book had good authority, though we cannot, without the help of such records as he perused give an account of it (see Buxtorf's Antieridica, p. 1014).

Ver. 31. *These likewise cast lots over against their brethren the sons of Aaron.]* There was the like solemnity used in their distribution, as there was in that

brethren the sons of Aaron in the presence of David the king, and Zadok, and Ahimelech, and the chief of the fathers of the priests and Levites,

even the principal fathers over against their younger brethren.

of the priests, by casting lots: whereby they knew what Levites should wait, in every course with the sons of Aaron.

Even the principal fathers over against their younger brethren.] This is expressed very obscurely;

but the meaning is, that the elder and younger had their places by lots, not by seniority of houses. They that were of greater dignity drew lots against those that were of less; and they were to take their courses, as they fell; either to the elder or the younger family.

CHAPTER XXV.

1 *The number and offices of the singers.* 8 *Their division by lot into four and twenty orders.*

1 MOREOVER David and the captains of the host separated to the service of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals: and the number of the workmen according to their service was:

2 Of the sons of Asaph; Zaccur, and Joseph, and Nathaniah, and Asarelah, the sons of Asaph under the hands of Asaph, which prophesied according to the order of the king.

3 Of Jeduthun: the sons of Jeduthun; Geda-

liah, and Zeri, and Jeshaiah, Hashabiah, and Matithiah, six, under the hands of their father Jeduthun, who prophesied with a harp, to give thanks and to praise the LORD.

4 Of Heman: the sons of Heman: Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel, Shebuel, and Jerimoth, Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti, and Romantiezzer, Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir, and Mahazioth:

5 All these were the sons of Heman the king's seer in the words of God, to lift up the horn.

CHAP. XXV.

Ver. 1. *David and the captains of the host]* It is absurd to think, that the commanders in war meddled with ordering the tribe of Levi, and the service of the temple. Therefore by *the host* we are to understand (as our Mr. Thorndike well observes) the companies of priests, that waited upon the service of God at the temple; the captains of whom (i. e. the chief leaders), together with David, divided the singers, as they had done the priests (ch. xxiv. 3, 6, 7). Though elsewhere (ch. xxiii. 6), David alone is mentioned to have done it (Rites of the Church, p. 230).

Separated to the service] Of God in the temple.

Of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun.] These were the chief persons among the Levites whose families were separated to the following service.

Who should prophesy] Sing psalms, which David and other prophets composed. For these young men were not prophets, as their fathers were; but are said to *prophesy*, because they sung in the service of God those divine prophetic hymns, which were composed by their fathers, who were men divinely inspired. Thus the Talmudists say, in Bava-Bathra, cap. 1, that all the hymns we find in the bible were made by Adam, Melchisedec, Abraham, Moses, Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, and David: who collected them into one volume. But this is a foolish tradition, and very new.

With harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals:] There were also pipes, or hautboys, used upon several occasions, together with the trumpets. The difference between these three here mentioned is better described by Dr. Lightfoot out of Josephus, than by any I have met withal; who observes, that the other Israelites, if allied to the priests by marriage, might, if they had skill, join in this instrumental music: but none besides the Levites in the vocal. See his Temple Service, ch. 7, sect. 2, where he likewise notes what psalms were to be sung every day of the week. And this was the first office of the Levites; the two other are explained in the two following chapters.

And the number of the workmen according to their service was:] It had better be translated, "the num-

ber of the men of the ministry (i. e. of those who ministered in singing, and playing on instruments) according to their service was," as follows.

Ver. 2. *Under the hands of Asaph,]* Under his government, as their preceptor: or who taught and instructed them in singing and music.

Which prophesied according to the order of the king.] The Targum understands this, as if Asaph prophesied by the Holy Ghost, and was constituted the head of these by the king. But the word *prophecy* is of very large extent; signifying sometimes, as I said before, nothing more, but singing divinely inspired hymns. Thus Miriam is called a prophetess (Exod. xv. 20), because she led up the women to praise God, with timbrels and dances. And, indeed, music and singing were in ancient times had in such esteem and veneration, that they who excelled in this faculty were looked upon as persons divinely moved. So Quintilian observes, as a known truth, lib. i. Instit. cap. 10. Quis ignorat, musicen tantum jam illis antiquis temporibus non studii modo, verum etiam venerationis habuisse, ut iidem musici, et vates judicarentur. "Who is so ignorant as not to know that music, in those ancient times, was not only so much studied, but had in such veneration, that the same men, who were musicians were accounted prophets, and wise men?"

Ver. 3. *Six, under the hands of their father Jeduthun,]* Here are but five named: but it appears afterward (ver. 17, when the lots were cast) there was another, whose name was Shimei: who being now very young and not yet able either to sing or to play, is not named in this verse. But, that he might be instructed and learn both, he is chosen to be the head of a course, when he should be fit for it. Thus D. Kimchi explains this matter.

Who prophesied with a harp,] The harp was a most noble instrument, in which Jeduthun seems to be peculiarly skilled, and therewith praised God; which is called *prophesying*.

Ver. 4.] He had the most numerous issue of these three; and they all had families who were employed in this service.

Ver. 5. *All these were the sons of Heman the king's seer]* He was a prophet, in whose company the king

And God gave to Heman fourteen sons and three daughters.

6 All these were under the hands of their father for song in the house of the LORD, with cymbals, psalteries, and harps, for the service of the house of God, according to the king's order to Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman.

7 So the number of them, with their brethren that were instructed in the songs of the LORD, even all that was cunning, was two hundred fourscore and eight.

8 ¶ And they cast lots, ward against ward, as well the small as the great, the teacher as the scholar.

9 Now the first lot came forth for Asaph to Joseph: the second to Gedaliah, who with his brethren and sons were twelve:

10 The third to Zaccur, he, his sons, and his brethren were twelve:

11 The fourth to Izri, he, his sons, and his brethren, were twelve:

12 The fifth to Nethaniah, he, his sons, and his brethren, were twelve:

13 The sixth to Bukkiah, he, his sons, and his brethren, were twelve:

14 The seventh to Jesharelah, he, his sons, and his brethren, were twelve:

15 The eighth to Jeshaiiah, he, his sons, and his brethren, were twelve:

16 The ninth to Mattaniah, he, his sons, and his brethren, were twelve:

17 The tenth to Shimei, he, his sons, and his brethren, were twelve:

delighted: and with whom he advised in difficult affairs.

In the words of God.] Especially in divine matters.

To lift up the horn.] In the temple they used also wind music: which many think to have been trumpets made of horn: but the priests only blew with trumpets in the temple: while the Levites sung to those other instruments. Therefore others understand this, of the hymns they sung to magnify the power, greatness, and exaltation of David's kingdom, or rather, of the kingdom of the Messiah, whom Zachary in his song (Luke i. 69), calls the *horn of salvation*. For the power of any thing in scripture is expressed by a *horn*; in which lies the strength of some creatures. And from these words Victorinus Strigelius gathers, that Heman was David's seer in politic affairs, which belonged to the confirmation and settlement of his kingdom: *Cornu enim significat regimen et regnum; "for a horn signifies government and kingdom."* But the first sense seems to me to be most natural, that at stated times they blew aloud with trumpets made of horns: for such, I suppose, they might use, though the priests only could blow with the silver trumpets. And thus the famous Bochartus interprets these words, "at set times to blow aloud with trumpets made of horns;" in his preface to his *Hieroicoicon*.

God gave to Heman fourteen sons and three daughters.] Some have fancied there are fifteen mentioned in the foregoing verse; but the Jews look upon Romanti-ezer as one name; and so we take it: which is justified by ver. 31.

Ver. 6. *All these were under the hands of their father for song in the house of the Lord.*] The whole number of these was four-and-twenty, who, under their several fathers, Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman, regulated the choir in their singing, and music; being the instructors and governors of those who were under them. It is likely they set the psalms to music which David composed; or if he himself modulated them, they sung them in the tunes he directed, with the musical instruments here mentioned.

According to the king's order to Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman.] These were prophets, who composed many of the songs, which their sons sung by their direction; as appears from 2 Chron. xxix. 10, where it is said they sung praises, "in the words of David and Asaph the seer."

Ver. 7.] This was the whole number of those who were skilful in singing, who, under the persons before mentioned, were distributed (as it here follows) into several courses, after the same manner the priest had been: with whom they were to attend in their order. For twelve of these singers, with their go-

vernors, came and waited every week; and at the end of which they were succeeded by other twelve, till the course was finished; and then it began again, where it did at first. Now twelve times twenty-four amount to two hundred fourscore and eight.

It is no wonder that there were so many of them: found very skilful in singing and music: for David himself was a great musician and poet, and every one knows how much the inclination of the supreme governor serves to the promoting of arts among the people.

Ver. 8. *They cast lots, ward against ward.*] Being thus distributed into twenty-four courses, they cast lots, one course against another, which should wait first, and in order succeed one another.

As well the small as the great, the teacher as the scholar.] So that they did not begin and succeed one another, according to the order of age, or of learning, but as God disposed them by their lot. The last words ["the teacher as the scholar"] the LXX. translate *τελειον και μαθητευτων*, "those that were perfect, and those that were learners." They were called perfect who were masters of their art, able to instruct others who learnt of them.

Ver. 9. *The first lot came forth for Asaph to Joseph.*] Who was not his eldest son (see ver. 2). After the word Joseph, we are to supply the words that follow in the rest of these classes, "who, with his brethren and sons, were twelve;" otherwise the number of two hundred fourscore and eight (ver. 7), will not be complete.

The second to Gedaliah.] Who was the eldest son to Jeduthun (ver. 3).

Who with his brethren and sons were twelve.] These words, as Rasi observes, are to be referred to Joseph as well as Gedaliah; for he mentions them both in one and the same verse; and therefore he only saith once with respect to both, "he and his sons and brethren;" where by *brethren* is meant their kindred.

Ver. 10. *Zaccur.*] He was the eldest son of Asaph (ver. 2).

Ver. 11. *Izri.*] Called Zeri, ver. 3, who was the second son of Jeduthun.

Ver. 12. *Nethaniah.*] This lot fell upon the third son of Asaph (ver. 2).

Ver. 13. *Bukkiah.*] Who was the eldest son of Heman (ver. 4).

Ver. 14. *Jesharelah.*] Called Asarelah, ver. 2, the youngest son of Asaph.

Ver. 15. *Jeshaiiah.*] Who was the third son of Jeduthun (ver. 3).

Ver. 16. *Mattaniah.*] Who was the second son of Heman (ver. 4).

18 The eleventh to Azareel, *he*, his sons and his brethren, *were* twelve:

19 The twelfth to Hashabiah, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

20 The thirteenth to Shubael, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

21 The fourteenth to Mattithiah, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

22 The fifteenth to Jeremoth, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

23 The sixteenth to Hananiah, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

24 The seventeenth to Joshbekashah, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

25 The eighteenth to Hanani, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

26 The nineteenth to Mallothi, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

27 The twentieth to Eliashah, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

28 The one and twentieth to Hothir, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

29 The two and twentieth to Giddalti, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

30 The three and twentieth to Mahazioth, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

31 The four and twentieth to Romami-ezer, *he*, his sons, and his brethren, *were* twelve:

Ver. 17. *Shimei.*] The youngest son of Jeduthan, as I have noted upon ver. 3.

Ver. 18. *Azareel.*] The third son of Heman, who is called Uzziel in the same verse.

Ver. 19. *Hashabiah.*] The fourth son of Jeduthan (ver. 4).

Ver. 20. *Shubael.*] The fourth son of Heman, called Shebuel, ver. 4.

Ver. 21. *Mattithiah.*] Who was the fifth son of Jeduthan (ver. 3).

Ver. 22. *Jeremoth.*] The fifth son of Heman, (ver. 4).

Ver. 23. *Hananiah.*] The next son of Heman.

Ver. 24. *Joshekashah.*] Who was the eleventh son of Heman.

Ver. 25. *Hanani.*] Who was the seventh son of Heman.

Ver. 26. *Mallothi.*] Who was the twelfth son of Heman.

Ver. 27. *Eliashah.*] Who was the eighth son of Heman.

Ver. 28. *Hothir.*] Who was the thirteenth son of Heman.

Ver. 29. *Giddalti.*] Who was the ninth son of Heman.

Ver. 30. *Mahazioth.*] Who was the youngest son of Heman.

Ver. 31. *Romami-ezer.*] The tenth son of Heman.

Thus all things were disposed, for the preserving order, and avoiding all disputes about precedence: there being no respect had in this divine distribution to their birth, but the younger in course preceded the elder.

CHAPTER XXVI.

1 *The divisions of the porters.* 13 *The gates assigned by lot.* 20 *The Levites that had charge of the treasures.* 29 *Officers and judges.*

1 CONCERNING the divisions of the porters: Of the Korhites *was* Meshelemiah the son of Kore, of the sons of Asaph.

2 And the sons of Meshelemiah *were* Zechariah the first-born, Jediael the second, Zebadiah the third, Jathniel the fourth.

3 Elam the fifth, Jehohanan the sixth, Elioenai the seventh.

4 Moreover the sons of Obed-edom *were*, She-

maiah the first-born, Jehozabad the second, Joah the third, and Sacar the fourth, and Neithanceel the fifth.

5 Ammiel the sixth, Issachar the seventh, Peulthai the eighth: for God blessed him.

6 Also unto Shemaiah his son *were* sons born, that ruled throughout the house of their father: for they *were* mighty men of valour.

7 The sons of Shemaiah; Othni, and Rephael,

CHAP. XXVI.

Ver. 1. *Concerning the divisions of the porters:*] As some of the Levites were chosen to be singers (of which an account is given in the foregoing chapter), so others were appointed to be porters. Which were fixed offices (as Dr. Lightfoot observes) which they might not change: none of them being permitted to intrude into the office of the other; and neither of them into the priesthood. It was an office of great dignity, and men of the best quality were put into it: they having the charge of the holy things (ver. 20, 22, 24, 26).

Meshelemiah] Called Shelemiah, ver. 14.

The son of Kore, of the sons of Asaph.] Not of Asaph the musician, mentioned in the foregoing chapter, for he was of the family of Gershon (ver. 41), but of another Asaph, called Eliasaph, and sometimes Jasaph, of the line of Kohath (ch. vi. 23; ix. 19).

Ver. 5. *For God blessed him.*] With a numerous offspring, as the Targum glosses upon the last words:

because he entertained the ark in his house with great reverence. Upon which account God did him the honour to let him see of his sons and grandsons fourscore and two: who were chief men among the Levites. This the Targum had said before, one only being wanting of this number (see upon ch. xiii. 14). But what the scripture saith is sufficient to show how God blessed him with a numerous posterity, without the help of such monstrous stories as some of the Jews relate.

Ver. 6. *Also unto Shemaiah his son were sons born, that ruled throughout the house of their father:*] Being men of great authority in that family.

For they were mighty men of valour.] Which was requisite in men who had this office: for they were to watch and guard the house of God, night and day. And not only to open and shut the doors of the mountain of the house, and of the court of the women (for the priests opened and shut the gates of the other courts), but to attend there to prevent any thing that might be done to the prejudice of the

and Obed, Elzabad, whose brethren *were* strong men, Elihu, and Semachiah.

8 All these of the sons of Obed-edom: they and their sons and their brethren, able men for strength for the service, *were* threescore and two of Obed-edom.

9 And Meshelemiah had sons and brethren, strong men, eighteen.

10 Also Hosah, of the children of Merari, had sons: Simri the chief, (for *though* he was not the first-born, yet his father made him the chief:)

11 Hilkiath the second, Tebaliah the third, Zechariah the fourth: all the sons and brethren of Hosah *were* thirteen.

12 Among these *were* the divisions of the porters, *even* among the chief men, *having* wards

one against another, to minister in the house of the LORD.

13 ¶ And they cast lots, as well the small as the great, according to the house of their fathers, for every gate.

14 And the lot eastward fell to Shelemiah. Then for Zechariah his son, a wise counsellor, they cast lots; and his lot came out northward.

15 To Obed-edom southward; and to his sons the house of Asuppim.

16 To Shuppim and Hosah *the lot came forth* westward, with the gate Shallecheth, by the causeway of the going up, ward against ward.

17 Eastward *were* six Levites, northward four a day, southward four a day, and toward Asuppim two and two.

peace, safety, and purity of the place. And likewise, as appears by what follows, they had the guard of some treasures, which required men of courage to defend them.

Ver. 7.] Their names are recorded, with two of their brethren, or cousins: who are likewise noted to be *strong men*. That is, not only men of great bodily strength, but of great courage and resolution. So it is translated in the margin, out of the Hebrew, *sons of valour*. But strength of body was a principal requisite in this service; for the doors of the temple were so massy and weighty, that the hands of many men (as Josephus saith) were needful to open and shut them.

Ver. 8.] This was a great number, which he lived to see descended from him, and from his sons.

Ver. 9.] Still their strength is mentioned, as a qualification for this service.

Ver. 10.] Because his elder brother was feeble, or some other way unfit for the service. For, as Jacob gave the kingdom to Judah, and the priesthood to Levi, and put Reuben his first-born from his right, because of his crime; so there was some weighty cause, no doubt, why this man had the right of primogeniture given him, which was not to be altered upon the account of affection (Deut. xxi. 16, 17).

Ver. 11.] Who were not all named, but these who are the principal.

Ver. 12. *Among these were the divisions of the porters, even among the chief men.*] They were distributed into courses, as the priests and Levites were; and these were principal commanders over them: being the most illustrious among their brethren, and therefore particularly named.

Having wards one against another.] Having charges or custodies answerable to their brethren: that is, to the Levites, who attended as these did.

To minister in the house of the Lord.] This was not a vile ministry (as the word *porter* sounds among us), but they were like the standing guard of a king in his palace: and so the word, I observed before, had better be rendered (see ix. 17). Who kept the treasures of the temple, as it follows (ver. 20, 26), and officers and judges also were chosen out of them (ver. 29, 30, 32), which shows they were eminent persons: some of them being very learned and wise (ver. 14); though, I suppose, they were not judges of the law, but of other matters.

Ver. 13. *They cast lots, as well the small as the great.*] Without respect to their age or dignity.

According to the house of their fathers.] Every family having a distinct lot drawn for it.

For every gate.] That it might be determined at what gate of the temple they were to wait.

Ver. 14. *Shelemiah.*] Who is called Meshelemiah, ver. 1.

Then for Zechariah his son, a wise counsellor.] He was as much reputed for prudence, as others were for strength or valour: and it was as necessary in the management of many of their affairs.

Ver. 15. *Asuppim.*] Many learned men take *Asuppim* to signify the treasury of the temple, or the place where things dedicated were laid up. This they ground, first, upon the import of the word, which betokens collections, or *gatherings*, as we translate it in the margin: and, secondly, because *Obed-edom* (whose sons are here said to be placed at *Asuppim* is said in 2 Chron. xxv. 24, to have the custody of the treasures. But, though this be granted, it still remains a very difficult matter to find where *Asuppim* was. After a long discussion of it, Dr. Lightfoot concludes, that *Asuppim* were two gates in the western wall, which stood most south, or nearest to Jerusalem; and that "the house of *Asuppim*" was a large building which ran between them, and was a treasury of divers rooms for laying up things that served the use of the temple (see Temple Service, ch. 5, sect. 3).

Ver. 16. *To Shuppim and Hosah the lot came forth westward, with the gate Shallecheth, by the causeway of the going up.*] This gate which in Solomon's time was called Shallecheth, in the time of Herod's temple was called the gate of Coponius. Which is said here to be "by the causeway of the going up:" because it was by that ascent which Solomon made for his own passage up from his own house to the temple (1 Kings x. 5; 2 Chron. ix. 4). Which Josephus thus expresses (as Dr. Lightfoot observes), "A gate led to the king's house from the temple, the valley between them being filled up for the passage." From whence the gate was called by the name of Shallecheth, which signifies *casting up*; because of the causeway that was cast up to lead to it from the king's palace: this being the ordinary way to the house of God.

Ward against ward.] I suppose the meaning is, that they guarded each of these gates of *Asuppim*: or, as others take it, they guarded by turns; when one went off, another coming on. But the most learned Dr. Alix (whom I consulted about it) thinks these words signify, that their stations were at the four points of heaven, opposite one to the other.

Ver. 17.] That is, two at each gate of *Asuppim* before mentioned. The distribution of the porters into four-and-twenty courses, is not so plainly and distinctly set down in scripture, as is the distribution of the priests and singers. Yet (as Dr. Lightfoot observes) it may be fairly concluded from two places: whereof this is one, in these two verses, 16, 17, where

18 At Parbar westward, four at the causeway, and two at Parbar.

19 These are the divisions of the porters among the sons of Kore, and among the sons of Merari.

20 ¶ And of the Levites, Ahijah was over the treasures of the house of God, and over the treasures of the dedicated things.

21 As concerning the sons of Laadan; the sons of the Gershonite Laadan, chief fathers, even of Laadan the Gershonite, were Jehieli.

22 The sons of Jehieli; Zetham, and Joel his brother, which were over the treasures of the house of the LORD.

23 Of the Amramites, and the Izharites, the Hebronites, and the Uzzielites:

24 And Shebuel the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, was ruler of the treasures.

the fathers of the porters are summed up to the very same number that the first fathers of the other courses were, viz. to four-and-twenty. "Among all the porters (saith Kimchi on this place) there were four-and-twenty, according to the rest of the courses; six on the east side, four on the north, four on the south, at Asuppim two and two (four in all), four on the west, and two at Parbar: behold, four-and-twenty." The other place is 2 Chron. viii. 14, where the porters go in the very same equipage (as he speaks), as to the matter of division into courses, with the priests and the singers (see Temple Service, ch. 7).

Ver. 18.] This gate, it appears from this place, was in the west quarter, and the west gate to the causeway, or Shallecheth. It signifies, some think, the same with Parvar, which betokens suburbs: for it led to the suburbs, that is, that part of the city which was called Millo. Which was the valley at the west end of mount Moriah, in which Jerusalem and Zion met; replenished with buildings in David's and Solomon's time, 2 Sam. v. 9; 1 Kings xi. 27 (see Dr. Lightfoot, in his Survey of the Temple, ch. 5, sect. 2).

Ver. 19.] These courses were made up of the Levites of these two great families.

Ver. 20.] By the "treasures of the house of God," are meant such things as were of ordinary use and employment in the temple; such as the vessels, vestments, tithes, wine, oil, and other things that were commonly used; together with such as were offered to the treasury, either as a due (as was the half shekel), or voluntarily, as money or vessels, for the repair of the house of God, and advancement of the service there. By "the treasures of the dedicated things," are meant whatsoever their kings or great commanders had consecrated and dedicated for divine uses; which lay as a stock for the temple, and monuments of their devotion.

Ver. 21.] This was an eminent man of that family (see xxiii. 7).

Ver. 22. The sons of Jehieli; Zetham, and Joel] See xxiii. 8, where he is called Jehiel.

Which were over the treasures of the house of the Lord.] From hence Dr. Lightfoot gathers that as some of the "treasures of the house of God" were under the care and charge of the porters (see ix. 26), so the rest, and the treasures of dedicated things, were committed to the care and charge of other Levites, who were neither porters nor singers.

Ver. 23.] Several persons of these families were employed as they that are mentioned in the foregoing verse.

25 And his brethren by Eliezer; Rehabiah his son, and Jeshaiah his son, and Joran his son, and Zichri his son, and Shelomith his son.

26 Which Shelomith and his brethren were over all the treasures of the dedicated things, which David the king, and the chief fathers, the captains over thousands and hundreds, and the captains of the host, had dedicated.

27 Out of the spoils won in battle did they dedicate to maintain the house of the LORD.

28 And all that Samuel the seer, and Saul the son of Kish, and Abner the son of Ner, and Joab the son of Zeruah, had dedicated; and whosoever had dedicated any thing, it was under the hand of Shelomith, and of his brethren.

29 ¶ Of the Izharites, Chenaniah and his sons were for the outward business over Israel, for officers and judges.

Ver. 24.] This is the sole honour that we read of hitherto, conferred upon any of the posterity of Moses; one of which was advanced to a great authority, being the overseer of all the treasures, and their officers. By *treasures*, I suppose, is here meant those of the house of the Lord: for another was over the dedicated things (ver. 26).

Ver. 25.] These, I suppose, were under Shebuel, as their chief ruler.

Ver. 26. Which Shelomith and his brethren were over all the treasures of the dedicated things.] Here is another of Moses' posterity (by his younger son) preferred to a great office: to have the charge of those things which were dedicated for the service of God, in which his brethren were to assist him.

Which David] Out of his great piety, had dedicated in abundance to the building of the temple (xxii. 14).

And the chief fathers, the captains] Such as by the counsel of Jethro (Exod. xviii.) were constituted to assist in the government of the people.

And the captains of the host, had dedicated.] The great military men imitated the rulers in the civil government in this piety: or such as are called "captains of the host," xxv. 1.

Ver. 27.] As David gave a vast treasure to the building of the house, so these men dedicated a part of their spoil to the support and repair of it, as there should be occasion, after it was built.

Ver. 28. And all that Samuel the seer, and Saul, &c. had dedicated.] He mentions particularly some great benefactors, to honour their memory, and to be examples to posterity. And Samuel seems to have begun, and led the way to the rest that followed. For he, I suppose, by the spirit of prophecy, foresaw the nation would be so well settled in the land, that a house would be built for the service of God; and therefore he dedicated part of the spoils which he got in the battles he fought, while he was judge of the people of Israel. Which example Saul, Abner, and Joab imitated. And they all took it from the ancient piety of the great patriarch Abraham, who gave the tenth of the spoils which he won to Melchisedec, God's high-priest. The like did the princes of the people of Israel, after their victory over the Midianites, as we read Numb. xxxi.

And whosoever had dedicated any thing.] There were many, no doubt, who were disposed to the same piety besides these named.

It was under the hand of Shelomith.] He was a man of eminent probity and prudence, otherwise so great a trust would not have been reposed in him.

30 *And of the Hebronites, Hashabiah and his brethren, men of valour, a thousand and seven hundred, were officers among them of Israel on this side Jordan westward in all the business of the Lord, and in the service of the king.*

31 *Among the Hebronites was Jerijah the chief, even among the Hebronites, according to the generations of his fathers. In the fortieth year of the reign of David they were sought for,*

Ver. 29. *Of the Izharites, Chenaniah and his sons were for the outward business*] That is, the business without the city of Jerusalem; which neither belonged to the singers, nor the porters, whose business was within the city; but what this *outward business* was, is not easily resolved. Kimchi and other Hebrew doctors think, it was to cut down trees in the woods, and to hew stones, and to see the fields ploughed, and the vineyards and gardens planted and dressed, which by devout persons had been dedicated to the service of God: but there doth not seem to be any thing belonging to such matters in these words. For though *shoterim*, or officers, might possibly have something to do in such matters, yet what business there was in these things for the judges (on whom these officers attended) none can imagine. And this *outward business being over Israel*, as it here follows, it does not denote their care of the fruits consecrated by the Israelites, nor the government of those who gathered those fruits; but some authority over the Israelites themselves, such as is described in the following verse. See Bertram, *De Repub. Jud.* p. 126, whose opinion is approved by Conringius; which is, that they were assessors with the ordinary judges.

Over Israel,] Not over all the people of Israel, but over a part of them: for those about Jordan were under another jurisdiction, as appears by the next verse.

For officers and judges,] For such employments as are mentioned in the following verse.

Ver. 30. *And of the Hebronites, Hashabiah and his brethren, men of valour, a thousand and seven hundred, were officers*] This was a vast number: therefore their officers were of several sorts (as it follows) not only in divine, but in civil affairs.

In all business of the Lord and in the service of the king,] The work or "business of the Lord," was to take care of all things belonging to religion: among which divine employments, no doubt this was the chief, to judge the people according to the law of God; and to see their sentence put in execution. For their judges "judged for the Lord," as Jehoshaphat tells them, 2 Chron. xix. 6, and they had officers called *shoterim*, to see their judgment take effect. But the word *shaterim* doth not signify merely the ministers of the judges, but also such persons who had some ministry committed to them, to correct offenders and to punish them, or to bring them before the judges, to be punished by them. For they are not only joined with judges (as I have often before observed), but frequently put before them in this book; and therefore it is hard to find one word to comprehend the whole work of these officers; who were employed both in peace and in war, as our learned Nic. Fuller observes, in his *Miscellanies*, lib. ii. cap. 20.

As for "the business of the king," some think it was the gathering his tribute, or perhaps publishing his orders and commands, and the like (see Grotius, *De Jure Sum. Pot. circa Sacra*, p. 390).

Ver. 31. *Among the Hebronites was Jerijah the*

and there were found among them mighty men of valour at Jazer of Gilead.

32 *And his brethren, men of valour, were two thousand and seven hundred chief fathers, whom king David made rulers over the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, for every matter pertaining to God, and affairs of the king.*

chief,] He was the principal person among the sons of Hebron, as we find before, xxiii. 19.

In the fortieth year of the reign of David they were sought for, and there were found among them mighty men of valour at Jazer of Gilead,] In the last year of king David's reign, not only these things mentioned in this chapter were established, but all the other ordinances which we read of in the foregoing, as the Hebrew commentators observe. And his care extended itself to the utmost parts of his dominions, where he sought for men fit to be put into these offices, on the other side of Jordan: and found many persons of great courage at Jazer in Gilead, and the territory belonging to it; among whom Jerijah was the chief: Jazer was a city given to the children of Merari (*Josh. xxi. 39*).

Ver. 32. *And his brethren, men of valour, were two thousand seven hundred chief fathers, whom David made rulers*] This was a great number to be employed in so small a country, when on the other side of Jordan (besides those under Chenaniah) there were but one thousand and seven hundred. But the reason was, that they lived a great way from Jerusalem, and therefore needed more to inspect and admonish them of their duty, lest they should forget their relation to the temple, or grow sluggish in the worship of God, or embrace the religion of their neighbours, as Pellicanus observes.

For every matter pertaining to God, and affairs of the king,] It was the more necessary there should be such a number of officers among them, to keep them in their obedience to the king, as well as in their duty to God. For there was danger of their desertion from their sovereign, who lived at a great distance, and was separated from them by the river Jordan. And nothing could be more pernicious, as he likewise observes, than the rending of the kingdom and neglect of the divine service.

From these words it appears very plainly, as Johannes Vorstius notes (in his dissertation *De Synedrismi Hebræorum*, sect. 36), that the same persons took care of the things or causes pertaining to God, and those concerning the king. For nothing hindered that one and the same college of judges might judge both kind of things, whether spiritual, as we distinguish, or civil. And he thinks no interpretation of the *things of God*, and the *things of the king*, is so probable as that which I have given before: that by the *things of God* are meant such things as might be judged by the divine law, and the *things of the king*, such as could not be determined by the law, but were left to the judgment of the king; who could not abrogate the ancient laws, being bound to study the book of the law all the days of his life (*Deut. xvii.*), and judge according to it. But all things being not there defined, or not so clearly and plainly that they could be determined by those laws, the king, or those whom he entrusted in his stead, gave sentence in such matters, and could make new laws, provided they did not contradict the old.

CHAPTER XXVII.

1 *The twelve captains for every several month.* 16 *The princes of the twelve tribes.* 23 *The numbering of the people is hindered.* 25 *David's several officers.*

1 Now the children of Israel after their number, *to wit*, the chief fathers and captains of thousands and hundreds, and their officers that served the king in any matter of the courses, which came in and went out month by month throughout all the months of the year, of every course *were* twenty and four thousand.

2 Over the first course for the first month *was* Jashobeam the son of Zabdiel: and in his course *were* twenty and four thousand.

3 Of the children of Perez *was* the chief of all the captains of the host for the first month.

4 And over the course of the second month *was* Dodai an Ahohite, and of his course *was* Mikloth also the ruler: in his course likewise *were* twenty and four thousand.

5 The third captain of the host for the third month *was* Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, a chief priest: and in his course *were* twenty and four thousand.

6 *This is that Benaiah, who was mighty*

among the thirty, and above the thirty: and in his course was Ammizabad his son.

7 The fourth *captain* for the fourth month *was* Asahel the brother of Joab, and Zebadiah his son after him: and in his course *were* twenty and four thousand.

8 The fifth captain for the fifth month *was* Shambhuth the Izrahite: and in his course *were* twenty and four thousand.

9 The sixth *captain* for the sixth month *was* Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite: and in his course *were* twenty and four thousand.

10 The seventh *captain* for the seventh month *was* Helez the Pelonite, of the children of Ephraim: and in his course *were* twenty and four thousand.

11 The eighth *captain* for the eighth month *was* Sibbecai the Hushathite, of the Zarhites: and in his course *were* twenty and four thousand.

12 The ninth *captain* for the ninth month

CHAP. XXVII.

Ver. 1.] After the settlement of ecclesiastical affairs, here is an account given how the militia, as we may call it, of the kingdom was settled in such order that it might be serviceable. They were distributed into twelve legions, consisting each of twenty-four thousand men; who were commanded by one of the *chief of the fathers*: under whom there were *captains of thousands*, such as we now call *colonels*, which were twenty-four in every legion, commanding a thousand men. And then *centurions* under them, or *captains of hundreds*; and under them inferior officers. Each of these generals attended, with the legions, one month, for the security of the king and kingdom, at the end of which they marched off, and another legion, with their general, succeeded. So that their course came but once in a year, for one month, which made it no considerable burden to them; there being so many valiant men then in the nation, that without much damage such a number might be in arms for so short a season. Pellicanus thinks this order was instituted in the beginning of David's reign, but was interrupted by many wars he had abroad; and not renewed till his last years, when he established it again, and left his kingdom to Solomon thus governed. See Bertram, De Repub. Jud. p. 133, who observes, that after this we never read of the Cherethites and Pelethites, these troops being settled in their room.

Ver. 2.] Now he sets down the names of the chief commander of every legion: and Jashobeam seems to have been the first of his mighty men, mentioned xi. 11; 2 Sam. xxiii. 8.

Ver. 3.] The forenamed Jashobeam was of the children of Pharez, the son of Judah; which tribe had the honour to have the first chief commander chosen out of it.

Ver. 4.] This Dodo (as he is called in 2 Sam. xxiii. 9) was another of David's mighty men, who had for his lieutenant (when he was absent) Mikloth; who, we may suppose, is therefore here mentioned, because he was a person of great eminence, and had some considerable command in this course.

Ver. 5. *A chief priest*:] Or rather, "a chief prince," as the Hebrew word *cohen* often signifies (see upon 2 Sam. viii. 18; xx. 26); for it is certain neither Benaiah nor his father was high-priest, or second-priest; but Abiathar and Zadok were in those offices.

Ver. 6. *This is that Benaiah who was mighty among the thirty*.] He was one of David's worthies, who had done such mighty acts, that this divine writer did not think fit here to mention him, without a mark of honour set upon him (see 2 Sam. xxiii. 20, 23).

And in his course was Ammizabad his son.] He was his deputy, when his father could not attend this duty himself; having another office of great dignity, wherein he served as captain of the Cherethites and Pelethites (2 Sam. viii. 18). Of whom, I observed before, we never read after the time of David: but it is likely were kept up while they lived, though there was no need of them, after these courses were settled.

Ver. 7. *The fourth captain for the fourth month was Asahel*] This confirms Pellicanus's opinion, that David instituted these courses in the beginning of his reign: for Asahel was killed while David reigned in Hebron, before he was king over all Israel, and settled at Jerusalem. He also was one of David's worthies (2 Sam. xxiii. 24).

And Zebadiah his son after him:] He had the honour to succeed his father in this great command, when he was slain.

Ver. 8.] It is probable, that this was that valiant man called Shammah, 2 Sam. xxiii. 11, and Shammath in this book, xi. 27.

Ver. 9.] He is mentioned among the thirty mighty in 2 Sam. xxiii. 26, and in this book, xi. 28.

Ver. 10.] He is called the Paltite in 2 Sam. xxiii. 26, and, for the honour of that tribe, he is said here to be of the "children of Ephraim."

Ver. 11.] One of that family that was eminent in the tribe of Judah descended from Caleb (ii. 53). He slew one of the sons of the giant, in a battle with the Philistines (2 Sam. xxi. 18).

Ver. 12.] He also is mentioned among the thirty mighty men in (2 Sam. xxiii. 27).

was Abiezer the Anetothite, of the Benjamites: and in his course were twenty and four thousand.

13 The tenth captain for the tenth month was Maharai the Netophathite, of the Zarithes: and in his course were twenty and four thousand.

14 The eleventh captain for the eleventh month was Benaiah the Pirathonite, of the children of Ephraim: and in his course were twenty and four thousand.

15 The twelfth captain for the twelfth month was Heldai the Netophathite, of Othniel: and in his course were twenty and four thousand.

16 ¶ Furthermore over the tribes of Israel: the ruler of the Reubenites was Eliezer the son of Zichri: of the Simeonites, Shephatiah the son of Maachah:

17 Of the Levites, Hashabiah the son of Kemuel: of the Aaronites, Zadok:

18 Of Judah, Elihu, one of the brethren of David: of Issachar, Omri the son of Michael;

Ver. 13.] One of the same mighty men (2 Sam. xxiii. 28).

Ver. 14.] Who is also there mentioned, ver. 30, but here it is added of what tribe he was.

Ver. 15.] He is called Heled in this book, ch. xi. 30, and Heleb in 2 Sam. xxiii. 29.

Ver. 16. *Furthermore over the tribes of Israel:*] Besides the twelve great captains before mentioned, who commanded, each of them, twenty and four thousand men: every tribe had a ruler (who are called "the princes of the tribes of Israel," ver. 22), who had the chief authority among them, under the king.

The ruler of the Reubenites was Eliezer] He reckons up the tribes in order according to their birth-right, by Leah.

Ver. 17. *Of the Levites, Hashabiah the son of Kemuel:*] He is mentioned before (xxvi. 30).

Of the Aaronites, Zadok:] They were not a distinct tribe, but of a distinct order, from the rest of the Levites: and therefore had a peculiar chief to preside over them, viz. Zadok. Who (as Bertram thinks) had the chief authority at the tabernacle in Gibeon, as Abiathar had at Jerusalem, where the ark was.

Ver. 18. *Of Judah, Elihu.*] Called Eliab in 1 Sam. xvi. 6.

Of Issachar, Omri the son of Michael:] He was the fifth son of Leah, and therefore is reckoned next to Judah, who was the fourth (Gen. xxx. 17, 18).

Ver. 19. *Of Zebulun, Ishmaiah the son of Obadiah:*] He was the next son of Leah (Gen. xxx. 20).

Of Naphtali, Jerimoth the son of Azriel:] Though Dan was the first-born of Bilhah (Gen. xxx. 6), yet that tribe is put last, and Naphtali, who was the next son, put before him. For what reason we cannot tell.

Ver. 20.] This is meant of that half tribe, which had its portion on this side Jordan, near to Ephraim.

Ver. 21. *Of the half tribe of Manasseh in Gilead,*] On the other side Jordan, where the Reubenites and Gadites were.

Iddo the son of Zechariah:] It doth not appear of what family he was, but it is likely one of that tribe.

Of Benjamin, Jaasiel the son of Abner:] It seems the family of Abner, who was the greatest man in the kingdom of Israel, continued in high authority after his death.

Ver. 22.] That is, of those tribes before mentioned. But Gad and Asher are omitted, of which we can give no certain account: perhaps they were under

19 Of Zebulun, Ishmaiah the son of Obadiah: of Naphtali, Jerimoth the son of Azriel:

20 Of the children of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Azariah: of the half tribe of Manasseh, Joel the son of Pedaiah:

21 Of the half tribe of Manasseh in Gilead, Iddo the son of Zechariah: of Benjamin, Jaasiel the son of Abner:

22 Of Dan, Azareel the son of Jeroham. These were the princes of the tribes of Israel.

23 ¶ But David took not the number of them from twenty years old and under: because the LORD had said he would increase Israel like to the stars of heaven.

24 Joab the son of Zeruiah began to number, but he finished not, because there fell wrath for it against Israel; neither was the number put in the account of the chronicles of king David.

25 ¶ And over the king's treasures was Azmaveth the son of Adiel: and over the storehouses in the fields, in the cities, and in the

the government of the ruler of some neighbouring tribe. For Asher, dwelling in very narrow bounds between Naphtali and Zebulun, might be under the command of him that governed either of them: and Gad, some think, was comprehended under the Reubenites.

Ver. 23. *But David took not the number of them*] That is, of Israel, whom he had spoken of before.

From twenty years old and under:] But only of those who were above the age of twenty years.

Because the Lord had said he would increase Israel like to the stars of heaven.] This was the reason, Pellicanus thinks, that God was so angry with David for numbering the people: which he had promised should be so many, that they should not be numbered. Which promise God would have to be believed, without attempting to prove the truth of it. But these words seem to me to confute that opinion: for they rather signify, that David forbore to number all the people, because he would not question that promise, and contented himself with an account of those that were fit to go to war, xxi. 4 (see my notes upon 2 Sam. xxiv. 10).

Ver. 24. *Joab the son of Zeruiah began to number, but he finished not,*] For he did not number those of Levi and Benjamin; as we read before in this book, ch. xxi. 6.

Because there fell wrath for it against Israel;] This seems to import, that before Joab had finished his account the plague began; which put a stop to his proceedings.

Neither was the number put in the account of the chronicles of king David.] An account of the number as far as he went, was given by Joab to the king: but the king being sensible of his error, would not have it recorded in the public registers of the kingdom, as other things of daily occurrence were. Yet the memory of it is preserved in these holy books, to teach all posterity not to put their trust in the arm of flesh.

Ver. 25.] The former of these was the principal officer in the exchequer, as we now speak, who received the king's money from the under-officers, and was accountable for it; and lived at Jerusalem, where he issued it out, according to the king's orders. But there was another in the country out of Jerusalem, who received the tribute of all kinds, which the people were to pay him: which he laid up in storehouses, that were built in several places for that purpose.

villages, and in the castles, *was* Jehonathan the son of Uzziah:

26 And over them that did the work of the field for tillage of the ground *was* Ezri the son of Chelub:

27 And over the vineyards *was* Shimei the Ramathite: over the increase of the vineyards for the wine cellars *was* Zabdi the Shiphmite:

28 And over the olive trees and the sycamore trees that *were* in the low plains *was* Baalhanan the Gederite: and over the cellars of oil *was* Joash:

29 And over the herds that fed in Sharon *was* Shitrai the Sharonite: and over the herds that *were* in the valleys *was* Shaphat the son of Adlai:

Ver. 26.] Besides the tribute paid by the people of corn, wine, oil, &c. the king had land of his own: where he kept servants to till the ground. And this person was set over them, to see they were not idle, and that they were honest in gathering the fruits of the earth, and sending them to the storehouses.

Ver. 27. *And over the vineyards was Shimei*] He looked after the vine-dressers.

Over the increase of vineyards for the wine cellars was Zabdi the Shiphmite:] His office was to see the wine pressed out of the grapes, and carried into the cellars; where it was laid up.

Ver. 28. *And over the olive trees, and the sycamore trees that were in the low plains was Baalhanan the Gederite:*] This shows that David was a great husbandman, as we speak, and had ground proper for all sort of fruits; which was managed by his own servants. For, as I have often observed, the greatest men in those times studied the improvement of their ground, of what sort soever it was.

And over the cellars of oil was Joash:] It appears, from many places, that a great part of their revenue lay in oil: which required great care, as wine did, in the looking after it.

Ver. 29.] He had great store of cattle also in his pastures, particularly in Sharon, which was a place noted for its fruitfulness, as we read in the prophet Isaiah, ch. xxxiii. 9; xxxv. 2. And so St. Jerome testifies, *Omnis regio Saron, &c.* "all the region of Saron" about Lydda, Joppa, and Jamnia, was apt for feeding of flocks (see Isa. lxx. 10). There was another Sharon besides this near the Mediterranean, which was in the east beyond Jordan (as I observed upon ch. v. 16 of this book), where the Gadites inhabited, who abounded in cattle: and therefore were planted by Moses in this region, and in Bashan, which was another rich country for pasture (see L'Empereur, upon Bava-kama). And therefore here David, it is likely, bred a great many cattle both in the mountains and in valleys; and had particular officers to look after them, they being very many. For here, as he observes out of Maimonides, there were great numbers of calves bred, which women had the care of, and were brought from hence to other places to be sold.

Ver. 30. *Over the camels also was Obil the Ishmaelite:*] An Ishmaelite was the fittest person to look after the breed of camels, because that country abounded with them, and they best understood their nature. And this person seems to have had his name from his office. For as *ibil*, in Arabic, signifies a camel, so *abal*, and *abil*, a keeper of camels: as Bochart notes in his *Hieroicozon*, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 2.

And over the asses was Jehdeiah the Meronothite:] This was a great part of men's riches in old times; for we find Ana feeding his father's asses in Gen.

30 Over the camels *was* Obil the Ishmaelite: and over the asses *was* Jehdeiah the Meronothite:

31 And over the flocks *was* Jaziz the Hagerite. All these *were* the rulers of the substance which *was* king David's.

32 Also Jonathan David's uncle was a counsellor, a wise man, and a scribe: and Jehiel the son of Hachmoni *was* with the king's sons:

33 And Ahithophel *was* the king's counsellor: and Hushai the Archite *was* the king's companion:

34 And after Ahithophel *was* Jehoiada the son of Benaiah, and Abiathar: and the general of the king's army *was* Joab.

xxxvi. 24. In which book we find them reckoned among the wealth of the ancient patriarchs: and the Israelites took no less than threescore and one thousand of them from the Midianites, Numb. xxxi. 34. And in this book we read of two thousand taken from the Hagarites (ch. v. 21). And when the Jews returned out of the captivity of Babylon, they were become so rich, that they brought away with them six thousand seven hundred and twenty asses; as Nehemiah relates, ch. vii. 69.

Ver. 31.] *The flocks of sheep*, no doubt, were very numerous; but among all the flocks and herds there is no mention made of swine, as Bochart observes. Nor had the patriarchs any that we read of, when mention is made of their possessions. Nor had Job any in Arabia, though he had a vast number of other cattle. Nor did the Israelites ever take any of these as spoil from their enemies. And therefore Gedara, where swine were kept in Judea (as we read in the gospel), was a Greek city, not a Jewish, as Josephus tells us (see *Hieroicozon*, par. i. lib. i. cap. 51).

Ver. 32. *Also Jonathan David's uncle was a counsellor, a wise man, and a scribe:*] He was one of the privy-council; being a man of great wisdom, and also skilful in the law: for so the word *sopher* (which we translate *scribe*) signifies. A very learned author thinks it signifies a *secretary of state*, or rather *chancellor*.

Jehiel—was with the king's sons:] He also, no doubt, was a man of great understanding, being a tutor, as we speak, or governor to the king's sons.

Ver. 33.] Ahithophel seems to have been president of the council: but Hushai was his favourite (being called David's friend), in whose company he most delighted, and whom he trusted with his greatest secrets.

Ver. 34. *After Ahithophel was Jehoiada the son of Benaiah, and Abiathar:*] After Ahithophel had destroyed himself, these two were the principal counsellors; as Kimchi and other Jewish doctors understand these words. But others think the meaning is, that next to him these two were accounted the ablest men that David advised withal: but *after him*, for he was esteemed the man of greatest prudence.

And the general of the king's army was Joab.] The Targum hath a strange exposition of this verse, which is this: When there was war to be made, they consulted Ahithophel, and after that they asked counsel of *urim* and *thummim* by Jehoiada, the head of the Sanhedrin; and by Abiathar the high-priest; and so the Cherethites and Pelethites, by the authority of *urim* and *thummim*, went to fight under the command of Joab, the general of the army. In the exposition of which there are a great many foolish descants, which I shall not mention.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

1 David in a solemn assembly having declared God's favour to him, and promise to his son Solomon, exhorteth them to fear God. 9, 20 He encourageth Solomon to build the temple. 11 He giveth him patterns for the form, and gold and silver for the materials.

1 AND David assembled all the princes of Israel, the princes of the tribes, and the captains of the companies that ministered to the king by course, and the captains over the thousands, and captains over the hundreds, and the stewards over all the substance and possession of the king, and of his sons, with the officers, and with the mighty men, and with all the valiant men, unto Jerusalem.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Ver. 1. *David assembled all the princes of Israel, the princes of the tribes.*] These seem to be the same, one being the explication of the other; and they are those persons mentioned ver. 16, 17, &c. of the foregoing chapter.

And the captains of the companies] That is, those great commanders, over four-and-twenty thousand apiece, mentioned in the beginning of the foregoing chapter.

The captains over the thousands, and captains over the hundreds.] The commanders of every one of those thousands, with the centurions who commanded the several companies, consisting of a hundred.

The stewards over all the substance and possession of the king.] Who are mentioned also in verse 25, 26, &c. of the foregoing chapter: and appear by this to have been considerable persons.

With the officers.] Who were about his person.

With the mighty men, and with all the valiant men.] Those who were eminent for their services in war, of whom he had spoken in ch. xi. xii.

Unto Jerusalem.] All these he called to attend him in the chief city of the kingdom, that he might commend Solomon to them as his successor, and this government which he had settled (see Bertram, De Republic. Jud. p. 150). This seems to have been a distinct assembly from that mentioned ch. xxiii. 2, being more general, and consisting of many persons, who were not then in such offices as are here named.

Ver. 2. *Then David the king stood up upon his feet, and said.*] He was sitting in his throne, I suppose, when they came in, but then stood up in respect to so great an assembly, and that he might be the better heard. When he first declared Solomon to be his successor, and caused him to be anointed, he lay upon his bed, being very palsied and decrepit, as we read 1 Kings i. But intending now to have him anointed again, in the midst of his princes and great commanders (ch. xxix. 22), whom he could not assemble, when on a sudden he commanded him to be anointed before; he roused up himself, and rose from his couch, and came out of his chamber, and made orations, and gave advice for things to come, as Dr. Lightfoot observes.

Hear me, my brethren, and my people.] He calls the great men his brethren, both because they had a share in the government with him, and to express his affection to them. It is likely they were attended by some other persons, whom he calls *my people*.

I had in mine heart to build a house of rest for the ark] A fixed place, where the ark might be settled, and not carried about, as it had been hitherto (2 Sam. vii. 1).

2 Then David the king stood up upon his feet, and said, Hear me, my brethren, and my people: *As for me, I had in mine heart to build an house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and for the footstool of our God, and had made ready for the building:*

3 But God said unto me, Thou shalt not build an house for my name, because thou *hast been* a man of war, and hast shed blood.

And for the footstool of our God.] Here the conjunction *and*, as our Mr. Mede observes, is exegetical, and the same with *that is*: according to which expression, the prophet Jeremiah saith (Lam. ii. 1), that the Lord had cast "down the beauty of Israel, and remembered not his footstool (that is, the ark of the covenant, which was their glory), in the day of his anger," book i. p. 500. For the divine glory sitting upon the wings of the cherubims, over the mercy-seat (Ps. lxxx. 2), his feet, as we speak after the manner of men, rest upon the ark; and therefore the Targum thus paraphrases it, "The footstool of the throne of glory." And thence it is sometimes called, "The ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts, who sitteth upon the cherubims" (1 Sam. iv. 4).

And had made ready for the building.] Laid up great treasures, which he designed to defray the charges of the building (see ch. xxii).

Ver. 3. *But God said unto me.*] In the Targum, *The Memra*, "Word of the Lord."

Thou shalt not build an house for my name, because thou hast been a man of war, and hast shed blood.] See my notes upon ch. xxii. 8. To which I shall here add, that bloodshed was accounted a thing so heinous, that though one had killed another only accidentally, yet he was bound to flee for it to a city of refuge, or else he might have been killed himself. And among the ancient Greeks (as Petitus shows, in his book of the Attic laws, lib. vii. p. 512), he that killed another involuntarily, was banished from his country for a year. But David is here forbidden to build God a temple, merely because he had been engaged in war and bloodshed, though it was on a pious account. And thus also among the ancient Greeks, (as Grotius observes), they stood in need of an expiation, who, without any blame, had defiled their hands in blood. And, accordingly, among the Greek Christians there was a canon, long observed in that church, which kept men from the holy communion for a time, who had killed an enemy in any war (see lib. ii. De Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 25, sect. 9). But Osiander, considering this passage in Grotius, thinks, that in these words, David's warring and bloodshed are not alleged, *ratione alicujus vitii*, &c. "upon the account of any blemish," which hindered him from building a house for God, but merely upon the account of the vast business wherein he was engaged: for, being employed continually in warlike actions, he was not at leisure for such a building; which was to be the work of peace and quietness. David also is expressly said to have managed the wars of the Lord, being but his instrument to punish the enemies of his people Israel; and therefore could not be blemished by being thus employed to God, nor made incapable thereby to build his temple. For he gloried and triumphed

4 Howbeit the LORD God of Israel chose me before all the house of my father to be king over Israel for ever: for he hath chosen Judah to be the ruler; and of the house of Judah, the house of my father; and among the sons of my father he liked me, to make me king over all Israel:

5 And of all my sons (for the LORD hath given me many sons) he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel.

6 And he said unto me, Solomon thy son, he shall build my house and my courts: for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father.

7 Moreover, I will establish his kingdom for ever, if he be constant to do my commandments and my judgments, as at this day.

8 Now therefore in the sight of all Israel, the congregation of the LORD, and in the audience of

in these wars, and in the victories he got: for which he sung praise to God, Ps. lx. Add to all this, that the account which Solomon gives to Hiram, why his father did not build God a house, was, that he was otherwise employed (1 Kings v. 3). But I leave this to better judgments.

Ver. 4. *The Lord God of Israel chose me before all the house of my father.*] See 1 Sam. xvi. 13; Pa. lxxviii. 68.

For he hath chosen Judah] See Gen. xlix. 10.

And of the house of Judah,—and among the sons of my father he liked me, to make me king] For till his days it was not known out of what family of Judah a king should be chosen, from whom the Messiah should come.

Ver. 5.] For he was beloved of God from his birth (2 Sam. xii. 25), and plainly designed by God to be his successor (2 Sam. vii. 13, and here in this book, ch. xxii. 9). So that David swore he should reign after him, and accordingly performed it (1 Kings i. 17, 35). This he declares now to them all, when he was going out of the world; that they might reverence Solomon as a person placed upon the throne by divine appointment; and not out of any partial and fond affection of his to him, preferred before his elder brethren.

Ver. 6.] See 2 Sam. vii. 13, and this book, chap. xxii. 9.

Ver. 7.] The last words import, that hitherto Solomon was very towardsly (as we speak), and gave great hopes he would continue steadfast in his obedience to God, as his father David had done.

Ver. 8. *In the sight of all Israel*] Who were here present by their representatives: to whom he now addresses his speech, that they might give the same exhortation to their neighbours.

And in the audience of our God.] Who was present in all their public assemblies, as I have noted upon Judg. xx. 1 (see there).

Keep and seek all the commandments of the Lord your God:] It is not enough to know the will of God, if we do not keep it; that is, observe his commands, and live in the practice of our duty. But that we may know it, it is necessary to seek it; that is, to inquire after it, and study the laws of God. For no man (as Grotius here observes) shall be excused by a supine ignorance.

That ye may possess this good land,] It was in vain to expect the continuance of God's favour to them, who had brought them into this good land, unless they continued steadfast in his obedience.

our God, keep and seek for all the commandments of the LORD your God, that ye may possess this good land, and leave it for an inheritance for your children after you for ever.

9 ¶ And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.

10 Take heed now; for the LORD hath chosen thee to build a house for the sanctuary: be strong, and do it.

11 ¶ Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasures thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlours thereof, and of the place of the mercy seat.

This was the only way to settlement in their possessions.

Ver. 9. *Thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father.*] To know God is, in scripture language, to acknowledge and love him. As God is said to know the way of the righteous; that is, to approve and love it (Ps. i. ult.). Solomon had the greater reason to do this, because God had been so very gracious to his father David, and chosen him, before all his brethren, to be his successor.

And serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind.] His love was to be expressed by obedience to God, and that entirely and cheerfully: out of choice, not by constraint; not to gain the good opinion of men, but the favour of God. For hearty piety, and not merely the outward appearance of it, is the surest support of a prince's power and authority: and will dispose his subjects to love and reverence him as sincerely as he doth God.

For the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts:] He presses him with two arguments unto sincerity in his obedience. The first is in these words; because God cannot be deceived with external services; for he looks into the hearts, and discerns the most secret motions there: which cannot be hid from him, but he is privy to every thought, and to the very beginning of them.

If thou seek him, he will be found of thee,] This is the other argument; God is not tied to any man, but upon condition of his hearty obedience. As he behaves himself towards God, so God will deal with him.

Ver. 10. *Take heed now; for the Lord hath chosen thee to build a house for the sanctuary.*] That is, for the ark to dwell in, for that was the principal furniture of the sanctuary. The Targum thus expresses it, "The Memra, Word of the Lord, hath chosen thee," &c.

Be strong, and do it.] Being a young man, he might be discouraged from undertaking so great a work: but he bids him go about it strenuously, because God had chosen him to do it.

Ver. 11. *Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof.*] Abatibnel is very confident that the word *ulam*, which we translate porch, is a general word used in this place for the whole house. The description of which David gave Solomon, with all the apartments belonging to it: especially of the houses thereof, which were two: the outward, called, the holy place, and the in-

12 And the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit, of the courts of the house of the LORD, and of all the chambers round about, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries of the dedicated things:

13 Also for the courses of the priests and the Levites, and for all the work of the service of the house of the LORD, and for all the vessels of service in the house of the LORD,

14 *He gave of gold by weight for things of gold, for all instruments of all manner of service; silver also for all instruments of silver by weight, for all instruments of every kind of service:*

15 Even the weight for the candlesticks of gold, and for their lamps of gold, by weight for every candlestick, and for the lamps thereof; and for the candlesticks of silver by weight, both for the

candlestick, and also for the lamps thereof, according to the use of every candlestick.

16 And by weight *he gave gold* for the tables of shew-bread, for every table; and *likewise silver* for the tables of silver:

17 Also pure gold for the flesh-hooks, and the bowls, and the cups: and for the golden basons *he gave gold* by weight for every bason; and *likewise silver* by weight for every bason of silver:

18 And for the altar of incense refined gold by weight; and gold for the pattern of the chariot of the cherubims, that spread out *their wings*, and covered the ark of the covenant of the LORD.

19 All this, said David, the LORD made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern.

ward, called *the holy of holies*, which were distinct houses, being separated by a partition: and accordingly the former is called *the greater house*, (2 Chron. iii. 5), being much larger in its dimensions, than the other. At the entrance of which there was a porch, the model of which David gave him, as well as of the houses.

And of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlours] There were several rooms against the walls of the house round about, as we read 1 Kings vi. 5, which are here called by several names, according to the use wherein they were employed. And the forenamed, Abarbinel here observes, out of Middoth, and Tamiid, and other books, that the temple was built like a high tower, reaching up to heaven, there being three upper stories one above another, and the first story three times higher than that of Moses, viz. thirty cubits.

And of the place of the mercy seat,] Where that should be placed, in the "holy of holies."

Ver. 12. And the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit,] In the Hebrew, "of all that he had in the Spirit with him;" that is, *inspired into him*. It being a house for God to dwell in, it was fit that it should not be of a mere human, but of a divine contrivance, as the tabernacle built by Moses was. Therefore God suggested to David by his Spirit, how he would have it made in all the parts before mentioned, and in those that follow: for those words refer to both (see ver. 19).

Of the courts of the house of the Lord, and of all the chambers round about,] How large the courts should be, and how many, and what rooms adjoining to them, was all ordered by a special direction from God.

Of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries of the dedicated things:] From the last words most are of opinion, it may be concluded, that in these places all the utensils belonging to the tabernacle which Moses made, and the tabernacle itself (which was no longer used after Solomon's temple was built), were laid up and preserved. By which, perhaps, was signified, as Constantine L'Empereur conjectures (upon Middoth p. 87), that all the ceremonies of Moses should one day be decently laid aside, and something better come in their room.

Ver. 13.] He disposed of the courses of the priests and Levites (before mentioned) by the same Spirit, and how they should be employed, and what vessels they should use in God's service.

Ver. 14.] He gave materials also, in a just proportion to the instruments that were to be made, either of gold or silver.

Ver. 15.] By this we learn that there were candlesticks of silver, as well as of gold. The former of which were lesser, to be carried in their hands from place to place, as there was occasion. But the latter were fixed in the sanctuary, and in Solomon's house were ten in number (1 Kings vi. 49).

Ver. 16.] There was but one table for the show-bread, but there were several others attending upon it, whereon were set such vessels as belonged to it. For as he made more candlesticks than were in the tabernacle, so it appears by this he also augmented the tables, which were no less than ten (2 Chron. iv. 8).

Ver. 17.] Assigning such a portion of gold or silver to every bason, as would make it as large as he proposed. Many of the Jews, by the Hebrew word *kepuri* (which we translate *basons*), understand *spoons*, which had the figure of oxen and lions on the head of them; which they imagine was the beginning of Solomon's offence. But the word rather imports some vessel, wherein they received the blood of the sacrifice of expiation.

Ver. 18. For the altar of incense refined gold.] It was covered with gold, as the cherubims were, 1 Kings vii. 49.

And gold for the pattern of the chariot of the cherubims, that spread out their wings, and covered the ark of the covenant of the Lord.] It seems David contrived these two cherubims, besides those which Moses had made. Of which see what I have noted upon 1 Kings vi. 23, 28. They are called the *chariot*, because God is said not only to sit, but "to ride upon the cherubims" (Ps. xviii. 10), as the Lord of hosts: and therefore they are described in Ezekiel, as having wheels on which they ran. The other made by Moses were most properly his seat, but these represented him as filling the whole house.

Ver. 19.] God made him understand all this so plainly and distinctly, as if it had been written on his mind as the ten commandments were upon the tables of stone in the mount. But some of the Jews think the meaning is, that God revealed these things first to some of the prophets, Samuel, (iv. 22), or Nathan, or Gad, who delivered all to David in writing as the mind of God. However it was, God was pleased thus himself to give instructions about the structure of the temple, and all belonging to it; that it might breed in the people's mind a greater reverence when they came to worship him there: and, as Joseph de Voysin observes, the Jews in Beracoth say, that their minds might be lifted up, when they came to the temple, from earthly things, to things spiritual and celestial.

20 And David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed: for the LORD God, *even* my God, *will* be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD.

21 And, behold, the courses of the priests and

Ver. 20. *David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it.*] He repeats what he had said before (ver. 10), the more to excite and encourage him to this work, which was to do the work of God.

Fear not, nor be dismayed.] He thought that he might possibly fear disturbance from enemies abroad, of which David had a great many: but he bids him be confident, he should not be disquieted in his work, which should go on prosperously, by the blessing of God, till it was finished. Of which he might be the more assured, if he reflected how God had blessed David himself all his life long.

the Levites, *even they shall be with thee* for all the service of the house of God: and *there shall be with thee*, for all manner of workmanship, every willing skilful man, for any manner of service; also the princes and all the people *will be* wholly at thy commandment.

Ver. 21.] It is a probable conjecture of Conradus Pellicanus, that he now presented Solomon with a list of all the courses of God's ministers, as God had directed him to establish them; assuring him that God would dispose them to be serviceable unto him in all that he had to do for the carrying on of the work. Which should have the help and assistance of all other skilful persons, whom he would make willing to further it; and that he would make all the princes and the people obedient to him in all things. This was one reason, no doubt, of calling this assembly together, that they might be engaged to be aiding to Solomon in promoting so pious a work.

CHAPTER XXIX.

1 *David, by his example and intreaty, 6 causeth the princes and people to offer willingly. 10 David's thanksgiving and prayer. 20 The people, having blessed God, and sacrificed, make Solomon king. 26 David's reign and death.*

1 FURTHERMORE, David the king said unto all the congregation, Solomon my son, whom God alone hath chosen, *is yet* young and tender, and the work *is* great: for the palace *is* not for man, but for the LORD God.

2 Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God the gold for *things to be made* of gold, and the silver for *things* of silver, and the brass for *things* of brass, the iron for *things* of iron, and wood for *things* of wood; onyx stones, and *stones* to be set, glistening stones, and of di-

vers colours, and all manner of precious stones, and marble stones in abundance.

3 Moreover, because I have set my affection to the house of my God, I have of mine own proper good, of gold and silver, *which* I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house,

4 *Even* three thousand talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver, to overlay the walls of the houses *withal*:

CHAP. XXIX.

Ver. 1. He stirs them up to the assistance of his son by these considerations, that he was a person chosen by God, not by him, for this work; and yet he needed their help, because he was but a youth (see 1 Kings iii. 7), and the work itself was to be very magnificent, suitable to the majesty that was to dwell therein, viz. the Lord himself; who dwells not, (as the apostle speaks) "in temples made with hands," but was present there by a glorious light, which represented his majesty.

Ver. 2.] We read of his great preparation for this building before (ch. xxii. 14, &c.), only nothing is said there concerning *precious stones*; the use of which, in the ornament of any part of the temple, is not known. Ludolphus, speaking of the word *phuc*, which we translate *glistening*, saith, that as David provided all things for the fabric of the temple, so he provided for the clothing of the priests with rich garments, and also with such things as were good for bodily health, as this was, which was not only *χορηγιασις*, "for ornament," but *θεραπευτικον*, "for medicine and preservation of health." But perhaps *phuc* being famous among those things which women used for setting off their beauty, it may possibly here be a metaphorical word, for all such stones as may set off the building (see his Commentary upon the Ethiopic History, lib. i. cap. 7, n. 51).

Ver. 3.] Besides what he had devoted and dedicated to this use, he gave, out of what remained for his own occasions, a further sum for the building of the house, which is mentioned in the next verse.

Ver. 4. *The gold of Ophir.*] The gold of Ophir here mentioned was that which came out of Arabia, where Bochartus hath proved, there was a country of that name abounding with gold. For in David's time the Ophir of India was not known, Solomon being the first that attempted a long voyage thither. So are we to understand the word Ophir in the book of Job (xxii. 24, xxviii. 16); for in his time they had not learned to traffic into those far distant countries where the other Ophir in India was (see my notes on 1 Kings ix. 18). This gold here mentioned was of a purer sort than that in chap. xxii. 11, which was coarser than the gold of Ophir.

And seven thousand talents of refined silver, to overlay the walls of the houses withal.] There are two things which Dr. Lightfoot hath remarked in these two verses. One is, that it is said this preparation was above what he had prepared for the holy house, and yet he saith he had prepared it for the house of God. The other is, that mention is made here of silver to overlay the house withal; whereas it is evident, that within the house itself all the overlaying was of gold. Therefore it is thus to be understood, that besides the store of gold that David had

5 The gold for *things* of gold, and the silver for *things* of silver, and for all manner of work to be made by the hands of artificers. And who *then* is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the LORD?

6 ¶ Then the chief of the fathers, and princes of the tribes of Israel, and the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with the rulers of the king's work, offered willingly,

7 And gave for the service of the house of God of gold five thousand talents and ten thousand drams; and of silver ten thousand talents; and of brass eighteen thousand talents, and one hundred thousand talents of iron.

8 And they with whom *precious* stones were found gave *them* to the treasure of the house of the LORD, by the hand of Jehiel the Gershonite.

9 Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the LORD: and David the king also rejoiced with great joy.

provided for the gilding of the house, both in the holy and most holy place, he had also laid by a stock both of gold and silver, to gild the chambers over the porch (for there were divers upper chambers, the height of it being a hundred and twenty cubits), and to beautify the side-chambers, and the other rooms that were about the courts. All this gold and silver amounted to such a vast sum of our money, that it is not easy to give an account of it (see Calvinus, ad Annum Mundi 2933).

Ver. 5. For all manner of work to be made by the hands of artificers.] That there might be enough to pay all sort of workmen their wages, as well as to provide them materials to work withal.

And who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord? The Hebrew phrase "to fill his hand" (as it is in the margin) signifies to make an offering; unto which he excites them by his example, as a thing which would be very grateful unto God.

Ver. 6.] All those great men mentioned ch. xxvii. made their cheerful contributions.

Ver. 7.] What every particular person gave is not here recorded; but the whole amounted to these sums, which was very great.

Ver. 8.] For he and his sons were keepers of the treasures of God's house (ch. xxvi. 21, 22), and were appointed to receive such offerings.

Ver. 9. Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly.] They that made the offering rejoiced, for they did it with a good will, and not by constraint.

Because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the Lord:] This is the virtue which St. Paul calls ἀκέρως, "singleness of heart;" which hath respect purely to the service of God, the honour of religion, and the good of his church (2 Cor. viii. 2; ix. 11, 13).

And David the king also rejoiced with great joy.] It was a singular comfort to him in his old age, to see the people so well disposed, and his exhortation so effectual upon their hearts; which gave him a good hope this work would not fail to be speedily accomplished.

Ver. 10.] All this he ascribed to the grace of God, whom he therefore blessed and praised, for giving them such a heart.

Ver. 11.] This is a most noble declaration of the sense he had of the divine excellencies and perfections, with a thankful acknowledgment of his immen-

10 ¶ Wherefore David blessed the LORD before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed be thou, LORD God of Israel our father, for ever and ever.

11 Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is *thine*; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all.

12 Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.

13 Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name.

14 But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.

15 For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the

sity, power, goodness, eternity, and majesty, which are the properties or attributes of God. The Targum and the Talmudists apply these to the wonderful works of God in this manner:—"Thine, O Lord, is the greatness," for thou createst the world; "and the power," for thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, and carriest them through the Red sea; and revealest thyself in glory upon mount Sinai, to give the law to thy people; and obtainest victory over Amalek, Sihon, Og, and the Canaanites; and madest the sun and the moon stand still, "by the spirit of thy glory," till thy people were vindicated of their enemies. For all things, both in heaven and in earth, are the work of thy hands; thou supportest and rulest all things, and thou art exalted above all the angels in heaven, as well as all the kings upon earth.

Ver. 12.] The Targum thus paraphrases it: The riches of the wealthy, and the glory of kings and dominions, are given them by thee; thou rulest over all, and they are in thy power: who art able to multiply, and strengthen all things; that is, to increase those to great numbers who are diminished, and to strengthen those who are feeble and weak.

Ver. 14. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? In the Targum it is thus paraphrased: "Who hast given such plenty, that we are able to offer these gifts." He should have added, and also given us a heart to part with them for thy service.

For all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.] We only return to thee what thine own hand hath blessed us withal, as the Targum expresses it. And so the ancient Christians were wont to say at their offertory, τὰ οὐκ ἴδια τῶν ὁμῶν, "thine from thine;" that is, thy own goods, from thy own people. In like manner we ought to acknowledge God in all spiritual things; referring every good thought, good purpose, good work, to his divine grace, from whom we receive it; beseeching him, as David doth here in this prayer (ver. 18), to preserve it in us.

Ver. 15.] He acknowledges that they were not proprietors of that good land wherein they dwelt, but only his tenants; who held all they had of him; and that but a very short term; after which they must leave all, as their fathers had done. The words may be thus paraphrased, in short: "We have but the use of these things for a little while, and so have parted with no great matter unto thee." Those words, *as* *is*

earth are as a shadow, and *there is* none abiding.

16 O LORD our God, all this store that we have prepared, to build thee a house for thine holy name, *cometh* of thine hand, and *is* all thine own.

17 I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered all these things: and now have I seen with joy thy people, which are present here, to offer willingly unto thee.

18 O LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee:

19 And give unto Solomon my son a perfect

shadow, the Targum thus paraphrases: "As the shadow of a bird which flieth through the air, so are our days upon the earth:" that is, soon gone, as the Psalmist speaks.

Ver. 16.] He could not often enough repeat his sense of this, that they had given him nothing but what was his own; which he had most bountifully bestowed on them.

Ver. 17.] But the highest satisfaction was, that God had bestowed upon him a heart to do what he had done willingly, with a sincere respect to the service of God, and not out of vain-glory. For the truth of which he appeals to God himself, who could not be deceived with false shows and pretences. It was a great additional comfort to him, that God had given such a heart unto his people.

Ver. 18.] He could not desire a greater blessing for them, than that he who had given them such a pious heart, would preserve them in the same good disposition: and confirm and establish them therein. So the last words are better translated in the margin, *establish their heart unto thee*. Which the Targum paraphrases, "dispose their heart to fear thee."

Ver. 19.] To have a due respect to all God's precepts (in the observation of every one of which, *perfectness of heart* consists) he knew would be the best security for the performing what David designed. For then he would not be disobedient to his father's dying words.

Ver. 20.] They worshipped both with the same gesture, but with a different mind; God with religious worship, the king with civil: giving God thanks for all his benefits, and thanking the king for all the care he had taken, during his reign, for their prosperity. But some think, this worship was not paid to David, but to Solomon; it being the manner thus to acknowledge the king, when he was enthroned. So they bowed their knees to our Saviour, in mockery of him, as a pretended king.

Ver. 21. *They sacrificed sacrifices unto the Lord, and offered burnt offerings—on the morrow after that day.*] For the ark was now at Jerusalem, where this great congregation was assembled (ch. xxviii. 1), and therefore they offered peace-offerings and burnt-offerings to God in that place, on the morrow after their meeting: for there was not time to do it on that day, when the foregoing things were done.

Even a thousand bullocks, &c. with their drink offerings, and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel.] That is, together with the numerous burnt-offerings, a great many peace-offerings (which are here meant by *sacrifices*), sufficient for the entertainment of all the Israelites, who were there present, to feast upon;

heart, to keep thy commandments, thy testimonies, and thy statutes, and to do all *these things*, and to build the palace for the which I have made provision.

20 ¶ And David said to all the congregation, Now bless the LORD your God. And all the congregation blessed the LORD God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and worshipped the LORD and the king.

21 And they sacrificed sacrifices unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings unto the LORD, on the morrow after that day, *even* a thousand bullocks, a thousand rams, and a thousand lambs, with their drink offerings, and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel:

22 And did eat and drink before the LORD on that day with great gladness: and they made

as the manner was, and as it follows in the next verse.

Ver. 22. *And did eat and drink before the Lord on that day with great gladness.*] For the greatest part of peace-offerings was given to the persons that offered them, to entertain their friends withal, as hath been often observed. And they are said to eat and drink *before the Lord*, because it was a sacred feast, kept before the ark at Jerusalem, the place which God had chosen, according to the law, Deut. xii. 11, &c.

They made Solomon—king the second time.] This is supposed to have been done after David's death, when Solomon was anointed for himself, as reigning *pleno jure*, "in subjection to none:" as he was anointed the first time by David's command. But there are great men of another opinion; that he was twice anointed while David lived: first, in the presence of a few of David's servants, as we read 1 Kings i., and now, in the presence of all the great men of Israel, the princes of the tribes, captains of thousands and hundreds (see Bertram, De Repub. Jud. p. 130, 131). And, indeed, we are led to this by the connexion of the foregoing words: for the persons who now made him king the second time, were those before mentioned, who sacrificed and feasted thereupon with great joy: after David's long speech to them. Dr. Lightfoot, indeed, observes, that there is mention three times of Solomon being made king; twice in this book, ch. xxiii. 1, and here in this place; and in 1 Kings i. So that there may be a question made, whether he was made king three times, or only twice. But this place seems to settle the doubt; for when, upon the aspiring of Adonijah, he was anointed, it was the first time that David showed who should succeed him: see 1 Kings i. 21, 27, and that must be concurrent, or the same, with that making the king mentioned in this book, ch. xxiii. 1, and this anointing in the midst of the princes and great commanders, was the second time. Abarbanel is of the same opinion, that he was anointed at first before a few; and now more publicly before the whole nation.

And anointed him—to be the chief governor.] After the death of David, who, perhaps, now resigned the government of the kingdom to him, finding he had not long to live.

And Zadok to be priest.] This hath inclined many to think the anointing forementioned was after the death of David: because Abiathar was not put out of his office till the beginning of Solomon's reign. But I see no reason why we may not think he was anointed to be priest, as Solomon was to be king, in David's lifetime: though he was not actually put into

Solomon the son of David king the second time, and anointed *him* unto the *Lord to be* the chief governor, and Zadok *to be* priest.

23 Then Solomon sat on the throne of the *Lord* as king instead of David his father, and prospered; and all Israel obeyed him.

24 And all the princes, and the mighty men, and all the sons likewise of king David, submitted themselves unto Solomon the king.

25 And the *Lord* magnified Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed upon him *such* royal majesty, as had not been on any king before him in Israel.

26 ¶ Thus David the son of Jesse reigned over all Israel.

the office till after he was dead, when Abiathar was thrust out. It was necessary he should be anointed, because the succession to the high-priesthood, in the line of Eleazar, had been long interrupted; and Abiathar, of the line of Ithamar, was still alive. This reason the Jews give why he was anointed; which was not necessary, they say, but in this case: it being sufficient otherwise, only to clothe him with the priestly vestments. But see Selden, *De Success. in Pontif. lib. ii. cap. 9.* who will incline one to be of another opinion.

Ver. 23. *Then Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord*] So the throne of this kingdom is called, because this was God's land, and Israel his people, over whom he still remained their king: and Solomon reigned over them, not by inheritance, but by his special appointment. The Targum thus expresses it, "He sat upon the royal throne, according to the word of the Memra, the Word of the Lord."

And all Israel obeyed him.] From the beginning of his reign, his people were all obedient to him: whereas, it was a long time before Saul could be settled on his throne; and it was longer before all Israel submitted to David.

Ver. 24. *All the princes, and the mighty men,*] All the soldiery, as well as the heads of the tribes, and the great commanders.

And all the sons likewise of king David,] Who were then alive.

Submitted themselves unto Solomon the king.] Swore allegiance to him. For so the Hebrew phrase signifies, "they gave the hand under Solomon." For putting the hand under the knee or the thigh of a person, was a token of subjection to him: and was anciently used, when they solemnly promised any thing to a superior, by an oath (*Gen. xxiv. 2; xlvii. 29*); which custom, if it did not continue in use in Solomon's days, yet that which was signified by it, was expressed in the ancient phrase.

Ver. 25.] Which appears from the foregoing books, which show, that neither David, nor Saul, nor any of the judges (who governed before them), lived in such splendour, as was in the court of Solomon.

Ver. 26.] That is, this is a brief account of what David did, during his reign, especially in the latter end of it.

27 And the time that he reigned over Israel *was* forty years; seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three *years* reigned he in Jerusalem.

28 And he died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour: and Solomon his son reigned in his stead.

29 Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they *are* written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer,

30 With all his reign and his might, and the times that went over him, and over Israel, and over all the kingdoms of the countries.

Ver. 27.] See 2 Sam. v. 5.

Ver. 28. *He died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour;*] Abundantly satisfied, that he had lived long enough, in as great splendour and glory as he could desire.

And Solomon his son reigned in his stead.] Having this particular satisfaction, to see his son sit on his throne, likely to reign in greater glory than he had done. This was the Lord's doing, who disposed the hearts of all the great men, and his elder brethren, and the whole kingdom, to submit to him, who was but a young man.

Ver. 29. *Now the acts of David the king, first and last,*] A larger account of all that he did, from the beginning to the end of his reign.

Behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer.] Here are three distinct titles given to those three persons: Samuel being called *roch*, and Nathan is called *nabi*, and Gad is called *chosh*. But whether they have distinct significations, denoting several ways of receiving divine inspirations, or several degrees of it, I am not able to determine. But this we may certainly affirm, with Theodoret (in his preface to the book of the Kings), that the prophets, besides the edition of their prophecies, published also very frequently the history of their own times. And Samuel began to write the life of David, which Nathan and Gad finished: out of which these things here recorded were extracted.

Ver. 30. *With all his reign and his might.*] That is, how he governed his people, and how he warred with their enemies; and got glorious victories over them: with all the rest that he did, both as a prophet and as a king.

And the times that went over him.] All the troubles which he endured, and which befell the people of Israel (which are called *times* in Ps. xxx. 16); or, more simply, the meaning may be, all the revolutions that were in public affairs, in his days.

And over all the kingdoms of the countries.] That is, the neighbouring countries, such as the Philistines, Moab, Amalek, Syria, Damascus, the Ammonites, &c. The loss of which history is very much bewailed; but God knows better than we, what was fit to be preserved for the use and benefit of his church.

THE

SECOND BOOK OF THE CHRONICLES.

As there are some things here omitted which are recorded in the first book of the Kings, so there are several things contained in this book, of which no mention is made there; particularly in the history of Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah. And many other things there mentioned are here more fully and clearly explained, as will be observed in the acts of Abijah, Asa, Joash, and other kings of Judah: upon which account St. Jerome saith of this book, It is such, and of so great use, that he who, without it, will pretend to the understanding of the prophets, will expose himself to scorn.

CHAPTER I.

1 *The solemn offering of Solomon at Gibeon.* 7 *Solomon's choice of wisdom is blessed by God.* 13 *Solomon's strength and wealth.*

1 AND Solomon the son of David was strengthened in his kingdom, and the LORD his God *was* with him, and magnified him exceedingly.

2 Then Solomon spake unto all Israel, to the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and to the judges, and to every governor in all Israel, the chief of the fathers.

3 So Solomon, and all the congregation with him, went to the high place that *was* at Gibeon; for there was the tabernacle of the congregation of God, which Moses, the servant of the LORD, had made in the wilderness.

CHAP. I.

Ver. 1. *Solomon—was strengthened in his kingdom.*] After the death of Adonijah and Joab, he was confirmed in his authority and government.

The Lord his God was with him, and magnified him exceedingly.] In the Targum it is paraphrased, "The Word of the Lord was his helper, and raised him to a great height of glory."

Ver. 2.] Before that great assembly, mentioned in the foregoing chapter, in the midst of which he was anointed, went home, Solomon discoursed with them about his intentions of going to Gibeon to worship God, by offering a great sacrifice, and desired them to accompany him.

Ver. 3. *So Solomon,—went to the high place that was at Gibeon;*] This verse shows, that this was the thing about which he spake unto them (see 1 Kings iii. 4).

For there was the tabernacle of the congregation of God, which Moses—had made in the wilderness.] But it was there without the ark, which was in the city of David, while the tabernacle was in Gibeon. How these came to be separated, so that the ark was without the tabernacle and its vessels; and the vessels, and the altar with the tabernacle, without the seat of the glory of God, is not easy to be resolved. Conradus Pellicanus supposes, that even in those days, God would have them to know, he did not regard the ceremonious worship, when the people were under the government and instruction of such men as Samuel and David: and they were free from idolatry. Then the Lord did not exact so strictly the legal services, as he did in times of peace and tranquillity, when they were most necessary for the people: lest, after their

4 But the ark of God had David brought up from Kirjath-jearim to *the place which* David had prepared for it: for he had pitched a tent for it at Jerusalem.

5 Moreover, the brasen altar that Bezaleel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made, he put before the tabernacle of the LORD, and Solomon and the congregation sought unto it.

6 And Solomon went up thither to the brasen altar before the LORD, which *was* at the tabernacle of the congregation, and offered a thousand burnt offerings upon it.

custom, when they lived in ease and prosperity, they should fall into superstition, and admire the rites of the gentiles. And with such questions as these he thinks the Jews may be very strongly urged: How came it to pass that, in the days of Samuel and David, the legal worship was not observed more precisely? how came the ark to be separated from the altars, which were made for the ark, and not the contrary? Who dispensed with David to build another tabernacle for the ark, and neglect that built by Moses? And how came Solomon to sacrifice in another place, than that which the Lord had chosen?

Ver. 4.] See 2 Sam. vi. 2, 17.

Ver. 5. *The brasen altar, that Bezaleel—had made, he put before the tabernacle of the Lord:*] One would think that this altar did not stand in its right place, till Solomon set it where it used to stand; but the words may be translated as in the margin, *was there before the tabernacle.*

And Solomon and the congregation sought unto it.] I think this is better translated by Victorinus Strigelius, "Solomon and the congregation were wont to frequent it;" with sacrifices by which they sought the favour of God.

Ver. 6. *And Solomon went up thither to the brasen altar before the Lord.*] This is said to be *before the Lord*, though the ark was not there, because God was pleased graciously to accept the sacrifices offered before the place where he was wont to dwell, though wanting the token of his glorious presence.

And offered a thousand burnt-offerings upon it.] He offered them by the ministry of the priests. And "burnt offerings" here signify (as Pellicanus with great reason thinks) the sacrifice of peace-offerings,

7 ¶ In that night did God appear unto Solomon, and said unto him, Ask what I shall give thee.

8 And Solomon said unto God, Thou hast showed great mercy unto David my father, and hast made me to reign in his stead.

9 Now, O LORD God, let thy promise unto David my father be established: for thou hast made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude.

10 Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people *that is so great*?

11 And God said to Solomon, Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honour, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge my people, over whom I have made thee king:

12 Wisdom and knowledge *is granted* unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour, such as none of the kings have had that

the general name being put for the special. For it is not reasonable to think, a thousand offerings were wholly burnt upon the altar: but in all probability, he made a feast for all that were there present, as had been done when this great assembly offered so freely at his inauguration (1 Chron. xxix. 22).

Ver. 7. *In that night did God appear unto Solomon.*] Immediately after the offering of the sacrifices.

Ask what I shall give thee.] See 1 Kings iii. 5. This was a declaration that he accepted his prayers which accompanied those sacrifices, and would grant whatsoever he desired.

Ver. 8.] An admirable example unto those who make petitions unto God, that they should in the first place thank him for the great benefits they have received (1 Kings iii. 6).

Ver. 9. *Let thy promise unto David my father be established.*] viz. That God would be a father to him and make him his son (2 Sam. vii. 14).

For thou hast made me a king.] See 1 Kings iii. 8.

Ver. 10. *That I may go out and come in before this people.*] This is a proverbial speech, for governing the people, both at home and abroad, in peace and in war (see Numb. xxvii. 17; Deut. xxxi. 2).

For who can judge this thy people, that is so great?] Among such a numerous people, he knew there would be so many, and so various, and many times difficult causes brought before him, that it would

have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like.

13 ¶ Then Solomon came *from his journey* to the high place that *was* at Gibeon to Jerusalem, from before the tabernacle of the congregation, and reigned over Israel.

14 And Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen: and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, which he placed in the chariot cities, and with the king at Jerusalem.

15 And the king made silver and gold at Jerusalem *as plenteous* as stones, and cedar trees made he as the sycamore trees that *are* in the vale for abundance.

16 And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, and linen yarn; the king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price.

17 And they fetched up, and brought forth out of Egypt, a chariot for six hundred *shekels* of silver, and a horse for a hundred and fifty: and so brought they out *horses* for all the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria, by their means.

be impossible to hear them and judge aright, without a divine Spirit (see upon 1 Kings iii. 9).

Ver. 11, 12.] These two verses have been sufficiently explained in the same chapter (1 Kings iii. 11—13): only it may be observed, he doth not say he would give him "the life of his enemies," because he was to be a peaceable king.

Ver. 13.] We put in these words, "from his journey" which was not needful, for the words may be translated exactly, "Solomon came from the high place," &c. and so it follows, "from before the tabernacle." For the particle *lamed* signifies not only to but *from*. So R. Jonas, whom Kimchi calls a famous grammarian, saith that it is here put for *mem* i. e. *from*. But Kimchi himself is author of our translation, who is followed by Junius, and Tremellius, and others, but comes to the same purpose.

Ver. 14. *And Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen.*] See upon 1 Kings x. 26.

The chariot-cities.] *The chariot-cities* were such wherein there was good pasturage for the horses.

Ver. 15.] See there, ver. 27.

Ver. 16, 17.] These two verses are there also explained (see 1 Kings x. 28, 29). From this place the famous Bochartus gathers, that the chariots of Egypt in Solomon's time were drawn by four horses: for the tribute which was exacted for a chariot, was four times as much as was paid for a single horse (see his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 9).

CHAPTER II.

1, 17 *Solomon's labourers for the building of the temple.* 3 *His embassy to Hiram for workmen and provision of stuff.* 11 *Hiram sendeth him a kind answer.*

1 AND Solomon determined to build a house for the name of the LORD, and a house for his kingdom.

2 And Solomon told out threescore and ten

thousand men to bear burdens, and fourscore thousand to hew in the mountain, and three thousand and six hundred to oversee them.

3 ¶ And Solomon sent to Hiram the king of

CHAP. II.

Ver. 1. *Solomon determined to build a house for the Lord.*] Wherein the Lord should be worshipped: as his father David had designed and directed.

And a house for his kingdom.] A royal palace for himself, and those who should succeed him. But he finished God's house before he began his own.

Ver. 2.] Here are three hundred more than are mentioned in the book of the Kings: concerning which

Tyre, saying, As thou didst deal with David my father, and didst send him cedars to build him a house to dwell therein, *even so deal with me.*

4 Behold, I build a house to the name of the LORD my God, to dedicate *it* to him, and to burn before him sweet incense, and for the continual shew-bread, and for the burnt offerings morning and evening, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts of the LORD our God. This is an ordinance for ever to Israel.

5 And the house which I build is great: for great is our God above all gods.

6 But who is able to build him a house, seeing the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him? who am I then, that I should build him a house, save only to burn sacrifice before him?

7 Send me now, therefore, a man cunning to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in iron, and in purple, and in crimson, and blue, and that can skill to grave with the cunning men that

difference, see what I have noted there (v. 16), and need not be repeated here.

Ver. 3.] Hiram (as he is called in the book of the Kings) first sent to him, to congratulate his succession to the throne, and then Solomon sent to him: as I have noted there (see 1 Kings v. 1).

Ver. 4. *I build a house*] That is, he purposed to build, as it is expressed 1 Kings v. 5, and he had also disposed things so, that he was ready to go about it.

To dedicate it to him.] For his worship and service.

For the continual show-bread.] So this bread is called in Numb. iv. 7, because it stood before the Lord continually, being renewed every week, as we read Exod. xxv. 30, and other places.

For the burnt offerings morning and evening, &c.] He reckons up several parts of the divine service, which was there to be performed: Hiram as I have elsewhere observed, being no stranger to the God of Israel.

This is an ordinance for ever to Israel.] Which God himself had appointed.

Ver. 5.] It was no large structure which he built, but very magnificent, suitable to the glorious majesty of him that dwelt therein.

Ver. 6. *But who is able to build him a house.*] He would not have Hiram imagine that he had such low notions of God, as to think he could be confined and comprehended in any house, though ever so large, being immense beyond all conception.

Who am I then, that I should build him a house, save only to burn sacrifice before him?] It would have been a high presumption then for him, or any man else to build him a house, for any other end, but only for his worshippers to assemble there; he being pleased in a special manner to be present in that place. The Targum thus paraphrases this, "The heavens are the throne of his glory, the earth is his footstool, the abyss, and all people are supported by the Spirit of his Word." Which carries in it a notion which the author had of the ever-blessed Trinity.

Ver. 7.] There were admirable artists in all these works at Tyre; whom he desired to be sent to him; that they might assist those whom David had provided, but were not so skillful as those of Tyre.

Ver. 8: *Algum trees.*] Or *almug trees*: concerning which, see what I have noted upon 1 Kings x. 11. To which may be added, that Beekius hath lately

are with me in Judah and in Jerusalem, whom David my father did provide.

8 Send me also cedar trees, fir trees, and algum trees, out of Lebanon; for I know that thy servants can skill to cut timber in Lebanon; and, behold, my servants shall be with thy servants,

9 Even to prepare me timber in abundance: for the house which I am about to build shall be wonderful great.

20 And, behold, I will give to thy servants, the hewers that cut timber, twenty thousand measures of beaten wheat, and twenty thousand measures of barley, and twenty thousand baths of wine, and twenty thousand baths of oil.

11 ¶ Then Hiram the king of Tyre answered in writing, which he sent to Solomon, Because the LORD hath loved his people, he hath made thee king over them.

12 Hiram said moreover, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, that made heaven and earth, who hath given to David the king a wise son, endued with prudence and understanding, that might

conjectured, This was a tree brought originally out of Arabia, as the prefix *al* notes. And then it was brought out of that Ophir which was in Arabia, and planted in Lebanon. For there, this place tells us, these trees grew; as well as cedars and firs.

For I know that thy servants can skill to cut timber in Lebanon;] The Tyrians were more expert in cutting down and hewing timber (they dealing much in it) and therefore he desires to entertain them as his principal workmen, with whom he should join.

Ver. 9. In the Hebrew, "great and wonderful." This relates not so much to the bigness of it (though, taking in all the courts belonging to it, it was of large extent), but to the admirable contrivance and riches of it.

Ver. 10. *Beaten wheat.*] That is, of wheat ground, or fine flour, as R. Jonas, a famous grammarian, expounds it; whom many Christians follow.

And twenty thousand measures of barley, &c.] All this was provision for the workmen; for whose subsistence Solomon took care, during their labour: besides what he gave to Hiram every year for his household (see upon 1 Kings v. 11). What this measure, called *corus*, was, is uncertain: but many learned men think it the same with an omer, which was the most ancient word. For we never find the other used in the books of Moses, nor in the prophets; but only in Ezekiel (xlv. 14), and in the books of the Kings, Chronicles, and Ezra. But Josephus and the LXX. often have the word *corus* instead of omer, which was the largest measure of dry things, containing, as Epiphanius saith, thirty bushels.

Ver. 11, 12.] From these two verses, Victorinus Strigelius thought it certain, that Hiram was a proselyte to the true religion: because he first of all owns the God of Israel to be Jehovah, the maker of heaven and earth; for none but the Israelites called God by that name, and when they would distinguish him from idols and all creatures, they confess him to be the Creator of the world, as Hiram here doth. And, secondly, he congratulates the Israelites upon the happiness they enjoyed under such a king, which was the effect of his love to God and his church. And, lastly, he declared his love to the church not only in embassies and letters, but in real acts of kindness, sending to Solomon materials to build the house of God, and artificers the best in the world. But the

build a house for the LORD, and a house for his kingdom.

13 And now I have sent a cunning man, endued with understanding, of Hiram my father's,

14 The son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father was a man of Tyre, skilful to work in gold, and in silver, in brass, in iron, in stone, and in timber, in purple, in blue, and in fine linen, and in crimson; also to grave any manner of graving, and to find out every device which shall be put to him, with thy cunning men, and with the cunning men of my lord David thy father.

15 Now therefore the wheat, and the barley, the oil, and the wine, which my lord hath spoken of, let him send unto his servants:

first of these reasons is not good; for, as my most learned friend, Dr. Alix, hath observed to me, the name of Jehovah was known to the Tyrians from the time of Gideon, as we learn from the words of Sanchniathon.

Ver. 13.] A man of great skill and long experience, being the principal workman employed by his father. So the Targum seems to understand the word *abi* to signify a *master or chief workman*. But Beckius upon this place thinks it most probable that *Abi* was his surname, as we call it: and translates this verse, "He sent him a man of great skill;" viz. Hiram *Abi*. For it was very common among the eastern people, to call men by the name of *Ab*, and *Abi*, or *Abā*, and *Abu*, as he observes. And thus Luther translates these words, *Hiram Abi*: to whom may be added Emanuel Sa, a person very skilful in this language.

Ver. 14. *The son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father was a man of Tyre.*] The Targum saith she was "a woman of the tribe of Naphtali;" because it is said so in 1 Kings vii. 14, and therefore he reconciles these two places; by "a daughter of Dan," he means of a man called Dan, who was of the tribe of Naphtali: which being near to Tyre, she married one of that nation. Or, as Jarchi and Kimchi will have it, he was a Jew, but dwelt in Tyre: as Obed-edom was called the Gittite, because he dwelt in Gath, but was a Levite (see my notes upon 1 Kings vii. 14).

Skilful to work in gold, and to find out every device which shall be put to him.] These last words argue this man to have been a great artist, who could contrive any thing that was propounded to him, though never wrought before.

With the cunning men of my lord David thy father.] This seems another argument, that Hiram was

16 And we will cut wood out of Lebanon, as much as thou shalt need; and we will bring it to thee in flotes by sea to Joppa; and thou shalt carry it up to Jerusalem.

17 ¶ And Solomon numbered all the strangers that were in the land of Israel, after the numbering wherewith David his father had numbered them; and they were found a hundred and fifty thousand and three thousand and six hundred.

18 And he set threescore and ten thousand of them to be bearers of burdens, and fourscore thousand to be hewers in the mountain, and three thousand and six hundred overseers to set the people a work.

of the true religion, because he honoured David with the name of his lord; as he doth Solomon in the next verse. Or, as others think, he was become tributary to them; his country very much depending upon them for corn.

Ver. 15.] For their support in their labour.

Ver. 16.] The Hebrew word *rapsodoth* (which we translate *flotes*) is of the same signification with *daberoth* (1 Kings v. 9), as a learned Jew notes. By which is meant, timber bound together, which was drawn through the sea, and through rivers. Such flotes were used, especially in the river Tigris (as Beckius here notes out of a Hebrew author), which was so swift, that vessels were wont to be overturned by the stream: and therefore they employed these flotes alone, made of reeds tied close together; upon which both men and burdens went down the river (see my notes upon 1 Kings v. 9).

Ver. 17.] These were the relics (as Kimchi thinks) of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, mentioned afterwar, ch. viii. 7. But they were not idolaters; for then David would not have suffered them to dwell in the land: but they worshipped God alone, though they did not embrace the Jewish religion wholly, by being circumcised. Those David had numbered, that he might know their strength and their condition. Which did not proceed from such vanity, as moved him to number his own people, but out of a prudent care, that they might be distinguished from Jews, and be employed in such work as he did not think fit to put upon the Israelites (see 1 Chron. xxii. 2).

Ver. 18.] This he had said before, ver. 2, but now relates of what condition they were, who were put to these servile employments. They that were the overseers (whom the LXX. call the *εργονοῦνται*) were, I suppose, of the children of Israel.

CHAPTER III.

1 *The place, and time of building the temple.* 3 *The measure and ornaments of the house.* 11 *The cherubims.* 14 *The vail and pillars.*

1 THEN Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where the LORD appeared unto David his father, in

the place that David had prepared in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

2 And he began to build in the second day of

CHAP. III.

Ver. 1. *Then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem in mount Moriah.*] See what I have noted concerning Moriah upon Gen. xxii. 2.

To which may be here added, that part of this mountain was in the tribe of Judah, and part of it in the tribe of Benjamin: so that the temple is ascribed to them both. To Judah, in Ps. lxxviii. 68, 69, to Benjamin, Deut. xxxiii. 12. For the greatest part of the

the second month, in the fourth year of his reign.

¶ Now these are the things wherein Solomon was instructed for the building of the house of God. The length by cubits, after the first measure, was threescore cubits, and the breadth twenty cubits.

4 And the porch that was in the front of the house, the length of it was according to the breadth of the house, twenty cubits, and the height was a hundred and twenty: and he overlaid it within with pure gold.

5 And the greater house he cieled with fir tree,

courts was in the tribe of Judah: but the altar, the porch, the most holy part of the temple, where the ark and the cherubims were, in the tribe of Benjamin.

Where the Lord appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshing-floor of Ornan] The Targum here derives the sanctity of this place from many noble things that were done there in ancient times. For in this place, saith he, Abraham worshipped the name of the Lord, and here he offered up his son Isaac, but he was delivered by the Memra, the Word of the Lord, and a ram substituted in his place. Here Jacob prayed when he fled from his brother Esau; and here the angel appeared to David, and ordered him to offer sacrifice in the threshing-floor of Ornan. By which appearance and sacrifice this mountain was consecrated to be a place where the temple should be built (see 1 Chron. xxi. 26). But Maimonides (in his treatise of the building of the temple) carries this a great deal higher. For here, saith he, Noah built an altar when he came out of the ark (as Abraham did when he offered his son); yea, here Cain and Abel offered their sacrifices, as Adam the first man had done before them. And more than that, he will have it, that he was created in this place; whence the saying of their wise men, "Man was made in the very place of his expiation." But this is unworthy of Maimonides, who is not wont to follow such conceits as this, which is borrowed from a foolish book called Pirke Eliezer.

Ver. 2.] See 1 Kings vi. 1. In the preceding winter it was not fit to build, and in the first month the paschal feast hindered, as Jarchi here observes: and Dr. Alix takes to have been a sabbatic year, in which the people were free from the tillage of their ground.

Ver. 3. Now these are the things wherein Solomon was instructed for the building] He had been instructed by David his father, who gave him a model, according to which he built it (see 1 Chron. xxviii. 11, &c.). The Targum translates these words very clearly, which in the Hebrew are a little obscure, "These are the dimensions of the foundation of the temple, which Solomon began to build." So in our margin we translate the word, not *instructed*, but *founded*. And thus, Beckius thinks, it is most properly to be understood; because Solomon did not receive from his father a delineation of the whole fabric of the temple, but only of the porch, and of the courts, and some other things: as the forenamed place tells us.

The length by cubits after the first measure was threescore cubits, and the breadth twenty] He projected the sanctuary and the oracle both together; and in their first description they were to be in length sixty cubits: that is, forty for the sanctuary, and twenty for the most holy place. Or, as some think, by the *first measure*, is here meant that mea-

sure which Moses followed in building of the tabernacle: for, in process of time, the cubits altered, and were larger (see 1 Kings vi. 2). But this is doubtful.

6 And he garnished the house with precious stones for beauty: and the gold was gold of Parvaim.

7 He overlaid also the house, the beams, the posts, and the walls thereof, and the doors thereof, with gold; and graved cherubims on the walls.

8 And he made the most holy house, the length whereof was according to the breadth of the house, twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof twenty cubits: and he overlaid it with fine gold, amounting to six hundred talents.

sure which Moses followed in building of the tabernacle: for, in process of time, the cubits altered, and were larger (see 1 Kings vi. 2). But this is doubtful.

Ver. 4. The porch—was according to the breadth of the house, twenty cubits.] So we read expressly, 1 Kings vi. 2, that "the breadth was twenty cubits."

The height was a hundred and twenty.] This is a very different account from that in the book of the Kings, where it is said to be thirty cubits. But Abendana hath briefly summed up what their authors say to reconcile these two places. Some think it probable, that the porch was but thirty cubits high, but the whole temple higher. Thus Kimchi. Others, that the porch and all were of the same height: but from the foundation to the roof was but thirty cubits: though above the roof there were *επιρρα*, upper-rooms, which were ninety cubits high (see upon 1 Kings vi. 3). And, indeed, it is not likely, that this house was lower than the second temple, which, by the command of Cyrus, was to be threescore cubits (Ezra vi. 3, and see Josephus, lib. vii. cap. 8).

He overlaid it within with pure gold.] As he did the rest of the house.

Ver. 5.] By the "greater house" he means the sanctuary, or holy place: which was larger than the most holy, as was before noted.

Ver. 6.] He garnished the house with precious stones] This shows the use to which the precious stones, that were dedicated by David, and by his princes, were employed (1 Chron. xxix. 2, 8); which served not merely for the garments of the high-priest, but for the house itself, which was garnished with them. Though I do not know but the observation of Bochartus may be true, that these stones are called *precious stones*, though they were common, because they excelled the rest in greatness, fineness, and in their polishing (Hieroz. par. ii. lib. v. cap. 7.).

The gold was gold of Parvaim.] It is a great mistake of Abraham Mylius, and others, who take this place to have been Peru; which the great man now mentioned hath proved to be Taprobana (see upon 1 Kings ix. 28), which was called Parvaim, and, with a small change, Parvam, and Provan; from whence he conjectures came the name of Taprobana, which is compounded of *taph* (which in Arabic signifies a shore or coast) and *Parvan* (lib. ii. Phaleg. cap. 28). The Jews, after their manner, say the gold was called the gold of Parvaim, because it was of a deep red colour, like the blood of *parim*, that is, *bullocks*, and signifies the most excellent gold, as L'Empereur notes upon Middoth; though others of them say it was a place.

Ver. 7.] See 1 Kings vi. 21, 22, 29.

Ver. 8.] The very same is said 1 Kings vi. 20, only here is added the quantity of gold which he expended upon this place, which was very great.

9 And the weight of the nails *was* fifty shekels of gold. And he overlaid the upper chambers with gold.

10 And in the most holy house he made two cherubims of image work, and overlaid them with gold.

11 ¶ And the wings of the cherubim *were* twenty cubits long; one wing of the one cherub *was* five cubits, reaching to the wall of the house; and the other wing *was likewise* five cubits, reaching to the wing of the other cherub.

12 And one wing of the other cherub *was* five cubits, reaching to the wall of the house; and the other wing *was* five cubits *also*, joining to the wing of the other cherub.

13 The wings of these cherubims spread them-

Ver. 9. *The weight of the nails was fifty shekels of gold.*] Each nail, I suppose, whereby the plates of gold were fastened to the boards, cost fifty shekels.

He overlaid the upper chambers with gold.] These seem to be the chambers mentioned 1 Chron. xxviii. 11, of which David gave him a model. But Dr. Lightfoot thinks, that over the holy place there were no chambers at all in the temple of Solomon, but it was all open to the roof. Over the most holy place, indeed, there was an upper room of ten cubits high; but why that should be called *chambers*, in the plural number, and why it should be overlaid with gold, since there was none came into it, nor any way to come there, is not easy to apprehend. And as for the side chambers that were on the outside of the house, there was no reason they should be overlaid with gold, since they were places wherein their corn, and wine, and tithes, and first-fruits, and such like things, were laid up. Therefore, by the Hebrew word *elyoth*, we are not to understand *upper chambers*, but the *upper floor*, or the *roof*, of the holy and most holy places; which were overlaid with gold everywhere; both the floor on which they trod, and the walls round about, and the roof over head (see his Temple Service, ch. 15, sect. 3).

Ver. 10. *In the most holy house he made two cherubims of image work.*] I do not know why we thus translate the last words, for the Hebrew, which we translate *image*, hath nothing of that signification in it: unless we take the word *zaazum* to be the same with *zeeazim*, which some of the Jews say signifies their faces were like to boys'. And accordingly many understand these words, They had the figure of youths, or boys. But Beckius, upon the Targum, in this place, seems to me to have given a more rational account of the word, which he derives from the root *zaa*, and translates it the *work of motions*, or moveable work,

selves forth twenty cubits: and they stood on their feet, and their faces *were* inward.

14 ¶ And he made the veil of blue, and purple, and crimson, and fine linen, and wrought cherubims thereon.

15 Also he made before the house two pillars of thirty and five cubits high, and the chapter that *was* on the top of each of them *was* five cubits.

16 And he made chains, *as* in the oracle, and put *them* on the heads of the pillars; and made a hundred pomegranates, and put *them* on the chains.

17 And he reared up the pillars before the temple, one on the right hand, and the other on the left; and called the name of that on the right hand Jachin, and the name of that on the left Boaz.

for they stood upon their feet, (ver. 13), as ready to move. In which he follows Forsterus and Buxtorfius.

Overlaid them with gold.] For they were made of olive-wood, and were not like those of Moses, of beaten gold (see upon 1 Kings vi. 23, 28).

Ver. 11—13.] See these three verses explained, 1 Kings vi. 24—26, where the height of these cherubims is also set down.

They stood on their feet.] See 1 Kings vi. 26.

Their faces were inward.] In the Hebrew, "towards the house:" that is, towards the inner house, or holy place, as Jarchi expounds it: whose words are, Their heads were not erect, that they should look outwards; but they bended down, that they might look upon one another.

Ver. 14.] That is, the veil before the most holy place; which is the partition mentioned in 1 Kings vii. 21.

Ver. 15. *He made before the house*] Before the entrance into the sanctuary.

Two pillars of thirty and five cubits high.] They were not each of them thus high, but both of them together, as it is explained in 1 Kings vii. 15.

The chapter that was on the top of each of them was five cubits.] In the form of a crown, as the Targum expresses it (see 1 Kings vii. 16).

Ver. 16. *He made chains.*] See 1 Kings vi. 21.

And made a hundred pomegranates, and put them on the chains.] There were a hundred in two rows, two hundred in all (see 1 Kings vii. 20).

Ver. 17.] See 1 Kings vii. 21. The Targum on these words makes this commentary: He called the one Jachin, because Nachon, the kingdom of the house of David, *was established*; and the other Boaz, from the name of the patriarch of that royal house of Judah from whom all their kings were derived.

CHAPTER IV.

1 The altar of brass. 2 The molten sea upon twelve oxen. 6 The ten lavers, candlesticks, and tables.
9 The courts, and the instruments of brass. 19 The instruments of gold.

1 MOREOVER he made an altar of brass, twenty cubits the length thereof, and twenty cubits the breadth thereof, and ten cubits the height thereof.

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 1.] The making this altar so many cubits high may seem to contradict God's command, Exod. xx.

2 ¶ Also he made a molten sea of ten cubits from brim to brim, round in compass, and five cubits the height thereof; and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about.

26. But see what I have noted there, to show how the ascent might be so contrived, that the priest's nakedness should not be discovered. The making it of brass also was, no doubt, by the direction of God.

3 And under it *was* the similitude of oxen, which did compass it round about; ten in a cubit, compassing the sea round about. Two rows of oxen *were* cast when it was cast.

4 It stood upon twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, and three looking toward the west, and three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east; and the sea *was set* above upon them, and all their hinder parts *were* inward.

5 And the thickness of it *was* a hand-breadth, and the brim of it like the work of the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies; and it received and held three thousand baths.

6 ¶ He made also ten lavers, and put five on the right hand, and five on the left, to wash in them: such things as they offered for the burnt offering they washed in them; but the sea *was* for the priests to wash in.

7 And he made ten candlesticks of gold according to their form, and set them in the temple, five on the right hand, and five on the left.

8 He made also ten tables, and placed them in the temple, five on the right side, and five on the left: and he made a hundred basons of gold.

9 ¶ Furthermore, he made the court of the priests, and the great court, and doors for the court, and overlaid the doors of them with brass.

10 And he set the sea on the right side of the east end, over against the south.

who told David how such things should be made (1 Chron. xxviii.), as L'Empereur very well observes.

Ver. 2.] This and the following verses are explained 1 Kings vii. 23.

Ver. 3. Under it *was* the similitude of oxen, which did compass it round about: ten in a cubit, compassing the sea round about.] These oxen are called knobs in 1 Kings vii. 24, which were little protuberances, or bunches, round about the lips of the laver, in the figure of oxen. There were ten of them in every cubit, and the circumference being thirty cubits, there were three hundred of them in one row; and they being cast in two rows, one under another, were six hundred in all.

Two rows of oxen were cast, when it was cast.] They were not fastened on afterward, but cast together with the vessel itself. So Kimchi and Jarchi; the latter of which thus explains it: They were not joined to it by nails or solder, but all cast together with the sea.

Ver. 4.] See upon 1 Kings vii. 25.

Ver. 5.] See this account reconciled with that in 1 Kings vii. 26. The Targum here thus paraphrases: Three thousand baths of things dry, and two thousand of things liquid. But others better explain it, that the quantity of water which was commonly in it was two thousand baths; but if it were filled up to the top it would hold three thousand.

Ver. 6.] See there, 1 Kings vii. 38, 39.

Ver. 7. He made ten candlesticks of gold] See upon 1 Kings vii. 49.

According to their form,] Those words, "according to their form," are thus translated by the Targum, "as was convenient or agreeable to them." Or the meaning may be, "according to the pattern which David gave him."

Ver. 8.] See upon 1 Kings vii. 48. Some have observed, that there was the very same furniture made

11 And Hiram made the pots, and the shovels, and the basons. And Hiram finished the work that he was to make for king Solomon for the house of God;

12 To wit, the two pillars, and the pommels, and the chapters which were on the top of the two pillars, and the two wreaths to cover the two pommels of the chapters which were on the pillars:

13 And four hundred pomegranates on the two wreaths; two rows of pomegranates on each wreath, to cover the two pommels of the chapters which were upon the pillars.

14 He made also bases; and lavers made he upon the bases;

15 One sea, and twelve oxen under it:

16 The pots also, and the shovels, and the flesh-hooks, and all their instruments, did Hiram his father make to king Solomon for the house of the Lord of bright brass.

17 In the plain of Jordan did the king cast them, in the clay ground, between Succoth and Zerethath.

18 Thus Solomon made all these vessels in great abundance: for the weight of the brass could not be found out.

19 ¶ And Solomon made all the vessels that were for the house of God, the golden altar also, and the tables whereon the show-bread was set;

by Solomon for the most holy place that was made by Moses; but in the holy place there was an augmentation made of ten candlesticks and ten tables. But they should have remembered, that Solomon also added two cherubims, and of a larger size, to the most holy place, which were not there before.

Ver. 9.] See 1 Kings vi. 36, where the court of the priests is called "the inner court," it being next the sanctuary: and by the "great court" here is meant the court of the people, to which he made doors.

Ver. 10.] See my notes upon 1 Kings vii. 39.

Ver. 11.] See there, 1 Kings vii. 40. He did not stir from the work, but finished it all before he left Solomon's service.

Ver. 12. The pommels,] Or, the globes, as we now speak, and as the Targum translates it.

And the chapters which were on the top of the two pillars, &c.] This is there explained, 1 Kings vii. 41.

Ver. 13.] See ver. 42.

Ver. 14. He made bases, &c.] See ver. 43.

Ver. 15. One sea.] See ver. 44.

Ver. 16.] In 1 Kings vii. 45, it is said, "which Hiram made;" and that is the meaning here: for the words are best translated Hiram Abi, or Abif, did make. See upon ch. ii. 13, which seems more easy than other expositions which may be given of the words. For some think Solomon calls him his father, out of great respect to him; or because he was the inventor of all this excellent work (as in Gen. iv. 20, 21), or it is a short speech, for "Hiram and his father."

Ver. 17.] See 1 Kings vii. 46.

Ver. 18. Thus Solomon made all these vessels in great abundance:] More for ornament and grandeur, than for necessary use.

For the weight of the brass could not be found out.] See 1 Kings vii. 47.

Ver. 19. Solomon made all the vessels that were for the house of God,] That is, for the sanctuary.

20 Moreover the candlesticks with their lamps, that they should burn after the manner before the oracle, of pure gold;

21 And the flowers, and the lamps, and the tongs, *made he of gold, and that perfect gold;*

The tables whereon the show-bread was set;] One table only was made by Moses, but Solomon made ten (ver. 8), for the greater convenience of the priests in the ministration: that they might have a table at hand whereon to set the bread which they took off, when they set on new upon the table of show-bread. But it is not improbable that *tables* in the plural are put for *table* in the singular, and that he speaks of that on which the bread stood before the Lord. Which I suppose was of gold, as the others were of silver.

Ver. 20. *Moreover the candlesticks with their lamps, that they should burn after the manner]* Which God had appointed in the law of Moses.

22 And the snuffers, and the basons, and the spoons, and the censers, *of pure gold:* and the entry of the house, the inner doors thereof for the most holy *place,* and the doors of the house of the temple, *were of gold.*

Before the oracle,] Here the Targum calls the oracle "the house of expiations;" because into this most holy place the high-priest went with the blood, to make atonement on the great day of expiation.

Ver. 21.] The Hebrew word *miklot*, which signifies *perfection*, denotes gold most purified, as Kimchi saith their doctors expound it. But he thinks it signifies simply, all these vessels were of gold.

Ver. 22. *The snuffers,]* See upon 1 Kings vii. 50. *The entry of the house, &c. were of gold.]* They were not entirely of massy gold, but of wood (as we read 1 Kings vi. 31, &c.), covered with plates of gold (ver. 35, and see 1 Kings xviii. 16).

CHAPTER V.

1 *The dedicated treasures.* 2 *The solemn induction of the ark into the oracle.* 11 *God being praised giveth a visible sign of his favour.*

1 Thus all the work that Solomon made for the house of the LORD, was finished: and Solomon brought in *all* the things that David his father had dedicated; and the silver, and the gold, and all the instruments, put he among the treasures of the house of God.

2 ¶ Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which is Zion.

3 Wherefore all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto the king in the feast which *was* in the seventh month.

4 And all the elders of Israel came; and the Levites took up the ark.

5 And they brought up the ark, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy vessels that *were* in the tabernacle, these did the priests and the Levites bring up.

6 Also king Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel there were assembled unto him before the ark, sacrificed sheep and oxen, which could not be told nor numbered for multitude.

7 And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD unto his place, to the oracle of the house, into the most holy *place,* even under the wings of the cherubims:

8 For the cherubims spread forth *their* wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims covered the ark and the staves thereof above.

9 And they drew out the staves *of the ark,* that the ends of the staves were seen from the ark before the oracle; but they were not seen without. And there it is unto this day.

10 *There was* nothing in the ark save the two tables which Moses put *therein* at Horeb, when the LORD made a *covenant* with the children of Israel, when they came out of Egypt.

11 ¶ And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy *place:* (for all the

CHAP. V.

Ver. 1.] See 1 Kings vii. 51. David, we read 1 Chron. xxii. 14, made such vast preparations for building of this house, that there was more than could be spent in the work. What remained, therefore, Solomon could not employ to his own use, but laid it up in the treasures of God's house.

Ver. 2.] See 1 Kings viii. 1.

Ver. 3. *All the men of Israel assembled themselves]* That is, all the persons forementioned.

In the feast which was in the seventh month.] See 1 Kings viii. 2. The feast of tabernacles, which they kept seven days; and the feast of dedication, which lasted as many (ch. vii. 9).

Ver. 4.] That is, they whose office it was to carry it.

Ver. 5.] See 1 Kings viii. 3.

Ver. 6.] See 1 Kings viii. 5. The observation of Victorinus Strigelius upon this history is very pious: That nothing is more lovely in human things, than such

concord as here appeared among all orders of men; both of teachers and learners, magistrates, soldiers, and people, who were all combined to promote the service and honour of God. Such unity ought to be studied by Christian people, that we may be all one, as our Saviour prayed.

Ver. 7.] The very same words are in 1 Kings viii. 6 (see there).

Ver. 8.] And this verse also is the same with 1 Kings viii. 7.

Ver. 9. *There it is unto this day.]* Or, "they are there," as the margin hath it, out of 1 Kings viii. 8, where there are the same words. And when that book was written they were exactly true; but when this author transcribed them into this book, after the captivity, there were then neither staves nor ark remaining: therefore he only relates how Solomon settled things (see my notes there).

Ver. 10.] These words are there also explained (see 1 Kings viii. 10).

Ver. 11. *When the priests were come out of the*

priests *that were present* were sanctified, and did not *then* wait by course;

12 Also the Levites, *which were the singers*, all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, *being arrayed* in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them a hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets;)

13 It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers *were* as one, to make one sound to be

holy place:] Whither they carried the ark, and set it in its place.

For all the priests that were present were sanctified, and did not then wait by course:] As David had appointed in the ordinary service at the temple. But upon this extraordinary occasion they all attended (though it was not their course), at least as many as could, and were sanctified to do all the duties of this great day. For, as Kimchi observes, there were such a multitude of sacrifices offered, that the service of them all was necessary.

Ver. 12. *Also the Levites which were the singers, all of them of Asaph, &c.*] According to their several families, as the Targum well explains it; viz. those of the family of Asaph, &c.

Stood at the east end of the altar,] Where the Talmudists say there were two desks for them to stand in and sing. One of which had fifteen steps, on which they sung those songs called the Songs of Degrees, or Steps. For there is no better account, L'Empereur thinks, can be given of that name.

With them a hundred and twenty priests] Who joined with the Levites, it appears by the next verse, in praising God.

Ver. 13. *As the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound*] When they were all ready, as one man, to make with one voice a loud sound.

When they lifted up their voice with the trumpets] As soon as they began to sound, and play on the instruments, and sing the following words.

For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: Many think they sung the whole psalm, which thus

heard in praising and thanking the LORD, and when they lifted up *their* voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, *saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then* the house was filled with a cloud, *even* the house of the LORD;

14 So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God.

begins, "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good," &c. And so the LXX. in this place, ἔξομολογείσθε τῷ Κυρίῳ, &c. and the Vulgar in like manner.

Then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord:] In the Hebrew there is nothing answering to the word *even*: but the whole may be thus plainly rendered, "The house was filled with the cloud of the house of the Lord." That is, with the cloud that was wont to be in the most holy place, and was the token of the gracious presence and favour of the divine majesty among them.

Ver. 14.] See 1 Kings viii. 19. It is a pious reflection which Victorinus Strigelius makes upon this place: Which admonisheth us, saith he, first, of the presence of God in his church; and, secondly, of the abrogation of the Levitical worship. It is a most sweet promise of our Saviour, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I will be there present in the midst of them." Thus when the Levites here sung his praises, the house of God was filled with a cloud, which was the token of his presence: and when the auditors of the apostles prayed (Acts iv. 31), the whole house where they were assembled was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost: but the Levitical priests being unable to discharge their office, after the majesty of the Lord filled the house: it was a plain signification that their ministry and way of worship should cease, when the Messiah came, in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily.

CHAPTER VI.

1 Solomon, having blessed the people, blesseth God. 12 Solomon's prayer in the consecration of the temple, upon the brasen scaffold.

1 THEN said Solomon, The LORD hath said that he would dwell in the thick darkness.

2 But I have built a house of habitation for thee, and a place for thy dwelling for ever.

3 And the king turned his face, and blessed

CHAP. VI.

Ver. 1.] When Solomon saw that token of the divine presence, he made this speech to the priests. See 1 Kings viii. 12, and the following verses; for there is little in this chapter but what is there explained: the sense, and commonly the very words, being the same. The paraphrase of the Targum upon these words, is very remarkable, which is this: "The Lord would have his Shechinah, or glorious presence, to reside in this city Jerusalem, in his sanctuary, which I have built to the name of his Word; and, behold, a thick cloud covereth it." This notion of God's

the whole congregation of Israel: and all the congregation of Israel stood:

4 And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, who hath with his hands fulfilled *that* which he spake with his mouth to my father David, saying,

dwelling in darkness was among the heathen (who hence learned it), for Justin Martyr observes, that Orpheus, and another ancient writer, call God Ἰσχυροφῶν, "altogether hidden." And the Lacedemonians, who pretend to be of kin to the Jews, had a temple dedicated to Ζεὺς Σκοτεινός, "Jupiter the dark," as Strabo relates out of Pausanias (see Meurs. Miscell. Lacon. lib. i. cap. 1).

Ver. 2.] See there, 1 Kings viii. 13.

Ver. 3.] Who were in the great court before the house (see there, ver. 14).

Ver. 4.] The same with what is there said, ver. 15.

Ver. 5.] The last words of this verse are very diffe-

5 Since the day that I brought forth my people out of the land of Egypt, I chose no city among all the tribes of Israel to build a house in, that my name might be there; neither chose I any man to be a ruler over my people Israel:

6 But I have chosen Jerusalem, that my name might be there; and have chosen David to be over my people Israel.

7 Now it was in the heart of David my father to build a house for the name of the LORD God of Israel.

8 But the LORD said to David my father, Forasmuch as it was in thine heart to build a house for my name, thou didst well in that it was in thine heart:

9 Notwithstanding, thou shalt not build the house; but thy son which shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house for my name.

10 The LORD therefore hath performed his word that he hath spoken: for I am risen up in the room of David my father, and am set on the throne of Israel, as the Lord promised, and have built the house for the name of the LORD God of Israel:

11 And in it have I put the ark, wherein is the covenant of the LORD, that he made with the children of Israel.

12 ¶ And he stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands,

13 For Solomon had made a brasen scaffold, of five cubits long, and five cubits broad, and three cubits high, and had set it in the midst of the court: and upon it he stood, and kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven,

14 And said, O LORD God of Israel, *there is no God like thee in the heaven, nor in the earth; which keepeth covenant, and shewest mercy unto*

rent from those 1 Kings viii. 16, where it is said, "but I chose David to be over my people Israel." Till whose time there was no settled succession of a ruler, that he and his posterity should reign over them; but God raised up judges out of what tribe and family he pleased: and when he made Saul king, did not continue that dignity in his family, as he did to David.

Ver. 6.] But now he declared both the city wherein he would dwell, and also the person and family whom he would have to govern Israel.

Ver. 7—10.] All these four verses are in the same words, 1 Kings viii. 17—20 (see there). I shall only therefore observe here, how the Targum translates the last words of this verse; "built a house to the name of the Word of the Lord God of Israel." In which he makes the Word a distinct person from the Lord God of Israel, but Lord God also; else he would not have built a house for his name, that he might be there worshipped and served.

Ver. 11.] There is no difference between these words and those 1 Kings viii. 21, but that there he saith, *I have set there the place of the ark*; which is the same in effect with these words, which signify he had put the ark in the most holy place.

Ver. 12.] See upon 1 Kings viii. 22.

Ver. 13.] This verse is added to what we read in the book of the Kings: and, as Solomon Jarchi ob-

thy servants, that walk before thee with all their hearts:

15 Thou which hast kept with thy servant David my father that which thou hast promised him; and spakest with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thine hand, as *it is* this day.

16 Now, therefore, O LORD God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that which thou hast promised him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit upon the throne of Israel; yet so that thy children take heed to their way to walk in my law, as thou hast walked before me.

17 Now then, O LORD God of Israel, let thy word be verified, which thou hast spoken unto thy servant David.

18 But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built!

19 Have respect therefore to the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the cry and the prayer which thy servant prayeth before thee:

20 That thine eyes may be open upon this house day and night, upon the place whereof thou hast said that thou wouldest put thy name there; to hearken unto the prayer which thy servant prayeth toward this place.

21 Hearken, therefore, unto the supplications of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, which they shall make toward this place: hear thou from thy dwelling place, *even* from heaven; and when thou hearest, forgive.

22 ¶ If a man sin against his neighbour, and an oath be laid upon him to make him swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house;

23 Then hear thou from heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, by requiring the wicked, by

serves, hath relation to what goes before, "in the presence of all Israel." For he was advanced higher than they, that he might be seen and heard of all.

Ver. 14.] See 1 Kings viii. 23, where there are the same words.

Ver. 15, 16.] These two verses, with very little difference, are in 1 Kings viii. 21, 25.

Ver. 18.] See there, ver. 26, 27. I shall only add the gloss of Kimchi upon the last words, "Thou art rather the place of this world, and comprehendest all things, than the world the place of thee, which cannot comprehend thee. Wherefore then have I built this temple? it was only that thy gracious presence might dwell there, hearing the prayers which shall be made in this place." So the next words import.

Ver. 19.] See there, ver. 28.

Ver. 20.] Those words, "that thine eyes may be open," the Targum expounds, By his divine providence and protection, in this place of the residence of his gracious presence, as the words there are.

Ver. 21.] See 1 Kings viii. 30.

Ver. 22.] See there, ver. 31. Whereby it appears, that a man who was to purge himself of any trespass, whereof he was accused against his neighbour, by an oath, was to do it at the temple, before the altar of God, from whom he expected remission of sin.

Ver. 23.] See there, 1 Kings viii. 32.

recompensing his way upon his own head; and by justifying the righteous, by giving him according to his righteousness.

24 ¶ And if thy people Israel be put to the worse before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee, and shall return and confess thy name, and pray and make supplication before thee in this house;

25 Then hear thou from the heavens, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest to them and to their fathers.

26 ¶ When the heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; yet if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou dost afflict them;

27 Then hear thou from heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, when thou hast taught them the good way wherein they should walk; and send rain upon the land, which thou hast given unto thy people for an inheritance.

28 ¶ If there be dearth in the land, if there be pestilence, if there be blasting, or mildew, locusts, or caterpillars; if their enemies besiege them in the cities of their land; whatsoever sore or whatsoever sickness *there be*;

29 Then what prayer or what supplication soever shall be made of any man, or of all thy people Israel, when every one shall know his own sore and his own grief, and shall spread forth his hands in this house;

30 Then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and render unto every man according unto all his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men;)

31 That they may fear thee, to walk in thy ways so long as they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers.

32 ¶ Moreover, concerning the stranger, which is not of thy people Israel, but is come from a far

Ver. 24, 25.] These two verses are, in a manner, the very same with those 1 Kings viii. 33, 34.

Ver. 26.] This, and all the rest to ver. 32, are the same, in a manner, with 1 Kings viii. 35, 36, &c. And therefore see the explication of them there: and in ver. 29 he desires, that all prayers, whether for private or public concerns that were made here, might be heard.

Ver. 32, 33.] These two verses are there also explained, in ver. 41—43. Unto which I shall here add this pious reflection which Dr. Jackson makes upon them: "Solomon knew the goodness of God to be so great, that it could not be a whit lessened towards Israel, how far soever it was extended towards other people. Happy had it been for that nation, if their charity had been like this of their heavenly Father. But it was their seeking to engross God's promised blessings to mankind, which brought that grievous curse upon them, under which they groan at this day."

Ver. 34—39.] All these verses are, with some small variation in a few words, and a large addition to the last verses, in 1 Kings viii. 44—50.

Ver. 40.] He sums up all these words, beseeching

country for thy great name's sake, and thy mighty hand, and thy stretched out arm; if they come and pray in this house;

33 Then hear thou from the heavens, *even* from thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for; that all people of the earth may know thy name, and fear thee, as *doth* thy people Israel; and may know that this house which I have built is called by thy name.

34 If thy people go out to war against their enemies by the way that thou shalt send them, and they pray unto thee toward this city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name;

35 Then hear thou from the heavens their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause.

36 If they sin against thee, (*for there is no man which sinneth not,*) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them over before *their* enemies, and they carry them away captives unto a land far off or near;

37 Yet if they bethink themselves in the land whither they are carried captive, and turn and pray unto thee in the land of their captivity, saying, We have sinned, we have done amiss, and have dealt wickedly;

38 If they return to thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their captivity, whither they have carried them captives, and pray toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, and toward the city which thou hast chosen, and toward the house which I have built for thy name;

39 Then hear thou from the heavens, *even* from thy dwelling place, their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their cause, and forgive thy people which have sinned against thee.

40 Now, my God, let, I beseech thee, thine eyes be open, and let thine ears be attent unto the prayer that is made in this place.

41 Now therefore arise, O Lord God, into thy

him, that the prayer which was presented to him here, for any blessing, of what sort soever it was, might be graciously accepted by him.

Ver. 41.] These words are part of Ps. cxxxii. 8, 9, with a little alteration. Wherein he beseeches God to take up his habitation here, together with his ark (whereby such wonders and miracles had been wrought), and stir from hence no more. And, then, that he would defend his priests, who ministered to him here; that they might obtain his blessings for others: so that all the people might rejoice in his great bounty to them. The Targum here translates the first words after a remarkable manner: "Now therefore, before the Lord God, rest in thy glory, thou, and the ark of thy strength." Upon which words an unanswerable question is made by Beckius to the Jews; Who is this *thou*, who, according to their paraphrase, rests before Jehovah? Their mouths are stopped, unless they acknowledge another Jehovah, that is, the Word of God (as he is commonly called in the Targum), the second person of the ever-blessed Trinity.

Ver. 42. O Lord God, turn not away the face of

resting place, thou, and the ark of thy strength: let thy priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation, and let thy saints rejoice in goodness.

thine anointed:] Since he had appointed Solomon to be king of his people, he hoped God would have regard to his humble petition. For as to *look upon one, or lift up the countenance* upon him, is to have a kind respect to him; so to "turn away the face" is to reject and refuse him.

42 O LORD God, turn not away the face of thine anointed: remember the mercies of David thy servant.

Remember the mercies of David] This is another argument of hope, that his prayer would be granted: because God had such a great kindness for David, that he had made very large and most gracious promises unto him, and his seed after him.

CHAPTER VII.

1 *God having given testimony to Solomon's prayer by fire from heaven, and glory in the temple, the people worship him.* 4 *Solomon's solemn sacrifice.* 8 *Solomon having kept the feast of tabernacles, and the feast of the dedication of the altar, dismisseth the people.* 12 *God appearing to Solomon giveth him promises upon condition.*

1 Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house.

2 And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD's house.

3 And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD upon the house, they bowed themselves

with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.

4 ¶ Then the king and all the people offered sacrifices before the LORD.

5 And king Solomon offered a sacrifice of twenty and two thousand oxen, and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the people dedicated the house of God.

CHAP. VII.

Ver. 1.] See 1 Kings viii. 11. This is added to what is recorded in that book to show God's gracious acceptance of Solomon's prayer and sacrifices; to give him assurance he would be present in this place, and grant all their petitions. Of which he gave two demonstrations: one by fire sent down from heaven to consume the sacrifices; the other by the glorious cloud filling the whole house. By the former of these, the first sacrifice that we read of in scripture (that of Abel), it is generally thought was declared to be acceptable unto God (Gen. iv. 4). And when the tabernacle was erected, and Aaron consecrated, there was the same testimony given of God's presence there, as here at the consecration of the temple, Lev. ix. 24 (see what I have there noted, and in other places). I shall only farther add, that the like miraculous token of God's acceptance was shown, when Elijah contested with the priests of Baal (1 Kings xviii.), and when David offered sacrifices in the threshing-floor of Araunah (1 Chron. xxi. 26), which had relation to what was now done: for David sacrificed in the very place where the temple was built; and therefore by both these miracles God declared he would be worshipped in this place. They differ only in this, that by the first God admonished David where the temple should be built: and by this he approved and consecrated it when it was built. Dr. Jackson most judiciously adds, that this was the consecration of the Son of God to his eternal priesthood confirmed by the apparition of the Holy Ghost in a flame of fire; which was the accomplishment of the appearance of Aaron's consecration, and of this at the consecration of the temple.

Ver. 2.] See Exod. xl. 35; 1 Kings viii. 11. But another great man (Dr. Alix) thinks it pertinent here to observe, that there was no such thing in the second temple: though the Lord Christ was to appear in it, and make the glory of the last house greater than the first. For the appearance of the flames of fire on the day of Pentecost was not in the temple, but in Jerusa-

lem: when the Messiah was exalted to his heavenly sanctuary, and the temple devoted to destruction by the Romans.

Ver. 3. *When all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the Lord upon the house,]* Here was a great assurance that God would be present in this place, in that the glory of the Lord not only filled the house, but appeared upon the house: so that all the people might see it, and not only have the word of the priests for it. By this they were satisfied that it was God's house, where he would accept their sacrifices, hear their prayers, and bestow his blessing upon them. There is no mention here made of the cloud, as in the book of the Kings; but that is comprehended, as Abarinel observes, in the *glory* and the *fire*, which were in the cloud. It came down at the first like a cloud, and then broke out in such a light and splendour, as they were not able to behold: and a flame came out upon the altar, and consumed the sacrifices that lay upon it.

They bowed themselves with their faces to the ground] They bowed down to the middle of their body, and fell prostrate upon the floor, which was the most profound adoration. These were two distinct acts of worship (bowing and falling flat on the face), but here are joined together upon this great occasion. As Dr. Hyde observes in his Reliq. Vet. Parsarum, cap. 1, where he notes out of Maimonides, that the pavement was kept very clean: it being unlawful for any one to come into the court with their shoes on their feet, or so much as to spit there.

And praised the Lord,] They praised and gave thanks to God (as they had great reason to do, the fire from heaven and the cloud of glory being manifest tokens of God's presence among them) in the same words which the priests had used, who sung the eighty-sixth psalm (see ver. 13).

Ver. 4.] They had offered sacrifices before; but now they renew them, and offer more in acknowledgment of this new assurance of God's love unto them.

Ver. 5. *Solomon offered a sacrifice of twenty and*

6 And the priests waited on their offices; the Levites also with instruments of music of the LORD, which David the king had made to praise the LORD, because his mercy *endureth* for ever, when David praised by their ministry; and the priests sounded trumpets before them, and all Israel stood.

7 Moreover, Solomon hallowed the middle of the court that *was* before the house of the LORD: for there he offered burnt offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings, because the brasen altar which Solomon had made was not able to receive the burnt offerings, and the meat offerings, and the fat.

8 ¶ Also, at the same time, Solomon kept the feast seven days, and all Israel with him, a very great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt.

9 And in the eighth day they made a solemn assembly: for they kept the dedication of the altar seven days, and the feast seven days.

10 And on the three and twentieth day of the seventh month he sent the people away into their tents, glad and merry in heart, for the goodness that the LORD had showed unto David, and to Solomon, and to Israel his people.

11 Thus Solomon finished the house of the LORD, and the king's house: and all that came into Solomon's heart to make in the house of the LORD, and in his own house, he prosperously effected.

12 ¶ And the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for a house of sacrifice.

13 If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people;

14 If my people, which are called by my name,

shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

15 Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer *that is made* in this place:

16 For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever: and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually.

17 And as for thee, if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, and do according to all that I have commanded thee, and shalt observe my statutes and my judgments;

18 Then will I stablish the throne of thy kingdom, according as I have covenanted with David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man *to be* ruler in Israel.

19 But if ye turn away, and forsake my statutes and my commandments, which I have set before you, and shall go and serve other gods and worship them;

20 Then will I pluck them up by the roots out of my land which I have given them: and this house, which I have sanctified for my name, will I cast out of my sight, and will make it *to be* a proverb and a byword among all nations.

21 And this house, which is high, shall be an astonishment to every one that passeth by it; so that he shall say, Why hath the LORD done thus unto this land, and unto this house?

22 And it shall be answered, Because they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold on other gods, and worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath he brought all this evil upon them.

two thousand oxen,] See 1 Kings viii. 63, where it is said, he offered only twenty thousand oxen; which was a vast number, but not incredible: nor are these two places inconsistent, as I have there shown.

So the king and all the people dedicated the house of God.] Thus the dedication of the temple ended.

Ver. 6. *The Levites also with instruments of music of the Lord,*] They are called musical instruments of the Lord, because David had made them, as it here follows "to praise the Lord withal, because his mercy endureth for ever" (see 1 Chron. xv. 16).

When David praised by their ministry;] For they sung the psalm of praise which he composed, 1 Chron. xvi. 7, &c. In the Hebrew the words are *behallil David bejatham*, with the *hallel* (that is, the hymn of praise) which David had put into their hands for that purpose.

All Israel stood.] For that was the common posture of worship, whether in prayer or praises.

Ver. 7—9.] These verses and the next are explained in 1 Kings viii. 64—66.

Ver. 10.] The Targum thus glosses upon the last words of this verse, which express the joy of the people: For the goodness of the Lord, shown *unto David* in the opening of the doors of the sanctuary; and *unto Solomon*, whose prayer God had accepted, and vouchsafed his glorious presence in the house he had built;

and *unto his people Israel*, in his gracious acceptance of their sacrifices, and sending down fire from heaven to consume them.

Ver. 11.] See 1 Kings ix. 1.

Ver. 12. *The Lord appeared to Solomon by night,*] See 1 Kings ix. 2.

And have chosen this place to myself for a house of sacrifice.] As appeared by the fire which came down from heaven and consumed the sacrifice, at the consecration of this house.

Ver. 13.] Famine and pestilence were two sore punishments wherewith God afflicted them for their sins; and the former of them was caused sometimes by want of rain, and sometimes by locusts, who ate up what the earth produced for their sustenance.

Ver. 14.] He had petitioned for the divine favour and clemency upon no other condition.

Ver. 15.] Some take these phrases to signify, that he will always discern whether they were such as they ought to be; but they rather have the same sense with the next verse, that he would have a gracious respect to them, and testify it by hearing their prayers, as he desired, ch. vi. 40.

Ver. 16.] See this explained, 1 Kings ix. 3.

Ver. 17.] See there, ver. 4.

Ver. 22.] This and the foregoing verses are the same with those 1 Kings ix. 6—9, and there have been explained.

CHAPTER VIII.

1 *Solomon's buildings.* 7 *The Gentiles which were left Solomon made tributaries; but the Israelites rulers.* 11 *Pharaoh's daughter removeth to her house.* 12 *Solomon's yearly solemn sacrifices.* 14 *He appointeth the priests and Levites to their places.* 17 *The navy fetcheth gold from Ophir.*

1 AND it came pass at the end of twenty years, wherein Solomon had built the house of the LORD, and his own house,

2 That the cities which Hiram had restored to Solomon, Solomon built them, and caused the children of Israel to dwell there.

3 And Solomon went to Hamath-zobah, and prevailed against it.

4 And he built Tadmor in the wilderness, and all the store cities, which he built in Hamath.

5 Also he built Beth-horon the upper, and Beth-horon the nether, fenced cities, with walls, gates, and bars;

6 And Baalath, and all the store cities that Solomon had, and all the chariot cities, and the cities of the horsemen, and all that Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, and in Lebanon, and throughout all the land of his dominion.

7 ¶ *As for all the people that were left of the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which were not of Israel,*

8 *But of their children, who were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel*

consumed not, them did Solomon make to pay tribute unto this day.

9 But of the children of Israel did Solomon make no servants for his work; but they were men of war, and chief of his captains, and captains of his chariots and horsemen.

10 And these were the chief of king Solomon's officers, even two hundred and fifty, that bare rule over the people.

11 ¶ And Solomon brought up the daughter of Pharaoh out of the city of David unto the house that he had built for her: for he said, My wife shall not dwell in the house of David king of Israel, because *the places are holy* whereunto the ark of the LORD hath come.

12 ¶ Then Solomon offered burnt offerings unto the LORD on the altar of the LORD, which he had built before the porch,

13 Even after a certain rate every day, offering according to the commandment of Moses, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts, three times in the year, even in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles.

CHAP. VIII.

Ver. 1.] See 1 Kings ix. 10.

Ver. 2.] This is a short relation of what is more largely told in the book of the Kings, ch. ix. 12, 13, only here we are further informed, that these cities being restored to Solomon, who had given them to Hiram, (who disliked them), Solomon built them so that his own subjects became the inhabitants of them.

Ver. 3.] This country lay between Euphrates, which was the eastern bounds of it, and Damascus, which was the western, as Bochartus hath demonstrated in his Phaleg, lib. ii. cap. 7.

Ver. 4. *He built Tadmor in the wilderness,*] See an account of this in 1 Kings ix. 18.

All the store cities, which he built in Hamath.] All the cities wherein he laid up provision for war were in this country of Hamath-zobah, as well as Tadmor.

Ver. 5.] Only one of these cities is mentioned in the book of the Kings, viz. the nether. But both of them were built before, and he now only repaired, enlarged, beautified, and made them strong places (see 1 Kings ix. 17).

Ver. 6. *Baalath, and all the store cities that Solomon had,*] That is, elsewhere, as well as in the land of Hamath.

And all the chariot cities,] See 1 Kings ix. 19.

Ver. 7—9.] These three verses are the same with 1 Kings ix. 20—22.

Ver. 10.] How this agrees with the book of the Kings, where it is said they were five hundred and fifty, see upon 1 Kings ix. 23.

Ver. 11. *Solomon brought up the daughter of Pharaoh out of the city of David*] Where she first dwelt (1 Kings iii. 1).

Unto the house that he had built] See 1 Kings vii. 8. *For he said, My wife shall not dwell in the house of David king of Israel, because the places are holy,*

whereunto the ark of the Lord hath come.] All houses into which the ark had come were not thereby made holy, for then the house of Obededom would have been so. But where it had been settled so long as it had been in David's house, and had a tabernacle made for it, there was a special regard to the place where it had made its abode; and Solomon would not suffer a stranger (for so his wife was, though proselyted) to keep her court there. For it is not likely she and all her servants had embraced the law of Moses, though they had renounced idolatry; and so might many ways defile a place which had been made sacred by a divine presence in it. Many other reasons are given by interpreters, to which I refer the reader; and only add, that Abarbinel thought it sufficient to say that it would have sounded very ill, to hear the people say that Pharaoh's daughter dwelt where the ark of God had inhabited. And he looks upon this as an argument that the heart of Solomon continued hitherto right with God, and had no intentions to commit those sins he afterward did: and therefore God at this time vouchsafed him the gift of prophecy.

Ver. 12.] That is, he settled the daily sacrifice at the temple.

Ver. 13.] He took care the law of Moses should be strictly observed, which prescribed what offerings should be offered every day (Exod. xxix. 28, 29); and at several other solemn times here mentioned (Exod. xxiii. 14, and other places).

Ver. 14. *He appointed, according to the order of David his father, the courses of the priests to their service, and the Levites to their charges,*] Next of all he took care to confirm and establish the orders which David had made, for the regular attendance of the priests and Levites upon the service of God. Who were but a few in the days of Moses, in comparison of what they were now; and therefore David disposed them so that all confusion might be avoided, and also

14 ¶ And he appointed, according to the order of David his father, the courses of the priests to their service, and the Levites to their charges, to praise and minister before the priests, as the duty of every day required; the porters also by their courses at every gate: for so had David the man of God commanded.

15 And they departed not from the commandment of the king unto the priests and Levites, concerning any matter, or concerning the treasures.

16 Now all the work of Solomon was prepared

assigned them new employments, in singing the hymns which he composed, and playing upon musical instruments, whereby he made the service of God more beautiful and cheerful (see 1 Chron. xxiv. xxv.).

The porters also by their courses at every gate:] These words show that the porters were distributed into twenty-four courses, as well as the priests and Levites; though this order of David's be not there expressly mentioned (see what I have noted upon 1 Chron. xxvi. 27, 28).

For so had David the man of God commanded.] He is called by the name of the "man of God," as Moses was, because after Moses there was none like him, so divinely inspired to raise the public worship of God to a higher pitch by his heavenly hymns, and to direct the manner of its performance in such order, that God was served (if I may use here those words of his) "in the beauty of holiness." For though Solomon, as Strigelius observes, was a very wise man in natural knowledge, and in political affairs, and in moral and divine things, yet he was much inferior to David in piety, and in the gift of prophecy; as the book of Psalms alone is sufficient to testify: in which there are so many glorious predictions of the Messiah.

Ver. 15.] Whatsoever had been ordered by David in all other matters, Solomon settled them, and the priests and Levites obeyed him.

unto the day of the foundation of the house of the LORD, and until it was finished: so the house of the LORD was perfected.

17 ¶ Then went Solomon to Ezion-geber, and to Eloth, at the sea-side in the land of Edom.

18 And Hiram sent him, by the hands of his servants, ships, and servants that had knowledge of the sea; and they went with the servants of Solomon to Ophir, and took thence four hundred and fifty talents of gold, and brought them to king Solomon.

Ver. 16.] Care was taken that there should be no stop to the building of God's house, because all materials were prepared before he began it; and every thing projected how it should be done, in every part of it.

Ver. 17.] After he had finished all those great works of the house of the Lord, and his own house, and built many cities, as before recited, he designed to improve navigation, which the Jews did not much understand. And for that end he went to these places on the Red sea (see 1 Kings ix. 26). Eloth (as is observed by the learned Nic. Fuller in his Miscellanies, lib. iv. cap. 20) lay nearest to him, which appears from Deut. ii. 8, where we read that the Israelites, passing by the country of Edom, came first to Eloth and then to Ezion. But Solomon went first to Ezion, though further off, because there was *Ναυπηγιον*, the place where ships were built and fitted up; which Solomon made haste, with the greatest diligence and speed, to inspect, and see in what forwardness they were.

Ver. 18.] Besides those ships which Solomon had built, Hiram sent more, who brought able seamen with them to manage the whole fleet. See there ver. 22, 23, where only four hundred and twenty talents are said to be brought; of which I have there given an account, and shown it doth not disagree with this place.

CHAPTER IX.

1 *The queen of Sheba admireth the wisdom of Solomon.* 13 *Solomon's gold.* 15 *His targets.* 17 *The throne of ivory.* 20 *His vessels.* 23 *His presents.* 25 *His chariots and horse.* 26 *His tributes.* 29 *His reign and death.*

1 AND when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, she came to prove Solomon with hard questions at Jerusalem, with a very great company, and camels that bare spices, and gold in abundance, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart.

2 And Solomon told her all her questions: and there was nothing hid from Solomon which he told her not.

3 And when the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, and the house that he had built,

4 And the meat of his table, and the sitting of

his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel; his cup-bearers also, and their apparel; and his ascent by which he went up into the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her.

5 And she said to the king, *It was a true report which I heard in mine own land of thine acts, and of thy wisdom;*

6 Howbeit, I believed not their words until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the one half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me: for thou exceedest the fame that I heard.

7 *Happy are thy men, and happy are these*

CHAP. IX.

Ver. 2.] There is little in this chapter, but what is related in 1 Kings x. where see concerning these two verses, ver. 1—3. I shall only add, that the hard

questions she came to ask, were not the curious inquiries into the secrets of natural things, or new political matters, but about things pertaining to piety, and the service of God. For our Saviour saith, she came to hear the *wisdom of Solomon*, and should

thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom.

8 Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee to set thee on his throne, *to be king for the LORD thy God*: because thy God loved Israel, to establish them for ever, therefore made he thee king over them, to do judgment and justice.

9 And she gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices great abundance, and precious stones: neither was there any such spice as the queen of Sheba gave king Solomon.

10 And the servants also of Hiram, and the servants of Solomon, which brought gold from Ophir, brought alnum trees and precious stones.

11 And the king made of the alnum trees terraces to the house of the LORD, and to the king's palace, and harps and psalteries for singers: and there were none such seen before in the land of Judah.

12 And king Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, beside *that* which she had brought unto the king: so she turned, and went away to her own land, she and her servants.

13 ¶ Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred and threescore and six talents of gold;

14 Beside *that* which chapmen and merchants brought. And all the kings of Arabia and governors of the country brought gold and silver to Solomon.

15 ¶ And king Solomon made two hundred targets of beaten gold: six hundred *shekels* of beaten gold went to one target.

16 And three hundred shields *made he of*

therefore rise up in judgment against that generation, who would not learn of him; and in 1 Kings x. 1, it is said, the fame she heard of Solomon was *concerning the name of the Lord*: which moved her to this journey.

Ver. 7.] All that is contained in the foregoing verses, is related in the same words (with very little difference) in 1 Kings x. 4—8, where see what I have noted.

Ver. 8. *Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee to set thee on his throne, to be king for the Lord thy God.*] In these words she says a great deal more than is there related, ver. 9, for she here calls the throne of Israel the "throne of the Lord:" and acknowledges Solomon to be made "king for the Lord his God;" that is, not only to rule by his authority, and as his viceroy, but for his glory, and to promote his religion.

Because thy God loved Israel.] See upon 1 Kings x. 9.

Ver. 11.] This and the two foregoing verses are explained in 1 Kings x. 10—12.

Ver. 12.] The last clause, concerning his presents (viz. "besides that which she had brought unto the king"), is expressed much otherwise in 1 Kings x. 13, where the words are, "besides that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty." Which is here explained to have been done to requite her for the great presents she had made the king.

Ver. 13.] See there, ver. 14.

beaten gold; three hundred *shekels* of gold went to one shield. And the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon.

17 Moreover, the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with pure gold.

18 And *there were* six steps to the throne, with a footstool of gold, *which were* fastened to the throne, and stays on each side of the sitting place, and two lions standing by the stays:

19 And twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps. There was not the like made in any kingdom.

20 ¶ And all the drinking vessels of king Solomon *were of* gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon *were of* pure gold: none *were of* silver; it was *not* any thing accounted of in the days of Solomon.

21 For the king's ships went to Tarshish with the servants of Hiram: every three years once came the ships of Tarshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks.

22 And king Solomon passed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom.

23 ¶ And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom, that God had put in his heart.

24 And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and raiment, harness, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year.

25 ¶ And Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he bestowed in the chariot cities, and with the king at Jerusalem.

26 ¶ And he reigned over all the kings from the river even unto the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt.

Ver. 14.] See there, ver. 15.

Ver. 16.] See both this and the foregoing verse there explained, ver. 16, 17.

Ver. 17, 18.] These and the following verses are explained in 1 Kings x. 18—21, where there are the same words: only here is mention made of a *footstool of gold*, which is not taken notice of there.

Ver. 21.] See 1 Kings x. 22.

Ver. 22—24.] See of these verses 1 Kings x. 23—25.

Ver. 25. *Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses*] See 1 Kings x. 26, and what I have noted there to make this place and that agree together.

Twelve thousand horsemen;) See there. It is evident that in David's time they had no horses: for Absalom, when he had lost the battle wherein he perished, rode upon a mule to make his escape; and David ordered his own mule to carry Solomon to be anointed. And indeed the country did not produce them; but Solomon, being able to make great expenses, had them brought out of Egypt, and maintained this number of chariots; which resembled those of the Grecians; that is, they were small, with two wheels a piece, carrying a man or two, standing or leaning forward. The following kings could not be at this charge; but upon occasion sent for succour from Egypt, and then mention is always made of their horses.

Ver. 26.] That is, they were tributaries to him (see 1 Kings iv. 26).

27 And the king made silver in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar trees made he as the sycamore trees that *are* in the low plains in abundance.

28 And they brought unto Solomon horses out of Egypt, and out of all lands.

29 ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, first and last, *are* they not written in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the prophecy of Ahi-

Ver. 27. *The king made silver in Jerusalem as stones.*] This is an hyperbolic expression, signifying such abundance of it, as exceeded all belief.

And cedar trees made he as the sycamore trees that are in the low plains in abundance.] This is a wild fig-tree, with which those countries abound; bearing fruit not unlike to figs, but much sweeter, and have no little seeds in them. And being not so good as others, are little esteemed, but commonly sold only to the poorer sort of people, as Leon Rawholf informs us in his Travels, par. i. ch. 4.

Ver. 28.] Such as Cappadocia, which was famous for a noble breed of horses (see 1 Kings x. 28). But Egypt is here especially mentioned, because it was nearer, and no place afforded more. From whence, even till the captivity, they sought for supplies, as appears by Zedekiah's sending ambassadors to Egypt, requesting horses from thence (Ezek. xvii. 15).

Ver. 29.] In the first book of the Kings it is only said, that his acts were written in the book of the acts of Solomon (see ch. xi. 41). But here we are told the particular books wherein they were recorded. And the last of these authors (*viz.* Iddo) wrote also the acts of Rehoboam, ch. xii. 15, of this book; and some suppose he lived till the time of Asa, ch. xv. 1, where he is called Obed. Howsoever that be, it ap-

pears by this, that the prophets, as I noted before, were also historians, who gave an account of what passed in their times: out of whose work this short history was extracted. And Abarbanel is of opinion, that there were two books or catalogues written of the acts of Solomon; one, *De Rebus Prioribus*, of what passed in the beginning of his reign, giving an account of his great buildings, and of the splendour wherein he lived, and the prosperity he enjoyed; and these were written by Nathan: the other, *De Rebus Posterioribus*, giving an account of what passed in the latter end of his life; how he doated upon women, and fell into idolatry, and was threatened with terrible punishments, and had several adversaries raised against him, &c., which were all written by Ahijah the Shilonite. And some of these things were also recorded by another author, Iddo; who wrote concerning the acts of Jeroboam, which could not be related without touching upon some part of Solomon's reign. These three did not join to make one book, but severally and distinctly gave an account of such things as occurred to their knowledge; out of which, it is probable, Ezra took many things, which he hath supplied in this book.

30 And Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years.

31 And Solomon slept with his fathers, and he was buried in the city of David his father: and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.

pears by this, that the prophets, as I noted before, were also historians, who gave an account of what passed in their times: out of whose work this short history was extracted. And Abarbanel is of opinion, that there were two books or catalogues written of the acts of Solomon; one, *De Rebus Prioribus*, of what passed in the beginning of his reign, giving an account of his great buildings, and of the splendour wherein he lived, and the prosperity he enjoyed; and these were written by Nathan: the other, *De Rebus Posterioribus*, giving an account of what passed in the latter end of his life; how he doated upon women, and fell into idolatry, and was threatened with terrible punishments, and had several adversaries raised against him, &c., which were all written by Ahijah the Shilonite. And some of these things were also recorded by another author, Iddo; who wrote concerning the acts of Jeroboam, which could not be related without touching upon some part of Solomon's reign. These three did not join to make one book, but severally and distinctly gave an account of such things as occurred to their knowledge; out of which, it is probable, Ezra took many things, which he hath supplied in this book.

Ver. 30, 31.] These two verses are the last words of 1 Kings xi. 42, 43.

CHAPTER X.

1 *The Israelites, assembled at Shechem to crown Rehoboam, by Jeroboam make a suit of relaxation unto him. 6 Rehoboam, refusing the old men's counsel, by the advice of young men answereth them roughly. 16 Ten tribes revolting kill Hadoram, and make Rehoboam to flee.*

1 AND Rehoboam went to Shechem: for to Shechem were all Israel come to make him king.

2 And it came to pass, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who *was* in Egypt, whither he had fled from the presence of Solomon the king, heard it, that Jeroboam returned out of Egypt.

3 And they sent and called him. So Jeroboam and all Israel came and spake to Rehoboam, saying,

4 Thy father made our yoke grievous; now, therefore, ease thou somewhat the grievous servitude of thy father, and his heavy yoke that he put upon us, and we will serve thee.

5 And he said unto them, Come again unto me after three days. And the people departed.

6 ¶ And king Rehoboam took counsel with the

old men that had stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, saying, What counsel give ye me, to return answer to this people?

7 And they spake unto him, saying, If thou be kind to this people, and please them, and speak good words to them, they will be thy servants for ever.

8 And he forsook the counsel which the old men gave him, and took counsel with the young men that were brought up with him, that stood before him.

9 And he said unto them, What advice give ye, that we may return answer to this people, which have spoken to me, saying, Ease somewhat the yoke that thy father did put upon us?

10 And the young men that were brought up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt

CHAP. X.

Ver. 2.] See 1 Kings xii. where this chapter is so fully explained, that little is to be added here.

Ver. 3. *And they sent and called him.*] The Targum well translates it, *for they sent*, giving a reason why he returned from Egypt.

Ver. 4.] This verse is the same in sense with 1 Kings xii. 4, and so are those that follow, with those that follow there; where see them explained. I shall only add, that if this complaint of Solomon's hard usage of them was true, it is probable that when he was corrupted by the love of money and strange women, and fell into idolatry, he also oppressed his sub-

thou answer the people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou *it* somewhat lighter for us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little *finger* shall be thicker than my father's loins.

11 For whereas my father put a heavy yoke upon you, I will put more to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I *will chastise you* with scorpions.

12 So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day, as the king bade, saying, Come again to me on the third day.

13 And the king answered them roughly: and king Rehoboam forsook the counsel of the old men,

14 And answered them after the advice of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add thereto: my father chastised you with whips, but I *will chastise you* with scorpions.

15 So the king hearkened not unto the peo-

jects; being unable to maintain such great expenses, as so many wives and concubines, and building them places for religious worship (besides other things before mentioned) put him unto, without greater treasures than he had heaped up to support them. At least they began to be exhausted,

ple; for the cause was of God, that the LORD might perform his word, which he spake by the hand of Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

16 ¶ And when all Israel *saw* that the king would not hearken unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? and *we have* none inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to your tents, O Israel: and now, David, see to thine own house. So all Israel went to their tents.

17 But *as for* the children of Israel that dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.

18 Then king Rehoboam sent Hadoram, that *was* over the tribute; and the children of Israel stoned him with stones, that he died. But king Rehoboam made speed to get him up to *his* chariot, to flee to Jerusalem.

19 And Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day.

which tempted him to these ill courses to keep them full.

Ver. 5.] The rest of this chapter is so much the very same, not only in sense, but also in words, with what we had before in the book of the Kings, that I shall not transcribe it.

CHAPTER XI.

1 Rehoboam raising an army to subdue Israel, is forbidden by Shemaiah. 5 He strengtheneth his kingdom with forts and provision. 13 The priests and Levites, and such as feared God, forsaken by Jeroboam, strengthen the kingdom of Judah. 18 The wives and children of Rehoboam.

1 AND when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he gathered of the house of Judah and Benjamin a hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, which were warriors, to fight against Israel, that he might bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam.

2 But the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah the man of God, saying,

3 Speak unto Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin, saying,

4 Thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not go up nor fight against your brethren: return every man to his house; for this thing is done of me. And they obeyed the words of the LORD, and returned from going against Jeroboam.

5 ¶ And Rehoboam dwelt in Jerusalem, and built cities for defence in Judah.

6 He built even Beth-lehem, and Etam, and Tekoa,

7 And Beth-zur, and Shoco, and Adullam,

8 And Gath, and Mareshah, and Ziph,

9 And Adoraim, and Lachish, and Azekah,

10 And Zorah, and Aijalon, and Hebron, which *are* in Judah and in Benjamin, fenced cities.

11 And he fortified the strong holds, and put captains in them, and store of victual, and of oil and wine.

12 And in every several city *he put* shields and spears, and made them exceeding strong, having Judah and Benjamin on his side.

CHAP. XI.

Ver. 1.—4.] These four verses I have explained in my notes upon 1 Kings xii. 21—24.

Ver. 5.] That is, he strengthened his frontiers against the ten tribes that were revolted from him.

Ver. 7.] We are told in 1 Chron. iv. 32, that Etam was a town in the tribe of Simeon: therefore this shows that some portion of that tribe adhered to the house of David, after Jeroboam made this rent in the kingdom.

Ver. 10.] It is apparent from hence, that by “building cities of defence” (ver. 5), is meant only repairing and fortifying them: for they were built before,

but perhaps he now enlarged some of them, and made them more capacious.

Ver. 11.] These strong holds, I suppose, were in the heart of his country: which he furnished with good garrisons and provisions; that they might be able to maintain a siege, in case their enemies should make an irruption into his country.

Ver. 12.] Who were two warlike and valiant tribes by whose assistance he made every one of these cities a magazine; out of which, upon occasion, soldiers might be furnished with arms. Which was a necessary precaution in doubtful times, for the preservation of his kingdom.

Ver. 13.] So the tribe of Levi was added to the

13 ¶ And the priests and the Levites that were in all Israel resorted to him out of all their coasts.

14 For the Levites left their suburbs, and their possession, and came to Judah and Jerusalem: for Jeroboam and his sons had cast them off from executing the priests office unto the LORD:

15 And he ordained him priests for the high places, and for the devils, and for the calves which he had made.

16 And after them, out of all the tribes of Israel such as set their hearts to seek the LORD God of Israel came to Jerusalem, to sacrifice unto the LORD God of their fathers.

17 So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong,

tribe of Judah; though not all the cities wherein they dwelt: which they were forced to leave, when they would not conform to the idolatrous worship which Jeroboam had set up. The tribe of Simeon likewise was so intermixed with Judah, that, in all probability, more cities of it besides that before mentioned, if not all, become one body with it; which made Judah a very powerful kingdom.

Ver. 14.] After the right manner, according to the law of Moses. For they refused to offer sacrifices before his calves in Dan and Beth-el: and he would not let them go to do their duty at Jerusalem, the place which the Lord had chosen; and therefore they left their dwellings and possessions, and went to live there. He mentions Jeroboam's sons as well as himself; because they were his principal counsellors, and assistants in the change he made in religion.

Ver. 15.] See 1 Kings xii. 28, 29, &c. A new religion being set up by Jeroboam, devised out of his own head, wherein he ordained a solemnity in the eighth month, which was not of God's institution, all that he did was profane. The priests profane, the feasts profane; and so were the sacrifices and the whole worship. And therefore he calls (as Bochartus well observes) the objects of their worship *devils* and *gods*; and the ministers of this religion he calls not *cohen, priests*, but *chemarim* (Hos. x. 5): and their solemnities, instead of the *feasts of God*, he calls the *day of their king* (Hos. vii. 5, because instituted by their king, and not by God); and the place of worship, instead of Beth-el, he calls Beth-aven (Hos. x. 5, 8), that is, not the *house of God*, but the *house of wickedness*, or of *idolatry*. For the ointment (as he speaks) being turned into deadly poison, the inscription ought not to remain upon the pot or box wherein it was contained (see his Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 34, p. 357). There is a late writer, indeed (Antonius van Dale, who labours to persuade us, that the word *seirim* (which we translate *devils*) signifies no more than *goats*; which were worshipped in Egypt: from whence Jeroboam lately coming brought this worship along with him. But who can think the Israelites would have been drawn to adore so filthy a creature? which was worshipped by the Egyptians, as several other hairy creatures were, and the image of them held in great veneration (Pan being represented below in that form), as Bochartus hath observed: yet signified also *demons*, which appeared in that shape. Thus the ancient interpreters, the Chaldee, the Syriac, the Arabic, and all the Jews, understand it, as the same learned man hath largely shown, in the same book, lib. ii. cap. 53, p. 643.

Ver. 16.] The good example of the priests and

three years: for three years they walked in the way of David and Solomon.

18 ¶ And Rehoboam took him Mahalath the daughter of Jerimoth the son of David to wife, and Abihail the daughter of Eliab the son of Jesse;

19 Which bare him children; Jeush, and Shammariah, and Zaham.

20 And after her he took Maachah the daughter of Absalom, which bare him Abijah, and Attai, and Ziza, and Shelomith.

21 And Rehoboam loved Maachah the daughter of Absalom above all his wives and his concubines: (for he took eighteen wives and threescore concubines; and begat twenty and eight sons, and threescore daughters.)

Levites moved many pious people to quit their habitations and estates, rather than forsake, or not have the exercise of their religion.

Ver. 17.] Though the number of people that came to him out of all the tribes, added great strength to Rehoboam's kingdom: yet his power was chiefly owing unto God: who protected and assisted them, as long as he and his people continued in the way of his predecessors, David and Solomon. From which last words some conclude Solomon was a penitent, because he is mentioned here as an example of true piety, as well as David. But it cannot be certainly inferred hence, because this may relate only to the greatest part of his reign, before he lapsed in his old age, and forsook the law of Moses. The book of Ecclesiastes is a better proof of it, which the Jews generally think was written when he was old: wherein he sensibly expresses the vanity of all earthly things; and particularly speaks with great detestation of bad women, by whom he had been seduced (Eccles. vii. 26). Here it is to be observed, that the corruption of Judah and Israel began in the fourth year of Rehoboam (see xii. 1); and from thence begin the three hundred and ninety years of their iniquity mentioned by Ezekiel, iv. 5, which lasted to the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.

Ver. 18. *Jerimoth*] We never read of Jerimoth among the sons of David, but only here. Some think he was by a concubine who is not named.

Abihail] His grand-daughter; for he was David's eldest brother.

Ver. 19.] He speaks, I suppose, of the latter of these wives, who bare him these children.

Ver. 20.] This wife was his first cousin (as we call such persons), being the daughter of his uncle: if this be meant of Absalom the son of David. But it is evident this was another person of the same name of Gibeah, which was in the tribe of Benjamin (xiii. 2), whereas Absalom the son of David was of Judah.

Ver. 21.] So great was their desire of having abundance of children in those days, that they entrenched upon the law of God, who commanded their kings should not multiply wives. But David indulged himself in it, and Solomon a great deal more: and so did Rehoboam and Abijah, who had both of them a numerous issue. For virginity in those days was not accounted a virtue: and the greatest unhappiness in a married estate was barrenness.

Ver. 22. *Rehoboam made Abijah the son of Maachah the chief*.] He was his eldest son by his beloved wife, whom he put in authority over all the rest, which he had by her, and by his former wives.

For he thought to make him king.] Such power I have observed before, they then challenged: and in

22 And Rehoboam made Abijah the son of Maachah the chief, to be ruler among his brethren: for he thought to make him king.

23 And he dealt wisely, and dispersed of all

his children throughout all the countries of Judah and Benjamin, unto every fenced city; and he gave them victual in abundance. And he desired many wives.

order to it, he seems to have committed unto Abijah the management of all affairs under himself.

Ver. 23. *And he dealt wisely, and dispersed of all his children throughout all the countries of Judah and Benjamin.*] Upon which words Kimchi glosses very well: He thought seriously of this thing, and, fearing a rebellion, broke all his sons (that is, did not suffer them to live together), and dispersed them into all parts of the country under his government, that he might confirm the kingdom in the hand of his son Abijah. Thus Abraham anciently sent his sons which he had by Keturah into other countries, that they might not be troublesome to Isaac, who he intended should be his heir: and thus Jehoshaphat did in following times after this (xxi. 3).

Unto every fenced city:] Of which, I suppose, he made them governors-in-chief, and committed a great care to them: these cities being frontier places, as I observed, ver. 5, where, it is probable, he had trusted persons to watch and observe them, that they entered not into any combinations to defeat his design.

He gave them victual in abundance.] He provided for them amply, that they might not be discontented, but live at their ease.

He desired many wives.] This might possibly be for his children, that they might in their several governments live very pleasantly. But, considering his temper, most interpreters think it was for himself: being not satisfied with those wives he had already, but still desiring more.

CHAPTER XII.

1 Rehoboam, forsaking the Lord, is punished by Shishak. 5 He and the princes, repenting at the preaching of Shemaiah, are delivered from destruction, but not from spoil. 13 The reign and death of Rehoboam.

1 AND it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself, he forsook the law of the LORD, and all Israel with him.

2 And it came to pass, that, in the fifth year of king Rehoboam, Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, because they had transgressed against the LORD,

3 With three hundred chariots, and three-score thousand horsemen: and the people were without number that came with him out of Egypt; the Lubims, the Sukkiims, and the Ethiopians.

4 And he took the fenced cities which pertained to Judah, and came to Jerusalem.

5 ¶ Then came Shemaiah the prophet to Rehoboam, and to the princes of Judah that were gathered together to Jerusalem because of Shishak, and said unto them, Thus saith the LORD, Ye have forsaken me, and therefore have I also left you in the hand of Shishak.

6 Whereupon the princes of Israel and the king humbled themselves; and they said, The LORD is righteous.

7 And when the LORD saw that they humbled themselves, the word of the LORD came to She-

CHAP. XII.

Ver. 1. *When Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself.*] When he thought himself safe, and out of all danger.

He forsook the law of the Lord.] His evil inclinations began to appear; which he derived, it is likely, from his mother, who was an Ammonitess (see I Kings xiv. 21).

And all Israel with him.] See I Kings xiv. 22—21.

Ver. 2.] See I Kings xiv. 25. Their apostasy was in the fourth year of his reign (after they had been three years obedient, xi. 17); therefore God speedily corrected them, that he might reduce them to his service, before they were settled in their impiety.

Ver. 3. *The people were without number*] That is, the footmen in his army.

That came with him out of Egypt; the Lubims, the Sukkiims, and the Ethiopians.] There is no doubt the Lubims were the people of Lybia, a famous country in Africa, adjoining to Egypt. And the Sukkiims are the people called Troglodytes, who lived near the Red sea: and had that name Troglodytes, because they dwelt in *τρύγαις* "in caves and dens of the earth:" which is the very signification of the Hebrew word *succha*: which in that language imports not only tabernacles, but also caves or dens, as in Ps. x. 9; Job xxxviii. 40. From this people there was a town, upon the coast of the Red sea, called *Succhæ*: and at this day, with a little alteration, *Suachen*, as Bochartus observes in his Phaleg. lib. iv. cap. 29. As

for the people called *Cush* (which we translate *Ethiopians*), they were either those to the south of Egypt, or the Scenitæ in Arabia: for I have observed elsewhere it was a name common to both (see the same most learned author in the same book, cap. 33).

Ver. 4. *He took the fenced cities which pertained to Judah.*] Where the sons of Rehoboam were governors: who, perhaps, there perished.

And came to Jerusalem.] The frontier towns being taken, nothing hindered his coming hither. For, trusting to his fenced cities, he had raised no army to oppose Shishak: or, if he had, they durst not oppose his progress.

Ver. 5. *Then came Shemaiah the prophet to Rehoboam,—to Jerusalem*] As to a place of more safety than the country; or, perhaps, to consult what to do, in a time of so great danger.

Ye have forsaken me, and therefore have I also left you in the hand of Shishak.] The Chaldee translates this, "Ye have forsaken my fear:" that is, his worship, and turned to idols: therefore God gave them up into the power of an idolater.

Ver. 6. *Whereupon the princes of Israel*] They are called "the princes of Israel," because there were many Israelites among them; and they had all lately been comprehended under this name.

And the king humbled themselves; and they said, The Lord is righteous.] Sorrowfully confessed that the Lord had most justly punished them for their sins.

Ver. 7.] Their humiliation prevailed with God so far, that he moderated his anger, and respited the

maiah, saying, They have humbled themselves, *therefore* I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance; and my wrath shall not be poured out upon Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak.

8 Nevertheless they shall be his servants; that they may know my service, and the service of the kingdoms of the countries.

9 So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house; he took all: he carried away also the shields of gold which Solomon had made.

10 Instead of which king Rehoboam made shields of brass, and committed them to the hands of the chief of the guard, that kept the entrance of the king's house.

11 And when the king entered into the house of the LORD, the guard came and fetched them, and brought them again into the guard chamber.

12 And when he humbled himself, the wrath

destruction which was coming upon them: promising he would not suffer Shishak to do so much mischief as he designed. Yet he seems to intimate, that if they went on to provoke him, he would use some other hand to ruin them.

Ver. 8.] He seemed to let them feel the difference between him and all other lords and masters; and how much more happy they were while they continued to worship and serve him, than when they fell under a foreign yoke.

Ver. 9. *So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem,*] Which was basely yielded up to him, ἀμαχητι, "without striking a stroke," as Dionysius Halicarnassus speaks. Who is thought by learned men to have respect to this place, when he saith that Sesostris made an expedition into Palestine, Δα3ωv ἀμαχητι τοις ἀνδρωτοις ἐν αὐτω, "taking all the men there without fighting." And it was to be ascribed only to the great goodness of God, that he did not possess himself absolutely of the whole country, and make it a province subject and tributary to the king of Egypt. For unless God had diverted him, he might have done what he pleased; it being in his power to extirpate the Jewish nation.

Ver. 10, 11.] These three verses have been explained in 1 Kings xiv. 25—28. Only from hence may be gathered, that the golden shields were made for state, to be used by his guard when they attended him to the house of the Lord; this being the use of the brassen shields which were made in their stead.

Ver. 12. *And when he humbled himself, the wrath of the Lord turned from him, that he would not destroy him altogether:*] When he saw his danger he humbled himself, before Shishak came to Jerusalem; and after he had taken and ransacked it, he humbled himself still more: and thereby diverted that utter destruction which such an army might have brought

of the LORD turned from him, that he would not destroy him altogether: and also in Judah things went well.

13 ¶ So king Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem, and reigned: for Rehoboam was one and forty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel to put his name there. And his mother's name was Naamah, an Ammonitess.

14 And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the LORD.

15 Now the acts of Rehoboam, first and last, are they not written in the book of Shemaiah the prophet, and of Iddo the seer, concerning genealogies? And there were wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam continually.

19 And Rehoboam slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David: and Abijah his son reigned in his stead.

upon him, and which their sins deserved. For it appears by the language of the prophet, God was most highly provoked by the defection of Judah so suddenly from him, to pour out his wrath upon them.

And also in Judah things went well.] They began again to prosper. But the words in the Hebrew being there were good things in Judah, they may be understood of the reformation made in the whole kingdom; many good things being found among them in the midst of their corruption. For the priests, I suppose, kept up the worship of God in its purity, and many good people joined in it, especially such as had fled from the idolatry of Jeroboam.

Ver. 13. *So king Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem, and reigned:*] He repaired the fenced cities which Shishak had taken, and recovered so much strength, that he reigned with some authority. See 1 Kings xiv. 21.

Ver. 14.] This seems to signify, that after his humiliation for his sins he relapsed again into them (though it may relate to his first provocation); and the reason is here given, because his heart was not intent (as the Targum expounds it) to seek instruction from the Lord.

Ver. 15. *The book of Shemaiah the prophet,*] Which was extant when Ezra made this short abstract out of it. For prophets, as I observed before, wrote the history of their own times; as Jarchi says they did their own prophecies.

And of Iddo the seer concerning genealogies?] The Targum hath it, "genealogies of the house of David;" which he set down in the history he wrote of things done in his time.

There were wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam continually.] See 1 Kings xiv. 30.

Ver. 16. *Abijah his son reigned in his stead.*] As he had designed in his lifetime (see ch. xi. 22, 23).

CHAPTER XIII.

1 *Abijah succeeding maketh war against Jeroboam. 4 He declareth the right of his cause. 13 Trust-*
ing in God he overcometh Jeroboam. 21 The wives and children of Abijah.

1 Now in the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam began Abijah to reign over Judah.

2 He reigned three years in Jerusalem: his mother's name also was Michaiiah, the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah; and there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam.

3 And Abijah set the battle in array with an army of valiant men of war, *even* four hundred thousand chosen men: Jeroboam also set the battle in array against him with eight hundred thousand chosen men, *being* mighty men of valour.

4 ¶ And Abijah stood up upon mount Zemaraim, which *is* in mount Ephraim, and said, Hear me, thou Jeroboam, and all Israel;

5 Ought ye not to know, that the LORD God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David for ever, *even* to him and to his sons by a covenant of salt?

6 Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon, the son of David, is risen up, and hath rebelled against his lord.

7 And there are gathered unto him vain men, the children of Belial, and have strengthened themselves against Rehoboam the son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was young and tender-hearted, and could not withstand them.

8 And now ye think to withstand the kingdom of the LORD in the hand of the sons of David;

CHAP. XIII.

Ver. 1.] See 1 Kings xv. 1.

Ver. 2. *His mother's name also was Michaiiah, the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah.*] He gives a different account above, xi. 20, 21, for there his mother is called Maachah, and her father's name is said to be Absalom: and so we read 1 Kings xv. 2. The Targum, therefore, to reconcile these two places, adds a long gloss, in these words: Because she was his legal wife, her name was changed from Maachah to Michajaha, which was a more honourable name; and the name of her father changed into Uriel, that no mention might be made of the name of Absalom. But this reason is frivolous, for she is said to be the daughter of Absalom in the place above named. Therefore a better account of this is given by Jarchi and by Kimchi, who say that her entire name was Michaiiah Maachah, and her father's entire name was Uriel Absalom (see what I have noted upon 1 Kings xv. 2).

And there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam.] See 1 Kings xv. 7.

Ver. 3.] Here was such a vast army brought into the field, that the whole strength of both sides was engaged in the controversy about the restoring the kingdom of Israel to the house of David, who had but half the number of men that was on Jeroboam's side; but thought they had the better cause, and seemed by Abijah's speech to have put such trust in God for succour, that they doubted not of success.

Ver. 4. *Abijah stood up upon mount Zemaraim.*] It seems Abijah had entered into the country of the Israelites, and there drew up his army on the hill afterward called Samaria.

Hear me, thou Jeroboam and all Israel; A great many might hear his voice from so advantageous a place, but all the eight hundred thousand could not. But he desired what he said might be reported to them, and it is very likely he desired a parley before they fought, to see if they could accommodate matters without shedding blood.

Ver. 5. *Ought ye not to know?* They did know, but he means they ought to consider and acknowledge.

By a covenant of salt? See concerning this expression, "covenant of salt," Numb. xviii. 19. The Targum here expounds it, "as the waters of the sea," which never alter their saltness. But it rather signifies a solemn covenant made by sacrifice, which was always salted (Lev. ii. 13).

Ver. 6.] Though he had the warrant of a prophet to take the kingdom, yet his own ambition first led him to it; as we may gather from 1 Kings xi. 27.

Ver. 7. *And there are gathered unto him vain men, the children of Belial.*] Such, one would think, his principal partakers were, who so easily changed their religion, that it showed they regarded neither God nor man, as the word Belial signifies (see my notes upon 1 Kings xii. 24). And here it may be further noted, that the high offenders of all sorts are called by the name of *children of Belial*. As those ungodly men, who, like a torrent, came upon David with all manner of violence, are called the *floods of Belial* (2 Sam. xxii. 5), and the sacrilegious sons of Eli (1 Sam. ii. 12), and the filthy beasts of Gibeah (Judg. xix. 22), and blood-thirsty men (2 Sam. xvi. 7), and perjured persons (1 Kings xx. 10), and pernicious counsellors (Nahum i. 11).

And have strengthened themselves against Rehoboam—when Rehoboam was young.] He was one-and-forty years old when he came to his kingdom, but not bred up to military affairs; in which he was raw and inexperienced, in a time of long peace.

And tender-hearted.] This doth not so much aggravate their crime, as reflect upon his father; who wanted courage, as this phrase signifies. But if we take it in this sense, Abijah over-shot himself: for Rehoboam gathered a great army, and would have fought, if God, by his prophet, had not forbidden him. And if that was his meaning, that he had a tender regard to God's commands, and yielded immediately to them, he spake the truth; for he was fearful then to offend God, and so could not withstand them, as it here follows.

Ver. 8. *Now ye think to withstand the kingdom of the Lord in the hand of the sons of David.*] But he would not have them think that God would always be of that mind, and let them quietly enjoy what they had usurped. For the kingdom which he governed was not set up by such vain persons as advanced Jeroboam, but the Lord himself, whom they should not be able to withstand.

Ye be a great multitude.] Or, *though ye be far more in number than we; being two to one* (ver. 3).

There are with you golden calves.] It may be better translated, "but there are with you," &c. i. e. you have forsaken the Lord, and worshipped other gods (for so the golden calves were esteemed by God), and therefore your vast forces will do you no service.

and ye be a great multitude, and there are with you golden calves, which Jeroboam made you for gods.

9 Have ye not cast out the priests of the LORD, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and have made you priests after the manner of the nations of other lands? so that whosoever cometh to consecrate himself with a young bullock and seven rams, the same may be a priest of them that are no gods.

10 But as for us, the LORD is our God, and we have not forsaken him; and the priests, which minister unto the LORD, are the sons of Aaron, and the Levites wait upon their business:

11 And they burn unto the LORD, every morning and every evening, burnt sacrifices and sweet incense: the shew-bread also set they in order

Ver. 9. *Have ye not cast out the priests of the Lord,]* This they could not deny, whatsoever they might pretend against the charge of "forsaking the Lord."

Have made you priests after the manner of the nations of other lands?] Without any regard to the family they were of, and out of any part of the country (see 1 Kings xii. 31).

So that whosoever cometh to consecrate himself with a young bullock and seven rams,] Any one that could make this expense might consecrate himself to be a priest.

The same may be a priest of them that are no gods.] The Targum expresses it thus, "is the priest of him that is not the Word of the Lord." By which it appears (as from innumerable other places) the divine Word was the God of Israel, worshipped in the most holy place.

Ver. 10. *But as for us, the Lord is our God,]* So it follows in the Targum, "Unto us the Word of the Lord is our helper, he is our God."

We have not forsaken him;] Not quite departed from him: though in some part Abijah (who spake these words) had done evil in the sight of the Lord, as his father had done; and his heart was not perfect with God (1 Kings xv. 3).

The priests, which minister unto the Lord, are the sons of Aaron, and the Levites wait upon their business:] The service of God was orderly performed in his house, by such only as were appointed to it by himself.

Ver. 11. *They burn unto the Lord every morning and every evening burnt sacrifices and sweet incense, &c.]* There was nothing omitted, either day or night, which the law required: and he mentions these things thus particularly, that he might put the Israelites in mind how the worship of God was with great solemnity kept up in Judah, which in some years the Israelites had not seen, and perhaps had forgot. But he mentions here only one candlestick, and its lamps, because, as some think, Shishak had carried away the rest. Or rather, because Solomon had made the other ten candlesticks for ornament, so that they had not lamps in them every night, which burnt only in the great candlestick made by Moses, from evening until morning (Lev. xxiv. 2, 3).

For we keep the charge of the Lord our God;] The Targum here again thus expresses it, "We keep the charge of the Word of the Lord our God." This gives us reason to think, that Abijah kept up the public worship of God very regularly: though he did evil in the sight of the Lord privately.

Ver. 12. *And, behold, God himself is with us for*

upon the pure table; and the candlestick of gold with the lamps thereof, to burn every evening: for we keep the charge of the LORD our God; but ye have forsaken him.

12 And, behold, God himself is with us for our captain, and his priests with sounding trumpets to cry alarm against you. O children of Israel, fight ye not against the LORD God of your fathers; for ye shall not prosper.

13 ¶ But Jeroboam caused an ambushment to come about behind them: so they were before Judah, and the ambushment was behind them.

14 And when Judah looked back, behold, the battle was before and behind: and they cried unto the LORD, and the priests sounded with the trumpets.

15 Then the men of Judah gave a shout: and

our captain, and his priests with sounding trumpets to cry alarm against you.] Upon the sounding of which Moses promised they should "be remembered before the Lord, and saved from their enemies" (Numb. x. 9). This seems to be added as an amplification of their strict observance of the law of God in all things, in war as well as in peace, which gave them a good hope he would be with them. And here it may be noted, that it doth not appear that the priests were forbidden any functions in a civil life: for they went to war, and performed the office of trumpeters in the army, as well as in the temple.

O children of Israel, fight ye not against the Lord God of your fathers; for ye shall not prosper.] So he concludes his speech, that, if they fought, it was not so much against him, as against the Lord whom their fathers worshipped, and they had forsaken, and therefore should not succeed. None of the great captains and commanders, whose speeches are recorded in heathen authors, ever spoke more movingly than this king of Judah did.

Ver. 13.] We read of no answer to this speech, but Jeroboam seems to have been so much touched with it, that he would not trust to his numbers, but used policy; and, like a great captain, laid in ambush behind the army of Judah, while he faced them with his main body, drawn up in battle array. For he had such a prodigious multitude with him, that he had men enough to spare upon any design, and more than enough to fight also.

Ver. 14. *When Judah looked back,]* Hearing a great noise, it is like, behind them.

Behold, the battle was before and behind:] Which put them into sore distress.

And they cried unto the Lord, and the priests sounded with the trumpets.] They were not dismayed, but implored help from God; which the priests gave them hopes to obtain. For "the sounding with the trumpets" was an imploring of the divine aid, which God had promised (as I before noted) when they sounded.

Ver. 15. *Then the men of Judah gave a shout:]* To terrify their enemies, by this token of their confidence, that they should have the victory.

And as the men of Judah shouted,—God smote Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah.] This is thus expressed by the Targum: When the alarm sounded, the Word of the Lord caused Jeroboam and all Israel to fall, and to be slain by Abijah. For to smite, commonly signifies in scripture language, to kill.

Ver. 16.] They seem not to have struck a stroke, but to have been so dismayed, that they ran away; and in the chase were slain in vast numbers.

Ver. 17.] This is the greatest slaughter that we

as the men of Judah shouted, it came to pass, that God smote Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah.

16 And the children of Israel fled before Judah; and God delivered them into their hand.

17 And Abijah and his people slew them with a great slaughter: so there fell down slain of Israel five hundred thousand chosen men.

18 Thus the children of Israel were brought under at that time, and the children of Judah prevailed, because they relied upon the LORD God of their fathers.

19 And Abijah pursued after Jeroboam, and

took cities from him; Beth-el with the towns thereof, and Jeshanah with the towns thereof, and Ephraim with the towns thereof.

20 Neither did Jeroboam recover strength again in the days of Abijah: and the LORD struck him, and he died.

21 ¶ But Abijah waxed mighty, and married fourteen wives, and begat twenty and two sons, and sixteen daughters.

22 And the rest of the acts of Abijah, and his ways, and his sayings, are written in the story of the prophet Iddo.

ever read of in any story, as Bochartus observes: but it is not incredible, when we consider that God fought for them, and chastised the idolatry of the Israelites to such a degree, that the Jews killed a hundred thousand of them, more than they had in their own army. So Josephus also long ago observed, that there never was such a slaughter heard of, either among the Greeks or barbarians.

Ver. 18. *Thus the children of Israel were brought under at that time.*] Very much humbled, but not made subject to the house of David.

And the children of Judah prevailed, because they relied upon the Lord God of their fathers.] It was not by their own valour that they obtained this great victory; but by their leaning (or relying) "upon the Word of the Lord God of their fathers," as the Targum expresses it.

Ver. 19. *Abijah pursued after Jeroboam, and took cities from him;*] He followed his blow (as we speak), and did not content himself with beating them in the field, but pursued the Israelites into their country, and possessed himself of some of their cities.

Beth-el with the towns thereof.] From whence it is likely, Jeroboam removed the golden calf unto some place of greater safety: or else the destruction of it would have been mentioned.

Ephraim with the towns thereof.] There was a city, as well as a tribe called Ephraim, John xi. 51, which some think was the same with Ophrah.

Ver. 20.] Some have made it a doubt, who it is of whom it is said that God *struck him*. And in Seder Olam Rabba, cap. 21, the Jews say it was Abijah: for Jeroboam lived a long time, but Abijah reigned only three years: God not granting him a longer life, because of his ingratitude for so great a victory; or, as others will have it, because, when he took Beth-el he did not destroy nor carry away the golden calf, but let it remain, although he had reproached the Israelites with it, (ver. 8). But it is uncertain, as I said, whether it was there when the city was taken: and the next verse plainly shows, that Abijah while he lived was mighty: and therefore it was Jeroboam who was struck, and died a year or two after this blow. And as long as he lived, after this defeat, some think he was full of anguish, and such pain in his bowels as Jehorám had (ch. xxi. 19). Thus Abarbinel, and many others.

Ver. 21.] Not after this victory, but before he was king, in the time of his father; for he lived not long after this success.

Ver. 22.] In the Targum it is, "they are written in the Midrash of the prophet Iddo:" that is, in his *commentary*, as we translate the Hebrew word here, in the margin of our Bible (see ch. xii. 15). This king was a very wise man (as appears by the excellent oration above mentioned); and in familiar conversation dropped many remarkable *sayings*, like the proverbs of Solomon: which Iddo thought worthy to be recorded and transmitted to posterity.

CHAPTER XIV.

1 *Asa succeeding destroyeth idolatry. 6 Having peace, he strengthneth his kingdom with forts and armies. 9 Calling on God, he overthroweth Zerah, and spoileth the Ethiopians.*

1 So Abijah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David; and Asa his son reigned in his stead. In his days the land was quiet ten years.

2 And Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God:

3 For he took away the altar of the strange gods, and the high places, and brake down the images, and cut down the groves;

4 And commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment.

CHAP. XIV.

Ver. 1.] There was no war declared, but only some private bickerings between his subjects and Baasha's (see 1 Kings xv. 16).

Ver. 2.] See concerning this verse and the next, in 1 Kings xv. 11, 12.

Ver. 3.] By this it appears, that though Abijah maintained the public worship of God (as I observed, ch. xiii. 11), yet there were also strange gods worshipped in some places.

Ver. 4.] I supposed he set forth royal edicts, re-

quiring the people to worship the Lord alone, and to observe all the laws of Moses.

Ver. 5. *He took away out of all the cities of Judah the high places*] There were high places in the open fields (mentioned before, ver. 3), and also in the cities, which were all taken away by him.

And the images:] In the Hebrew the *sun images*, as we translate it in the margin. Certain it is, that the word *hammanim* imports something belonging to the sun, which Buxtorf renders *Solares statuae, sun-statuas*; because, saith Jarchi, they were set on the tops of houses, and so exposed to the sun. Whence

5 Also he took away, out of all the cities of Judah, the high places and the images: and the kingdom was quiet before him.

6 ¶ And he built fenced cities in Judah: for the land had rest, and he had no war in those years; because the LORD had given him rest.

7 Therefore he said unto Judah, Let us build these cities, and make about them walls and towers, gates and bars, while the land is yet before us; because we have sought the LORD our God, we have sought him, and he hath given us rest on every side. So they built, and prospered.

8 And Asa had an army of men that bare targets and spears, out of Judah three hundred thousand, and out of Benjamin, that bare shields and drew bows, two hundred and fourscore thousand: all these were mighty men of valour.

9 ¶ And there came out against them Zerah the Ethiopian, with a host of a thousand thou-

sand, and three hundred chariots, and came unto Mareshah.

10 ¶ Then Asa went out against him, and they set the battle in array in the valley of Zepthath at Mareshah.

11 And Asa cried unto the LORD his God, and said, LORD, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O LORD our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O LORD, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee.

12 So the LORD smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah; and the Ethiopians fled.

13 And Asa, and the people that were with him, pursued them unto Gerar: and the Ethiopians were overthrown, and they could not recover themselves; for they were destroyed before the LORD, and before his host: and they carried away very much spoil.

Junius and Tremellius called them *subdiales statuae*. But Abarbinel thinks they were in the form of the sun, made after the similitude of that globe, and worshipped by those who took the sun for their god. Others think they were temples built for the worship of the sun: which the Vulgar Latin follows.

And the kingdom was quiet before him.] Nobody made opposition to him.

Ver. 6. He built fenced cities.] On the frontiers of his kingdom.

For the land had rest, and he had no wars in those years; because the Lord had given him rest.] The Targum thus expresses it, "Because the land of Israel rested, neither did they more war against him in those years." That is, the Israelites and their king made no attempt upon him, nor endeavoured to vindicate the late great loss they had received, by the singular providence of God over him. But the meaning may rather be, that "the land of Judah" (which he is speaking of), which had hitherto endeavoured to reduce the ten tribes to the obedience of the house of David, now attempted nothing, nor was assaulted by them or others.

The Lord had given him rest.] Of which he made this good use, in providing for war in the time of peace.

Ver. 7. Therefore he said unto Judah, Let us build these cities, and make about them walls and towers.] But he showed his wisdom in this also, that he did not go about this work without the advice of his council, and the elders of Judah.

While the land is yet before us;] Which the Targum thus expounds, "While the inhabitants of the land are subdued to us:" or, as Jarchi, "While the kingdom is established before us." That is, while it is in our power, as this phrase signifies.

He hath given us rest on every side.] None gave him the least disturbance till he had finished his works.

Ver. 8.] He was provided also of a great army, if there were any occasion to use it, as well as of places of defence. Some think he raised these men after he heard Zerah intended an invasion upon him: but it rather signifies his great care to have an army in readiness, when he saw no danger of any enemy.

Ver. 9. There came out against them Zerah the Ethiopian.] King of the Arabians, as Cush here signifies: and must necessarily be so understood in ch. xxi. 16, and 2 Kings xix. 9. See what I have there noted; and Bochartus, in his Phaleg, lib. iv. cap. 2, where he shows they were a very powerful nation.

Mareshah.] A city upon the borders of Judah (Josh. xv. 44).

Ver. 10.] He did not stay till he entered his country, but went to fight him upon the frontiers of it.

Ver. 11. Asa cried unto the Lord his God.] Before he began to fight, he implored the help of Heaven; which he did, I suppose, in the face of all his army, that they might look up to God as their strength and salvation.

Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power:] Or, as the Targum renders it, "There is none besides thee, who helpeth both the strong and the weak."

Help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude.] In the Targum it is, "We rely upon thy Word, in the name of thy Word we go forth." That is, by his authority, in confidence of his power, and in the defence of his kingdom and religion.

O Lord, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee.] Nothing could more inspire them with courage, than to believe he looked upon their cause as his own, while they owned him for their God.

Ver. 12. The Ethiopians fled.] As the Israelites had done not long before (ch. xiii. 15).

Ver. 13. Gerar:] This was a city of the Philistines who, it is likely, were their allies and confederates in this war.

The Ethiopians were overthrown, that they could not recover themselves; for they were destroyed before the Lord.] The victory was so entire, that they could not rally their forces to renew the fight. It is not said what numbers were slain, but the word *destruction* signifies that very many perished; for they fought against the Lord and his host, who made a great destruction among them.

They carried away very much spoil.] From the men that were slain in the field of battle, and those that ran away and left their baggage behind them: for he speaks in the next verses of the spoil of their cities, and of the fields about them.

Ver. 14. They smote all the cities round about Gerar:] Into which it is likely, the Ethiopians fled.

For the fear of the Lord came upon them:] Seeing so vast a host defeated, they had no courage to defend themselves.

For there was exceeding much spoil in them.] Partly by their own riches, and partly by the booty which the Ethiopians afforded them.

14 And they smote all the cities round about Gerar: for the fear of the LORD came upon them: and they spoiled all the cities; for there was exceeding much spoil in them.

Ver. 15.] The abundance of camels which they had show they were Arabians. And the Scenitæ and Nomades (as Bochartus observes) did not live all the year in the open air, but had tents both for themselves and their cattle in winter time. And they that dwelt

15 They smote also the tents of cattle, and carried away sheep and camels in abundance, and returned to Jerusalem.

in tents are opposed to those who lived in the open field, who are said ἀγραιγεῖν. Thus Esau and Jacob are distinguished: the former of which is said to be a *man of the field*, and the other to *dwell in tents* (Gen. xxv. 27).

CHAPTER XV.

1 Asa with Judah and many of Israel, moved by the prophecy of Azariah the son of Oded, make a solemn covenant with God. 16 He putteth down Maachah his mother for her idolatry. 18 He bringeth delicate things into the house of God, and enjoyeth a long peace.

1 AND the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded:

2 And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: The LORD is with you, while ye be with him: and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you.

3 Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law.

4 But when they in their trouble did turn unto the LORD God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them.

5 And in those times *there was* no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations *were* upon all the inhabitants of the countries.

6 And nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city: for God did vex them with all adversity.

7 Be ye strong, therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded.

8 And when Asa heard these words, and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage, and put away the abominable idols out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin, and out of the cities

CHAP. XV.

Ver. 1.] Some think he was also called Oded (ver. 8), but had the name of Azariah given him, to distinguish him from his father.

Ver. 2. *The Lord is with you.*] As appeared by the late glorious victory they had obtained by his help (ch. xiv. 13).

While ye be with him;] While you continue to worship him alone.

If ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you.] He would not have them presume of his continued favour, if they forsook his worship and service: and therefore admonishes them to stick close to him, otherwise he would forsake them. The Targum thus expresses it, "The Word of the Lord is your helper, while you walk in his ways," &c.

Ver. 3. *Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true God,*] The Targum explains it very clearly: "There have been many days since the house of Israel departed from the house of David, because of Jeroboam: in which they have not worshipped the true God, but the golden calves."

Without a teaching priest, and without law.] For all the priests were gone into the land of Judah: and the Israelites neglected the study of the law, as the Targum explains the last words. But there are a great number of learned men who will have these words, and those that follow, relate to the times of the judges: when they were more manifestly in such a condition as is here described. And truly Campegius Vitringæ hath learnedly asserted this opinion, in his book De Synagoga Veteri, par. ii. lib. i. cap. 6.

Ver. 4.] If we follow the common interpretation, which respects the present and future state of Israel, these words should thus be translated; "If in their trouble they had turned, &c. they should have found him."

Ver. 5.] We do not read of such troubles hitherto in the kingdom of Israel; therefore the words must be translated, "In those times (if they continue to displease God) there shall be no peace," &c. No quiet, no safety; but they shall be infested both by external wars and intestine discords. Which was fulfilled, as we find in their history, 1 Kings xv; xvi. &c.

Ver. 6. *And nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city:*] These words also must be translated in the future tense, "Nation shall be destroyed of nation," &c. Where by *nation* is meant tribe: one of which fought against another, in those times, when there was no certain settled succession in the kingdom; but whosoever killed their king, hoped to make a party to help him to get into the throne.

For God did vex them with all adversity.] For God shall set them one against another, with mutual slaughters, and all those evils that accompany civil wars. The Targum here again translates it, "The Word of the Lord, &c."

Ver. 7. *Be ye strong—let not your hands be weak:*] To root out idolatry; which had brought such calamities upon the Israelites, and would still bring more.

For your work shall be rewarded.] As they might learn from their late great victory over idolaters.

Ver. 8. *And when Asa heard these words, and the prophecy of Oded the prophet.*] A short expression, being as much as "the son of Oded the prophet." Though some think the father prophesied as well as the son, and foretold the same calamities: the more to awaken them, and confirm them in the belief of what Azariah said.

He took courage,] This explains the foregoing words "be strong therefore," to be meant of an undaunted resolution to abolish idolatry; which required great courage, when so many were addicted to it, and had practised it both in the days of Rehoboam and Abijah.

Out of the cities which he had taken from mount

which he had taken from mount Ephraim, and renewed the altar of the LORD, that *was* before the porch of the LORD.

9 And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon: (for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw that the LORD his God *was* with him:)

10 So they gathered themselves together at Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa.

11 And they offered unto the LORD the same time, of the spoil *which* they had brought, seven hundred oxen, and seven thousand sheep.

12 And they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul;

13 That whosoever would not seek the LORD

Ephraim,] Or, which had been taken, viz. from Abijah.

And renewed the altar of the Lord, that was before the porch] At the entry of the court of the priests.

Ver. 9. *He gathered all Judah and Benjamin,—and out of Simeon:*] Though the Simeonites had their portion out of the tribe of Judah, when the land was divided by Joshua, yet it appears from hence, as well as from other places, that they joined themselves to the rest of the Israelites, when the kingdom was rent by Jeroboam. But now great numbers of them came over to Asa: which they might easily do, for one side of their tribe adjoined to Judah, as the other to Dan.

When they saw that the Lord his God was with him.] The Targum here again renders it, "When he saw the Word of the Lord was his helper."

Ver. 10.] This seems to have been a voluntary assembly by common agreement, rather than by the king's commandment or invitation. Unless we suppose it to have been at one of the great festivals, when they were bound by God to go up to Jerusalem.

Ver. 11.] *They offered unto the Lord the same time,*] In the Hebrew, in that day. Which the Targum takes to have been in the *feast of weeks*; which in the New Testament is called Pentecost; which was kept in the third month, called Sivan.

Of the spoil which they had brought,] From Zerah, and from the cities they took about Gerar.

Seven hundred oxen, and seven thousand sheep.] Which they offered besides the appointed offerings at the feast. And they seem to have been partly burnt-offerings, in acknowledgment of God's goodness for their great victory: and partly peace-offerings, in eating of which they made the following covenant.

Ver. 12.] Engaged themselves, by a solemn oath, to worship the Lord alone, and professed to do it sincerely, and with entire affection to him. But this doth not signify that Asa had no fault: for it appears by the next chapter, that he had a great many.

Ver. 13. *Whosoever would not seek the Lord God of Israel should be put to death,*] If any body did, either publicly or privately, worship any other god, they agreed the sentence of the law should be executed upon him, which was death (Deut. xvii. 2).

Whether small or great, whether man or woman.] That is, without any respect to persons; no consideration being had of any one's dignity, nor the weakness of their sex moving pity and compassion.

Ver. 14.] These were expressions of the joy mentioned in the next verse, wherewith they took this oath. The difference between trumpets and cornets it is not worth inquiring after; the former seem to

God of Israel should be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman.

14 And they swore unto the LORD with a loud voice, and with shouting, and with trumpets, and with cornets.

15 And all Judah rejoiced at the oath; for they had sworn with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire; and he was found of them: and the LORD gave them rest round about.

16 ¶ And also *concerning* Maachah the mother of Asa the king, he removed her from *being* queen, because she made an idol in a grove: and Asa cut down her idol, and stamped it, and burnt it at the brook Kidron.

17 But the high places were not taken away out of Israel: nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect all his days.

have been made of metals, the other of horns or wood.

Ver. 15. *All Judah rejoiced at the oath:*] The main body of the people: and though there might be some idolaters secretly lurking among them, yet they all gave those outward tokens of their joy to see the worship of God thus established.

For they had sworn with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire;] That is, they professed to do this most sincerely and heartily; and many of them, no doubt, did, at that time, resolve to worship God alone, though afterward they apostatized from him.

And he was found of them: and the Lord gave them rest round about.] They reaped the happy fruit of this reformation, in the great peace which they enjoyed, without any disturbance from any of their neighbours.

Ver. 16. *Also concerning Maachah the mother of Asa the king,*] His grandmother, as the Targum observes: it being usual in scripture to call such their parents (Exod. ii. 18).

He removed her from being queen,] This was a great testimony of the uprightness of this king, that he would not suffer such a near relation to retain her idols, or any authority: his love to God overcoming his affection for his parents (see 1 Kings xv. 13). Jacobus Capellus thinks this stirred up Baasha to make war upon him: for having lived peaceably with him a long time, upon this he broke out into hostility (Histor. Sacra et Exot. ad Annum Mundi 3053).

Because she had made an idol in a grove:] Or rather, an *Asherah*, or *Astarte*, for so *laasherah* is translated by the LXX. And, in all probability, *Astarte*, the famous goddess of Syria, was the deity which was worshipped by Maachah, as Mr. Selden observes in his *De Diis Syris*, Syntagm. ii. cap. 2. And thus Abarbinel upon Jer. xlv. makes *Asherah* to be the same with the *queen of heaven* there mentioned, viz., the moon.

Asa cut down her idol, and stamped it, and burnt it] He destroyed it with the utmost contempt (1 Kings xv. 13).

Ver. 17. *But the high places were not taken away out of Israel:*] It is said twice in the foregoing chapter, that he did take away the high places (ver. 3, 5). But that was of Judah: whereas out of the territories he had conquered in the land of Israel, we are here informed, he was not able to remove them. Or else the meaning is, that he gave orders for the taking them away every where; but they were not obeyed. Or, as others think, he took away those high places that

18 ¶ And he brought into the house of God the things that his father had dedicated, and that he himself had dedicated, silver, and gold, and vessels.

19 And there was no more war unto the five and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa.

were for the service of other gods; but let those alone where the true God alone was worshipped.

The heart of Asa was perfect all his days.] He heartily hated all idolatrous worship as long as he lived.

Ver. 18.] See upon 1 Kings xv. 15.

Ver. 19.] That is, as some interpret it, there was no war with the Ethiopians, or such-like people; though with Baasha he had perpetual war (1 Kings xv. 16).

But Jacobus Capellus in the place above named would have the words thus translated, "There was no war in the kingdom of Asa till the thirty-fifth year," viz. of the kingdom of Israel, not of Judah, or Asa: for this was the thirty-fifth year after Jeroboam rent the kingdom from the house of David. In which he follows Torricellus, as he doth Beroaldus and Junius, though he would not vouchsafe to name them. But more of this in the beginning of the next chapter.

CHAPTER XVI.

1 Asa, by the aid of the Syrians, diverteth Baasha from building of Ramah. 7 Being reprov'd thereof by Hanani, he putteth him in prison. 11 Among his other acts in his disease he seeketh not to God, but to the physicians. 13 His death and burial.

1 In the six and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah, and built Ramah, to the intent that he might let none go out or come in to Asa king of Judah.

2 Then Asa brought out silver and gold out of the treasures of the house of the LORD and of the king's house, and sent to Benhadad king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying,

3 *There is a league between me and thee, as there was between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent thee silver and gold; go, break*

thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me.

4 And Benhadad hearkened unto king Asa, and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel; and they smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abel-maim, and all the store cities of Naphtali.

5. And it came to pass, when Baasha heard it, that he left off building of Ramah, and let his work cease.

6 Then Asa the king took all Judah; and they carried away the stones of Ramah, and the timber

CHAP. XVI.

Ver. 1. *In the six and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah.*] The war was begun in the conclusion of the five-and-thirtieth year: and in the beginning of the six-and-thirtieth he made this invasion. But this disagrees so much with what is said 1 Kings xv. 33, that interpreters labour hard to reconcile them. For by that place it appears, that Baasha began his reign in the third year of Asa, and reigned no more than four-and-twenty years. From whence it follows, that he was dead nine or ten years before the thirty-sixth year of Asa. It is a short way of solving this which Josephus seems to take (lib. viii. Ant. cap. 6.), by supposing a mistake in the transcriber from the original copy, in which it was not the *six-and-thirtieth* of Asa's reign but the *six-and-twentieth*, which was the last year of the reign of Baasha. Who died, he thinks, immediately after Benhadad had defeated his intentions of building Ramah. But most think this too bold a supposal; and therefore I gave in few words another account of this difficulty in my notes upon 1 Kings xvi. 8, viz. that this was the six-and-thirtieth year since the division of the kingdom, after the death of Solomon, when Israel was rent from Judah. For so many years were now passed since that time; viz. twenty years in the reign of Rehoboam and Abijah, and fifteen of Asa's reign, when many of the Israelites came to him (xv. 10). Thus Seder Olam Rabba, Ralbag, Abarinel also, with a great number of eminent modern writers, both protestants and papists: such as Junius, Piscator, Cocceius, Jacobus Capellus, Lightfoot, Mariana, Torricellus, Sanctius, Salianus, and Petavius himself, with many others. It is not said, indeed that Baasha came up in the thirty-sixth year of the kingdom of Judah, but in that year of the reign of king Asa: but they make ac-

count, that the kingdom of Judah and of Asa were all one: and so they might easily be put one for the other. And whereas it is objected, that the scripture is not wont to reckon the years of any king from any other term but the time wherein he began to reign: they produce an example to the contrary from 2 Sam. xv. 7, where Absalom is said to have gone to Hebron in the end of forty years, and there conspired against his father: which years Seder Olam reckons from the beginning of the kingdom, or the inauguration of Saul. And our Dr. Lightfoot alleges another instance in the thirty-sixth chapter of this book, ver. 9, where Jehoiachin is said to be eight years old when he began to reign: that is, said he, in the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar: for he was eighteen years old, as appears from 2 Kings xxiv. 8. But this difference, I think, may be better reconciled another way, as I shall observe on that place. I shall here only add, that as this is the most ancient way of solving this difficulty, so they that go another are forced to suppose, that these words do not relate to the beginning of the reign of Asa, but to something else; for instance, to the beginning of his wars with Israel. Which Kimchi endeavours to make out; but I shall not trouble the reader with it: for many good men think Josephus in the right.

And built Ramah.] That is, made a wall about it, and fortified it.

To the intent that he might let none go out or come in to Asa king of Judah.] The late defection of so many of his subjects, as fell from him to the house of David (xv. 9), was the occasion of setting a strong guard in this place, which was the passage between the dominions of Israel and Judah (1 Kings xv. 17).

Ver. 2.] This is a little more largely related in 1 Kings xv. 15 (see my notes there).

Ver. 3—6.] These four verses are the very same

thereof, wherewith Baasha was building; and he built therewith Geba and Mizpah.

7 ¶ And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said unto him, Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and not relied on the LORD thy God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thine hand.

8 Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubims a huge host, with very many chariots and horse-men? yet, because thou didst rely on the LORD, he delivered them into thine hand.

9 For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly; therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars.

(with small variation) with those in 1 Kings xv. 19—21, 29 (see my notes there).

Ver. 7. *Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said unto him.*] Here follows a remarkable history added to what we read in the book of the Kings: which relates to the great weakness of Asa in his declining years, and God's displeasure at it.

Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and not relied on the Lord] Who had promised great victories to him, by the prophet Azariah, if he did well (xv. 7).

Therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thine hand.] Whom God would have overthrown, as he did the Ethiopians, if they had continued their league with Baasha, and come to his assistance against Asa. But now the Syrians were reserved to be a scourge to his family.

Ver. 8. *Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubims a huge host, with very many chariots and horse-men?*] See xiv. 9. By the Lubims are meant the people of Lybia, or the Africans beyond Egypt: who are sometimes in scripture called Phut, and sometimes Lubim, from the Arabic word *lub*, which signifies dry or thirsty, as Bochartus observes; for such was the country which the people inhabited, *terra sitiens* (as Lucian calls it), "a thirsty land." They are noted by authors to have had abundance of horsemen and chariots, in which they fought, as Xenophon tells us. And Herodotus saith, the Greeks learnt from them *ῥιπιδίους ἰπποδὸς ζευγίνας*, "to yoke four horses together to draw a chariot."

Yet because thou didst rely on the Lord he delivered them into thine hand.] See xiv. 11. The words of Conradus Pellicanus upon this verse are so pious, that I think fit to transcribe them: "Asa committed a triple offence; in distrusting the goodness of God for help, and calling to his aid an infidel and impious king; when he had lately had such an experiment of God's clemency in his triumph over the king of Ethiopia. Nothing offends God so much as distrust in his goodness towards the faithful; as an entire faith and confidence in his mercy pleases him above all things. Upon which account David was so highly in his favour, though otherwise guilty of sundry crimes."

Ver. 9. *For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth.*] He exercises a most watchful providence over those throughout the whole world, who sincerely commit themselves unto him and depend upon him in well-doing, and will not fail to protect them. For these words, as Mr. Mede observes, are of the same import with those in the prophecy of Zechariah, iv. 11, where "the seven eyes of the Lord" are said to "run to and fro through the earth." Which took such care of that one stone which Zerubbabel had laid for the foundation of the

10 Then Asa was wroth with the seer, and put him in a prison-house; for he was in a rage with him because of this thing. And Asa oppressed some of the people at the same time.

11 ¶ And, behold, the acts of Asa, first and last, lo, they are written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel.

12 And Asa, in the thirty and ninth year of his reign, was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the LORD but to the physicians.

13 ¶ And Asa slept with his fathers, and died in the one and fortieth year of his reign.

14 And they buried him in his own sepulchres, which he had made for himself in the city

temple, that the work could not be disappointed, but should certainly at length be finished (par. i. discourse 10.)

Herein thou hast done foolishly.] The heart of Asa is said to have been "perfect all his days," in the foregoing chapter, ver. 17. And so it was in the matter of the outward worship of God at the temple of which he was there speaking. But in the latter end of his life he was defective in his inward trust and confidence in God: which is called *foolishness*; both because it was a sinful thing, and very pernicious. For God exposed him to his enemies as a punishment for relying on man more than his friendship.

Ver. 10. *Asa was wroth with the seer.*] This was still a greater sin, to be so angry with his reprover (though he had his commission from God) as to put him in prison. But anger is no good adviser; and when men forget God, they are not themselves.

And put him in a prison house.] In the stocks which were in the prison, as Tremellius translates it, in domum cippi.

For he was in a rage with him because of this thing.] For which he ought to have thanked and rewarded him.

Asa oppressed some of the people the same time.] He enslaved them, as the Targum translates it. That is, in the latter part of his reign he grew something tyrannical. And no wonder, when he relied not upon God, but upon human power, and was full of pride and passion.

Ver. 11.] Not in those books of the Kings which we have in the Bible; but in those written by the prophets, mentioned xii. 15.

Ver. 12. *Asa—was diseased in his feet.*] He had the gout: which increased to such a height, that he died of it, as Pellicanus thinks. Which was a just punishment upon him, for putting the prophet's feet in the stocks: Ut per id quod peccaverat, per id puniretur; "that his offence might be seen in his punishment."

Yet in his disease he sought not to the Lord but to the physicians.] It was not a fault that he desired the help of physicians; but that he trusted to their skill, more than to the goodness and power of God; which he did not implore, but continued in his former fault, of putting confidence in man. And so Grotius thinks, he did not sin in seeking help from the Syrians, but in trusting to them more than God, and hiring them with things consecrated to God (lib. ii. de Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 15. sect. 9.). An excellent person whom I have often mentioned (Dr. Alix) is of opinion, that these physicians were heathens; for we never read of any before in the sacred story, but among the Egyptians; and the heathen physicians in those days were a sort of charmers.

of David, and laid him in the bed which was filled with sweet odours and divers kinds of spices pre-

pared by the apothecaries' art; and they made a very great burning for him.

Ver. 14. *They buried him in his own sepulchres.*] In the Hebrew the words are, they buried him in his sepulchres; the plural number being used, as many think, for the singular, which is frequent in the scripture. But the words rather respect the form of their monuments in that nation, which contained many sepulchres; that is, several cells wherein dead bodies were laid. And it is likely he made one for himself, which he added to the rest of the sepulchres in that vault or monument.

And laid him in the bed which was filled with sweet odours.] To all his other offences he added this vanity (as Conradus Pellicanus thinks), that he ordered his body to be buried after the manner of the gentiles, rather than like the people of God. Though it must be confessed, it was an ancient custom to embalm bodies, which was used in the burial of Jacob. But what is here related doth not seem to be meant of anything done to the body, but to the bed on which it lay; which, among the Romans, was very stately for great persons (see Suetonius, in the life of Julius Cæsar, cap. 84). For the heathens were wont to burn their goods with them, to serve them in the other world.

They made a very great burning for him.] The Greeks and Romans burnt dead bodies, throwing

frankincense, myrrh, cassia, and other fragrant things, into the fire. And these in such vast quantity, that Pliny represents it as a piece of profaneness to bestow such heaps of frankincense upon a dead body, when they offered it to their gods by crumbs (lib. xii. Nat. Hist. cap. 18). But the Israelites had no such custom; but from the ancient Egyptians perhaps learnt the custom, not of burning bodies, but of burning many spices at their funerals; as we find not only here, but at the funeral of Jeroham (ch. xxi. 9), and of Zedekiah (Jer. xxxiv. 5). Kimchi here says, that they burnt the bed on which they lay, and other household-stuff, that none might have the honour to use them when they were gone.

If we may believe what the Jews say in Juchasin, when Gamaliel the son of Simeon, the grandchild of Hillel (at whose feet St. Paul sat), was buried, Onkelos burnt seventy pounds of frankincense upon his sepulchre. But this is a fable invented to raise the credit of the Targum of Onkelos, which was not known till many ages after. But the best of the Jews believe this burning of sweet spices and woods was first intended merely to prevent the offence which the smell of dead bodies might possibly sometimes give. But the vanity of some men made them exceed beyond necessity.

CHAPTER XVII.

1 Jehoshaphat, succeeding Asa, reigneth well, and prospereth. 7 He sendeth Levites with the princes to teach Judah. 10 His enemies being terrified by God, some of them bring him presents and tribute. 12 His greatness, captains, and armies.

1 AND Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead, and strengthened himself against Israel.

2 And he placed forces in all the fenced cities of Judah, and set garrisons in the land of Judah, and in the cities of Ephraim, which Asa his father had taken.

3 And the LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not unto Baalim;

4 But sought to the LORD God of his father,

and walked in his commandments, and not after the doings of Israel:

5 Therefore the LORD established the kingdom in his hand; and all Judah brought to Jehoshaphat presents; and he had riches and honour in abundance.

6 And his heart was lifted up in the ways of the LORD: moreover, he took away the high places and groves out of Judah.

7 Also, in the third year of his reign, he sent

CHAP. XVII.

Ver. 1.] The first thing he did after he came to the crown, was to put his kingdom in a good posture of defence against the king and people of Israel; who had given disturbance to his father (xvi. 1, &c.).

Ver. 2.] He fortified his frontier cities, and increased the garrisons in the rest of the country, and in those cities which his father took from Israel. We do not read, indeed, of any cities that Asa took, but Abijah possessed himself of several, which Asa kept and took for his own (xiii. 19), and Jehoshaphat put such forces in them as might secure them to himself.

Ver. 3. *The Lord was with Jehoshaphat.*] The Targum, according to the usual language of that paraphrast, saith, "The Word of the Lord was his helper."

Because he walked in the first ways of his father David.] Before he committed those foul sins, in the matter of Uriah. But some read it, "of his father, and of David." For Asa in the beginning of his reign was very pious, as David was. And thus it is some reflection upon Asa, for his offences in the latter end

of his life: his son being noted to have followed him as he was in his first days, not in his old age.

And sought not unto Baalim:] Which were the gods worshipped in all the eastern countries round about them.

Ver. 4.] As he worshipped not the gods of other countries; so he did not join with the Israelites in worshipping God by the calves.

Ver. 5. *All Judah brought to Jehoshaphat presents;*] As they used to do in those countries, in the beginning of their king's reign (see 1 Sam. x. 27. 28; 1 Kings x. 25).

He had riches and honour in abundance.] Riches procure men honour; when they make such a good use of them as he did.

Ver. 6. *His heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord;*] He had very generous resolutions, as Strigelius renders it, to promote the true worship of God, and all goodness: his mind being raised above all fear and discouragement.

Moreover, he took away the high places and groves out of Judah.] The meaning is plain, that those

to his princes, *even* to Ben-hail, and to Obadiah, and to Zechariah, and Nathaneel, and to Michaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah.

8 And with them *he sent* Levites, *even* She-maiah, and Nathaniah, and Zebadiah, and Asahel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehonathan, and Adonijah, and Tobijah, and Tob-adonijah, Levites; and with them Elishama and Jehoram, priests.

9 And they taught in Judah, and *had* the book of the law of the LORD with them, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people.

high places wherein they sacrificed to idols he destroyed, as Asa had done in the beginning of his reign: but, in the latter end some had restored them again. There is no need, therefore, of their amendment, who fancy, that, anciently, instead of *zeoth*, moreover, there was *velo*, *he did not*: that so it may agree with 1 Kings xxii. 43, and with the twentieth chapter of this book, ver. 33. As if the meaning was, that though he was courageous above all that had been before him; yet the people were so accustomed to sacrifices in high places, that he durst not take them away. This is true, that where they offered to the true God he did not take them away: but those wherein idols were worshipped were abolished.

Ver. 7.] He sent some that were of his council, to see the people taught; by removing all impediments, and making the people come to hear the priests and the Levites. For it had been to little purpose to take away their idols, if they had not been withal better instructed: and the priests and the Levites would not have had much authority among the people, if they had not been backed by such great persons as are here mentioned. Grotius, indeed, will have it, that these great men did themselves instruct the people: for, as the Jews observe, it was not proper to the priests and Levites, but all learned men might teach the people: and these who were of the king's council were certainly learned in the law. But the two next verses tell us, that priests and Levites were sent along with them, *who taught in Judah*. And therefore I take the meaning to be, that Jehoshaphat, being very desirous to have the people understand their duty, took this singular and extraordinary course to send some princes, together with the priests and Levites, upon this weighty business. The latter, that they might teach the people, the former to see them do it carefully, and require the people to come and receive instruction, and to be obedient to what they heard. Thus Jarchi and other interpreters explain it: "It belonged to the priests and Levites to inform the people of their duty, as it is written, Deut. xxiv. 8, and these political persons went along with them, to quicken the people to hear them, and compel them to obey them, and do according to their commands" (see Neh. viii. 9). Campegius Vitringa hath a large discourse to this purpose in his Synag. Vet. par. ii. lib. i. cap. 9, where he takes this to be an indication that the people in those times had little solemn public instruction; and thinks it a good proof that there were no synagogues in the country in those days, as there were in aftertimes, wherein the people were constantly instructed in the sense of the divine law. Mr. Thorndike, indeed, rightly observes, that the words of Moses, Deut. xxiv. 8, are not rightly alleged by Jarchi to this purpose. But there is another place, Deut. xvi. 18, from whence he also concludes (Religious Assemblies, p. 23), that this teaching consisted

10 ¶ And the fear of the LORD fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that *were* round about Judah, so that they made no war against Jehoshaphat.

11 Also *some* of the Philistines brought Jehoshaphat presents, and tribute silver: and the Arabians brought him flocks, seven thousand and seven hundred rams, and seven thousand and seven hundred he goats.

12 ¶ And Jehoshaphat waxed great exceedingly; and he built in Judah castles, and cities of store.

in declaring the obligation of the law by the judges of it, the priests and Levites; and the princes were officers with power to enforce the execution of it (see Mal. ii. 7).

Ver. 8.] These, no doubt, were eminent men among the Levites, as the two priests, Elishama and Jehoram, were, who were joined with them.

Ver. 9. *And had the book of the law of the Lord with them.*] That they might teach with the greater authority, by reciting the very words of that sacred book. But from hence Vitringa argues, that the books of Moses were scarce among the people in those days; for if there had been then public synagogues, wherein the law had been read (as it was afterward, every sabbath-day,) there had been no need of carrying a copy of the law with them, which they might have had in every synagogue.

And went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people.] Which is too plain an argument, that there were not settled teachers in every city, who on all occasions instructed the people; nor doth it appear by this history, that these great men, who were sent to see the people instructed, settled such constant teachers in every city, to instruct them when they were gone. The priests and Levites, no doubt, were ready to teach the people in their cities where they dwelt; and there is good reason to think, that most part of the prophets, who were the great instructors of the people, were priests and Levites. But it is as certain, that the charge of teaching the people belonged to those prophets who were not priests and Levites, as much as to those that were, as Mr. Thorndike observes in the same place.

Ver. 10.] God took care to prevent any disturbance, while they were about this pious work, by striking a terror into all their neighbours; who, it is likely, were sensible that it was in vain to assault them, while they continued firm in their religion. For they could not but observe how much their prosperity depended on that; and that they never fell into their enemies' hands, but when they fell off from God.

Ver. 11. *Some of the Philistines brought Jehoshaphat presents, and tribute silver:*] They were so far from giving him any disturbance, that some of his neighbours complimented him by presents, and voluntarily paid their tribute. Which, it is likely, they had neglected in the time of some of his predecessors, though imposed on them by David, who had conquered the Philistines.

And the Arabians brought him flocks.] The riches of the Arabians consisted in cattle, as Fuller observes out of Strabo and Pliny, in his Miscellanies, lib. iii. cap. 16. And the scripture informs us, how they abounded in both the sorts of flocks here mentioned (Isa. lx. 7; Ezek. xxvii. 21). And these, perhaps, were their tribute, they having been brought under the Jews; or rather their present, by which they

13 And he had much business in the cities of Judah: and the men of war, mighty men of valour, were in Jerusalem.

14 And these are the numbers of them, according to the house of their fathers: Of Judah, the captains of thousands; Adnah the chief, and with him mighty men of valour three hundred thousand.

15 And next to him was Jehohanan the captain, and with him two hundred and fourscore thousand.

16 And next him was Amasiah the son of

sought Jehoshaphat's friendship, and put themselves under his protection.

Ver. 12.] He built very strong towers (as Jarchi understands it), and cities wherein he laid up provisions of wine and corn.

Ver. 13. *He had much business in the cities of Judah.*] To settle religion, and purge out idolatry; as well as to provide for their safety, by fortifications, and whatsoever was necessary for the preservation of public tranquillity.

And the men of war, mighty men of valour were in Jerusalem.] He kept the principal officers in his army near to himself; that he might advise with them upon any emergency.

Ver. 14.] He mentions only the commanders-in-chief: under whom were a great number of captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds, who are not named.

Ver. 15.] In the Hebrew (as it is noted in the margin) the first words are, *at his hand was, &c.* Which may seem to import, that he was lieutenant-general (as we speak) to the former great man: who assisted him in the management of that army. But the following words plainly signify, that he was another commander-in-chief, having under him a great body of men, though not equal to the former. And, as the Targum translates the first words (whom Jarchi follows) he encamped near to the former.

Ver. 16.] Some think, he served as a volunteer, without any stipend; or that he vowed himself to the service. Kimchi thinks that he offered gold and silver to the treasury, for the service of the Lord.

Ver. 17.] All the former were of Judah; now he mentions those of Benjamin, and the eminent persons who commanded them.

Zichri, who willingly offered himself unto the Lord; and with him two hundred thousand mighty men of valour.

17 And of Benjamin; Eliada a mighty man of valour, and with him armed men with bow and shield two hundred thousand.

18 And next him was Jehozabad, and with him a hundred and fourscore thousand ready prepared for the war.

19 These waited on the king, beside those whom the king put in the fenced cities throughout all Judah.

Ver. 18.] See ver. 16. If we put all these numbers of valiant men together, they make a great demonstration of the wonderful blessings of God upon Jehoshaphat: who, though he had little more than the third part of the kingdom which David had, yet went much beyond him, in proportion, in the number of able men that were subject to him. For David, when he numbered the people, found but thirteen hundred thousand; and Jehoshaphat had several bodies of good troops, which altogether amounted to eleven hundred and sixty thousand: not reckoning the garrisons, which were in the strong-holds. Nor is there any thing incredible in this, for we read the like in profane histories. The great Thebes, for instance (as Tacitus relates in his *Annales*, lib. ii), furnished seven hundred thousand soldiers, of its own inhabitants alone. But it is farther observable, how God blessed the reign of these last two kings, Asa and Jehoshaphat: in that when Abijah, the father of Asa, could scarce bring into the field four hundred thousand men (xiii. 3), his grandson was able to muster almost three times that number.

Ver. 19. *These waited on the king.*] That is, these great men, who had such numerous forces at their command, attended the king's person always, where-soever he went.

Beside those whom the king put in the fenced cities] He made governors of all strong places, who constantly attended their duty there: and were under the direction of the great men before mentioned. Who did not only wait upon the king, but, as Pelliganus conjectures, presided over the whole kingdom: and were ready upon any occasion to send abroad the king's orders, and take care of the public concerns.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1 Jehoshaphat, joined in affinity with Ahab, is persuaded to go with him against Ramoth-gilead. 4 Ahab, seduced by false prophets, according to the word of Micaiah, is slain there.

1 Now Jehoshaphat had riches and honour in abundance, and joined affinity with Ahab.

CHAP. XVIII.

Ver. 1. *Jehoshaphat had riches and honour in abundance.*] So he had before this time (xvii. 5), but now they were more increased.

And joined affinity with Ahab.] For his son married Athaliah the daughter of Ahab (2 Kings viii. 18; and ch. xxi. ver. 6, of this book). His great prosperity tempted him to this affinity with an abominable idolater: having some conceit, perhaps, that he might again unite, by this marriage, the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

Ver. 2. *After certain years*] After there had been

2 And after certain years he went down to Ahab to Samaria: and Ahab killed sheep and

peace three years between Israel and Syria, as it is explained 1 Kings xxii. 1.

He went down to Ahab to Samaria.] The affinity between them was the occasion, I suppose, of this visit.

Ahab killed sheep and oxen for him in abundance, and for the people he had with him.] He entertained both Jehoshaphat and all his attendants with great splendour: which is not mentioned in the book of the Kings, though the substance of this chapter is the same with that above mentioned; and is there explained.

And persuaded him to go up with him to Ramoth-

oxen for him in abundance, and for the people that *he had* with him, and persuaded him to go up *with him* to Ramoth-gilead.

3 And Ahab king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat king of Judah, Wilt thou go with me to Ramoth-gilead? And he answered him, *I am* as thou art, and my people as thy people; and *we will be* with thee in the war.

4 ¶ And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, Inquire, I pray thee, at the word of the LORD to day.

5 Therefore the king of Israel gathered together of prophets four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall we go to Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for God will deliver *it* into the king's hand.

6 But of Jehoshaphat said, *Is there* not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might inquire of him?

7 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, *There is* yet one man by whom we may inquire of the LORD: but I hate him; for he never prophesied good unto me, but always evil: the same is Micaiah the son of Imla. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so.

8 And the king of Israel called for one of *his* officers, and said, Fetch quickly Micaiah the son of Imla.

9 And the king of Israel, and Jehoshaphat king of Judah, sat either of them on his throne, clothed in *their* robes, and they sat in a void place at the entering in of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them.

10 And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah had made him horns of iron, and said, Thus saith the LORD, With these thou shalt push Syria until they be consumed.

11 And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramoth-gilead, and prosper; for the LORD shall deliver *it* into the hand of the king.

12 And the messenger that went to call Micaiah spake to him, saying, Behold, the words of the prophets *declare* good to the king with one assent: let thy word therefore, I pray thee, be like one of theirs, and speak thou good.

13 And Micaiah said, *As* the LORD liveth, even what my God saith, that will I speak.

14 And when he was come to the king, the

gilead:] He caressed him so at this feast, and used such arguments, as prevailed with him to undertake this expedition.

Ver. 3. *Wilt thou go up with me to Ramoth-gilead?]* What he had consented unto in the midst of their merriment, he seems now to resolve more deliberately (see 2 Kings xxii. 4).

I am as thou art, and my people as thy people; and will be with thee in the war.] The prophet Hanani had given his father a caution against this (xvi. 7), and Jehoshaphat is reproved for it afterward (xix. 2; xx. 37). The Targum expounds the last words thus, "that which happens to thee, shall happen to me, in this war."

Ver. 4—6.] These three verses are the same in sense, and almost in words, with those which I have explained in 1 Kings xxii. 5—7.

king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go to Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And he said, Go ye up, and prosper, and they shall be delivered into your hand.

15 And the king said to him, How many times shall I adjure thee, that thou say nothing but the truth to me in the name of the LORD?

16 Then he said, I did see all Israel scattered upon the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd: and the LORD said, These have no master; let them return, *therefore*, every man to his house in peace.

17 And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell thee *that* he would not prophesy good unto me, but evil?

18 Again he said, Therefore, hear the word of the LORD; I saw the LORD sitting upon his throne, and all the host of heaven standing on his right hand, and on his left.

19 And the LORD said, Who shall entice Ahab king of Israel, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one spake, saying after this manner, and another saying after that manner.

20 Then there came out a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will entice him. And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith?

21 And he said, I will go out, and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And the LORD said, Thou shalt entice *him*, and thou shalt also prevail: go out, and do *even* so.

22 Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of these thy prophets, and the LORD hath spoken evil against thee.

23 Then Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah came near, and smote Micaiah upon the cheek, and said, Which way went the Spirit of the LORD from me to speak unto thee?

24 And Micaiah said, Behold, thou shalt see on that day when thou shalt go into an inner chamber to hide thyself.

25 Then the king of Israel said, Take ye Micaiah, and carry him back to Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son;

26 And say, Thus saith the king, Put this *fellow* in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I return in peace.

27 And Micaiah said, If thou certainly return

Ver. 7.] See there, ver. 8.

Ver. 8.] He seems to have thought, that Micaiah would be backward to come, because he knew the king's hatred to him; and therefore he bids the officer (who was a person of quality) quicken him.

Ver. 9. *And the king of Israel, and Jehoshaphat—sat in a void place]* The very same we read there, ver. 10. And the Targum explains it thus; "they sat in a semicircle," as the court of judgment used to do, that they might see one another, and all the people stood before them.

All the prophets prophesied before them.] All the *false prophets*, as the Targum understands it, who pretended to the gift of prophecy, which the following words show to be the meaning.

Ver. 10—13.] There is no difference between these verses and those in 1 Kings xxii. 11—14.

in peace, *then* hath not the Lord spoken by me. And he said, Hearken, all ye people.

28 So the king of Israel, and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, went up to Ramoth-gilead.

29 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and will go to the battle; but put thou on thy robes. So the king of Israel disguised himself, and they went to the battle.

30 Now the king of Syria had commanded the captains of the chariots that *were* with him, saying, Fight ye not with small or great, save only with the king of Israel.

31 And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, It is the king of Israel: therefore they compassed

about him to fight: but Jehoshaphat cried out, and the Lord helped him; and God moved them *to depart* from him.

32 For it came to pass, that, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it was not the king of Israel, they turned back again from pursuing him.

33 And a *certain* man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel-between the joints of the harness: therefore he said to his chariot man, Turn thine hand, that thou mayest carry me out of the host; for I am wounded.

34 And the battle increased that day: howbeit the king of Israel stayed *himself* up in *his* chariot against the Syrians until the even; and about the time of the sun going down he died.

Ver. 18. *Therefore hear the word of the Lord;*] Some think he spake these words to the bystanders: but this is confuted by 1 Kings xxii. 19, where the words are, *Hear thou therefore*, speaking again to the king.

In all that follows, to the end of the chapter, there is scarce any difference between it, and what is recorded in the book of the Kings; where I have explained it: and will not here transcribe what the reader may find there.

CHAPTER XIX.

1 *Jehoshaphat, reproved by Jehu, visiteth his kingdom.* 5 *His instructions to the Judges,* 8 *To the priests and Levites.*

1 AND Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned to his house in peace to Jerusalem.

2 And Jehu, the son of Hanani the seer, went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, Shouldst thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore *is* wrath upon thee from before the Lord.

3 Nevertheless, there are good things found in thee, in that thou hast taken away the groves out

of the land, and hast prepared thine heart to seek God.

5 And Jehoshaphat dwelt at Jerusalem: and he went out again through the people, from Beersheba to mount Ephraim, and brought them back unto the Lord God of their fathers.

5 ¶ And he set judges in the land, throughout all the fenced cities of Judah, city by city,

6 And he said to the judges, Take heed what

CHAP. XIX.

Ver. 1.] I suppose, as soon as the battle was over, he immediately went to Jerusalem; to return thanks to God for his wonderful preservation.

Ver. 2. *Jehu the son of Hanani.*] See 1 Kings xvi. 1.

Went out to meet him.] Before he came into the city: that, being admonished by him, he might be the more affected with the mercy of God towards him in his deliverance.

Shouldst thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord?] As much as to say, This is contrary to common reason, which taught the gentiles to make no friendship with such as were God's enemies. So Callimachus in his hymn to Ceres, ver. 117, 118.

Δάμνατε, μὴ τῆος εἶναι φίλος ὅς τοι ἀπειθήης,
Ἔσται, μὴδ' ἑμότητος μοι καχομίτους ἐχθρός.

"O Ceres, he shall be none of my friend who is hated by thee; nor shall he live under my roof: such neighbours are odious unto me." Where the illustrious Spanhemius hath observed many the like sayings among the heathens; and shows how the ancient Greeks abhorred to lodge in the same house with a murderer, or other grievous criminals; with whom they would not eat, much less be with them in their sacred assemblies; looking upon them as impure creatures.

Therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord.] Upon which account God threatens to punish

him: which some think he did by raising such numerous enemies to invade him, as we read of in the next chapter. But most of all, by suffering all his sons to be murdered by their elder brother (ch. xxi. 4), and his grandchildren by Jehu (2 Kings ix. 27: x. 13, 14).

Ver. 3. *Nevertheless, there are good things found in thee.*] For the sake of which he so far pardoned his error as not to punish him in his own person, but in his posterity.

In that thou hast taken away the groves out of the land, and hast prepared thine heart to seek God.] The chief thing wherein he pleased God was by abolishing idolatrous worship: which he had done rigorously, and served God with a sincere heart.

Ver. 4. *Jehoshaphat dwelt at Jerusalem.*] Being settled at Jerusalem after his visit to Ahab, and the war with Syria, he had time to reflect upon his escape out of the late battle, and the reproof of the prophet: at which he was so far from being angry (as his father Asa had been, xvi. 7) that he laid it to heart, and seriously resolved upon a farther reformation, in other matters, as well as religion.

He went out again through the people.] He had sent out his officers before (ch. xvii. 7), who went out by his authority, and acted in his name, about this very business; and now he went in person, as then by his orders.

From Beersheba to mount Ephraim.] The former of these had always been the utmost bound south-

ye do: for ye judge not for man, but for the LORD, who *is* with you in the judgment.

7 Wherefore now, let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take heed and do it: for *there is* no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts.

8 ¶ Moreover in Jerusalem did Jehoshaphat set of the Levites, and of the priests, and of the chief of the fathers of Israel, for the judgment of

ward of the tribe of Judah: and the latter, since the division of the kingdom, had been the northern bound, as before the division was Dan.

And brought them back unto the Lord God of their fathers.] Since the last reformation, it seems, some had revolted to their former idolatry, whom he now reduced; especially those cities which his father had taken in mount Ephraim (ch. xv. 8), who, being Israelites, might have been drawn in again to worship the calves.

Ver. 5.] That is, in every one of these cities: or, as Bertram thinks it should be translated, "for city, and city." That is, he placed judges in the principal cities, unto which all causes were brought from the lesser cities and villages. This was a means both to have justice done between man and man, and also to preserve them in the worship of God, when judges were ready at hand, to call those to an account who went after other gods.

Ver. 6.] He gave them this very solemn admonition when he settled them in their place: which the Targum thus translates, "Ye do not judge before the sons of men, but before the Word of the Lord; and his glorious presence resides among you in the act of judgment." Which is a most illustrious testimony that the ancient Jews believed more persons than one in the Deity.

Ver. 7. Let the fear of the Lord be upon you: take heed and do it:] That is, do as I command you, judge according to the law; for such as God is, such you ought to be, since you are in his place.

For there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts.] He bids them remember that as the nature of God is perfectly just, so he cannot be moved to do iniquity by respect to the greatest, or pity to the meanest, or by any gift be bribed to do unjustly. Whom they ought to imitate, being entrusted by him with his authority.

Ver. 8. Moreover, in Jerusalem did Jehoshaphat set of the Levites, and of the priests, and of the chief of the fathers of Israel.] Many were of opinion, that as before he speaks of the courts consisting of twenty-three judges, which were settled in every considerable city of the kingdom; so here he speaks of the high court of all, consisting of seventy, called by the Jews the great Sanhedrin, sitting at Jerusalem: whither appeals were made in all causes, that could not be determined below. But if this be true, Jehoshaphat was the first that we can find who settled this excellent constitution: of which we can find no footsteps in the books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, or in the foregoing kings, as I have discoursed at large upon Deut. xvi. 18: xvii. 9 (see my notes there). And there is little in the succeeding times to persuade us of it; for Ezra and Nehemiah set up no such judicature as that the Jews call Sanhedrin. Which seems to have been wisely constituted, when they fell under the government of the Macedonian princes, from whose language they borrowed the name. Though Jehoshaphat therefore settled judges in Jerusalem, yet the number of them is not certain.

For the judgment of the Lord, and for controversies.] These words are variously expounded:

the LORD, and for controversies, when they returned to Jerusalem.

9 And he charged them, saying, Thus shall ye do in the fear of the LORD, faithfully, and with a perfect heart.

10 And what cause soever shall come to you of your brethren that dwell in their cities, between blood and blood, between law and commandment, statutes and judgments, ye shall even warn them

some understanding by the "judgment of the Lord," causes about sacred matters, others pecuniary matters: and by *controversies*, some understanding civil causes, others criminal and capital. It is sufficient, I think, to say, they tried all sorts of causes.

When they returned to Jerusalem.] That is, when Jehoshaphat, and those that attended him, returned from the other cities, where they had appointed judges (ver. 5), he constituted this supreme court in the chief city of his kingdom. I say supreme court, for there were not two of them; one for ecclesiastical, the other for civil causes, as some have imagined: but one court judged both, as Grotius has very well proved, from the very account here given of this matter. For Jehoshaphat bids these judges try what cause soever should come to them (ver. 10), and adds, "between blood and blood, between law and commandment, statutes and judgments." Which shows there was no kind of business in controversy, which did not come before this one court. Nor do those words, ver. 11, prove the contrary, as he shows in his book, *De Imperio Sum. Potes. circa Sacra*, cap. 11, sect. 15.

Ver. 9.] He gives them the same solemn charge which he had given the other Judges (ver. 7); that having the fear of God before their eyes, they should do righteous judgment, and not suffer themselves to be any way corrupted, for God would judge all over again.

It is a most memorable saying of Cicero, that judges, being sworn to do justice, should remember; when they come to pass sentence, *Deum se habere testem*; id est, ut ego arbitrator, mentem suam, qua nihil homini dedit ipse Deus Divinius; "that he hath God a witness of what he doth, even his own conscience, than which God himself hath given unto man nothing more divine: lib. iii. *De Officiis*, cap. x. where he hath left this excellent instruction also, that a man may lay aside the person of a friend, when he puts on the person of a Judge.

Ver. 10. And what cause soever shall come to you of your brethren that dwell in their cities.] By way of appeal from the other cities: where the judges were wont to refer matters of great difficulty to this supreme court at Jerusalem, where the judges were most learned.

Between blood and blood.] When the question was, who was next of kin to an estate, and should succeed him that was deceased. So some understand the word *blood* to signify *kindred*. But Jarchi understands it of a question, whether a murder was voluntary, or a man was killed by chance.

Between law and commandment, statutes and judgments.] Some take the word *law* to be a general word, the species of which follow. So that it is as much as to say, Ye shall judge concerning all manner of laws: first, of *commandments*, such as have a natural equity in them: then *statutes*, or positive laws belonging to rites and ceremonies: and *judgments*, concerning those precepts, which direct the manner of proceeding in judgments.

Ye shall even warn them that they trespass not

that they trespass not against the LORD, and so wrath come upon you, and upon your brethren: this do, and ye shall not trespass.

11 And, behold, Amariah the chief priest is over you in all matters of the LORD; and Zeba-

against the Lord, and so wrath come upon you.] This seems to be a command, that they should not only pronounce a righteous sentence in every cause that came before them, but that they should admonish him, who was in the wrong (and all other persons in the like case), to beware of injuring their neighbours for the time to come.

This do, and ye shall not trespass.] But worthily discharge their office.

Ver. 11. *Amariah the chief priest]* See concerning him, what I have noted upon 1 Chron. vi. 9, 10, &c.

Is over you in all matters of the Lord; and Zebadiah the son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah, for all the king's matters:] Many understand by "the matters of the Lord," all things sacred; and by "the king's matters," all civil and political causes. But Grotius hath judiciously observed (in his book *De Imperio Sum. Potest. circa Sacra*, cap. 11, sect. 15), that it is most agreeable to the scripture to understand by "the things of God," those which were defined by the law of God, and were to be judged by that law: and by "the king's matters," such as, not being defined by the divine law, were left to the judgment of the king. Of which kind were all deliberations about what was expedient or not expedient. And thus, he observes, the most learned of the Jewish interpreters explain these words in his book, *De Jure Belli et Pacis*, lib. i. cap. 3, sect. 20. But which way soever we distinguish *the things of God and the king's things*, yet one and the same court took cognizance of them both: only with this difference, that the court had different presidents according to the nature of the causes. In things pertaining to God, Amariah the high-priest sat as the first judge; in things pertaining to the king, Zebadiah, a principal person about the king, had the chair, and was the moderator. For, as the high-priest was most conversant in the law of God, and therefore fittest to direct in such matters; so the chief ruler about the king was most exercised in matters left undetermined by the law, and so fittest, to preside in such consultations.

There are, indeed, very learned men who think these words plainly prove two different courts: in one of which ecclesiastical matters were determined,

diah the son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah, for all the king's matters: also the Levites shall be officers before you. Deal courageously, and the LORD shall be with the good.

in the other civil; in the former of which Amariah presided; in the latter Zebadiah. Thus Corn. Bertram, in his book *De Republ. Judaica*, p. 137, 139, whom Const. L'Empereur defends in his annotations on that place; and endeavours to prove out of Deuteronomy, that God himself instituted an ecclesiastical senate, distinct from the civil, p. 389. But this is not a fit place to meddle farther with that controversy: I shall only say, that I think Grotius hath sufficiently confuted this opinion in the book and chapter before mentioned, *De Imperio*, &c. And in his annotations also upon St. Matt. v. 22 (on those words *λογος ἵσταται τῷ ἀντιδίκῳ*), where he makes this paraphrase upon this speech of Jehoshaphat: "Do not despond, as not able to discharge so weighty an office, for want of such learning and knowledge as are necessary for such a work: you have excellent men to guide you with their counsel. Such is the prince of the senate Amarias the priest, a man skilled in judgment; and if any thing fall out belonging rather to civil prudence than to the knowledge of the law, Sabadiah the Ishmaelite is ready at hand, who is a principal person in such kind of deliberations. And besides (as it here follows) you have the Levites their assessors, who are very well skilled in many arts."

Also the Levites shall be officers before you.] Some of the Levites were members of this great court, who sat in judgment (ver. 8): the rest, who were not judges were ministers under them to see their sentence executed. But it appears by this place, that the word *shoterim* doth not here signify, as in others, mere apparitors who summoned men to the court, or such officers as executed the sentence of the court; but persons of some authority, who had power to make offenders sensible of the justice of the sentence, and convince them of their error: which was a great encouragement to the judges to undertake this office, and to judge uprightly.

Deal courageously, and the Lord shall be with the good.] He bids them not to be afraid of any man: for God, who employs them, would stand by them and defend them, if they were good and upright judges. The Targum hath it, "The Word of the Lord will help you who is good."

CHAPTER XX.

1 Jehoshaphat in his fear proclaimeth a fast. 5 His prayer. 14 The prophecy of Jahaziel. 20 Jehoshaphat exhorteth the people, and setteth singers to praise the Lord. 22 The great overthrow of the enemies. 26 The people, having blessed God at Berachah, return in triumph. 31 Jehoshaphat's reign. 35 His convoy of ships which he made with Ahaziah, according to the prophecy of Eliezer, unhappily perished.

1 It came to pass after this also, that the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon,

CHAP. XX.

Ver. 1. *The children of Moab, and the children of Ammon.]* These seem to have been the principal in this invasion: the other here mentioned (in the next verse and in verse 22) to have been auxiliaries. For such was the ancient way of making war, and still is to this day, to call in the assistance of their neighbours. As appears by the Romans, more especially, whose armies consisted of their own legions,

and with them other beside the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle.

on whom they chiefly relied, and their auxiliaries: who agreed neither in their discipline, nor in their language, nor in their affection, as Vegetius observes in his book *De Re Militari*, lib. ii. cap. 2, and therefore could not do such service. For which cause (as he observes in the beginning of his third book) they took care their *socii militares* should never exceed the number of their own soldiers, which is a rule laid down by Livy and Tacitus.

With them other beside the Ammonites.] It ought

2 Then there came some that told Jehoshaphat, saying, There cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea, on this side Syria: and, behold, they be in Hazazon-tamar, which is En-gedi.

3 And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.

4 And Judah gathered themselves together to ask help of the LORD; even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.

5 ¶ And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court,

6 And said, O LORD God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over

all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?

7 Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever?

8 And they dwelt therein, and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying,

9 If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house,) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help.

10 And now, behold, the children of Ammon, and Moab, and mount Seir, whom thou wouldst

to be translated, "and with them the Meunims;" who were a people in Arabia, near the Moabites and Ammonites (see my annotations upon Judges x. 12, and in this book, ch. xxvi. 6, 7, and Bochartus, in his Phaleg, lib. ii. cap. 22).

Came against Jehoshaphat to battle.] Made an invasion upon his country.

Ver. 2. *There cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea*] That is the Dead sea, as it is called in scripture.

On this side Syria;] The Targum translates it, "from the western part of Syria:" for the Dead sea was the western bounds of that country; and it is likely the Syrians joined against him, to revenge the assistance he gave to Ahab.

They be in Hazazon-tamar, which is En-gedi.] A place where there was a great forest of palm-trees. It seems he had but slender intelligence, for he heard not of their motion till they were upon the borders of his country.

Ver. 3. *Jehoshaphat feared.*] Having been lately told by the prophet (ch. xix. 2) that God was very angry with him.

Proclaimed a fast] Fasting was generally joined with prayer in times of distress: unto which he publicly called the whole nation, that they might obtain help from God.

Ver. 4.] The Targum translates it, "to ask mercy of him, and to beg his direction, and to hear his holy word." For some part of the law was read upon those solemn days. Vitringa takes this to be an argument, that there were no synagogues in every city in those days. For there would have been no need they should come out of their cities, and all resort to Jerusalem, to fast and pray, and hear the law there; which might have been done at home in their synagogues, as well as in the temple. Though not, indeed, in such a solemn manner, as it was performed by such a vast confux of people, in one place, to make their supplication to God (De Vet. Synag. par. ii. lib. i. cap. 9).

Ver. 5. *Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord.*] For there was a throne, the Hebrew doctors tell us, in the court of the Israelites, where their kings prayed to God, or spake to the people, as there was occasion. So Jehoshaphat did, and, in the following times, Hezekiah and Josiah; after the example of Solomon, who began this custom (chapter vi. 13).

Before the new court.] The most learned in these matters confess they do not know what is meant by the new court. Some think it probable, that it was only some enlargement that Jehoshaphat had made of the court of the people, to render it more capacious:

but others are of opinion, that it signifies the court of the women, which was now made distinct from the court of the men (see 1 Chron. xv. 3). Thus Constantine L'Empereur thinks that the court of the women was not built by Solomon, but added in after-times, Annot. in Cod. Middoth, cap. 2, sect 5, where he disputes that according to the Mishna, this court when it was made did not surround the court of Israel: but the breadth of them was equal, according to the delineation there.

Ver. 6.] This is the most admirable prayer that we read any of their kings made; expressing the greatest confidence in God, and representing to him the justice of their cause. He begins with an acknowledgment of God's supreme and irresistible power; which extends itself every where over all creatures in heaven and earth, who are every one of them subject to his authority.

Ver. 7.] Then he remembers the peculiar relation the people of Israel had to him, and the promise to Abraham, and the deed of gift which he made of this country to him, and to his posterity for ever, as a reward of his fidelity to him.

Ver. 8.] Next to that he remembers, that they had been long possessed of this country, wherein a house had been built for his worship by Solomon: to whom God promised at the consecration of it, that he would have regard to the prayers made in that place (see the sixth chapter of this book, and 1 Kings viii.). The Targum here again saith this sanctuary was "built to the name of thy Word;" as in the foregoing verse God is said to have driven out the inhabitants of this land by his Word.

Ver. 9. *If when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment,*] Some translate it, the sword of judgment, that is, the punishing sword. But if judgment signify any particular punishment, distinct from the sword, it must be wild beasts, or captivity: for pestilence and famine are particularly mentioned in the following words. The Targum translates it, "slaughter of the sword," which was a sore judgment.

We stand before this house.] See 1 Kings viii. 38, 39.

Ver. 10. *The children of Ammon, and Moab, and mount Seir.*] Some think this explains what is meant by "other besides the Ammonites" (as we translate ver. 1), viz. Edomites. So the Targum is that place, "With these the Edomites, who joined with the Ammonites." But see there.

Whom thou wouldst not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt, when they turned from them.] He represents in the next place, the foul ingratitude of their enemies (added to their injustice) in invading their country, unto which they had an

not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not;

11 Behold, *I say, how* they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit.

12 O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes *are* upon thee.

13 And all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children.

14 ¶ Then upon Jahaziel, the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite, of the sons of Asaph, came the Spirit of the LORD in the midst of the congregation;

15 And he said, Harken ye, all Judah, and ye

inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat; Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle *is* not yours, but God's.

16 To-morrow go ye down against them: behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz; and ye shall find them at the end of the brook, before the wilderness of Jeruel.

17 Ye shall not *need* to fight in this battle; set yourselves, stand ye *still*, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to-morrow go out against them; for the LORD *will be* with you.

18 And Jehoshaphat bowed his head, with his face to the ground: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the LORD, worshipping the LORD.

19 And the Levites of the children of the

undoubted title: when the Israelites did not do them the least harm, as they went to take possession of it, but took the pains to march a long way about to come at it, rather than give them any disturbance in their country.

Ver. 11.] It is a most odious thing not to make grateful returns for benefits received; but to return evil for good is the highest wickedness. Which in this case was aggravated by this, that they made an attempt not only upon the rights of the Israelites, but of God himself; whose land this was, which they held of him as their Lord.

Ver. 12. *O our God, wilt thou not judge them?*] He appeals to the justice of God, the righteous Judge, who rights those that suffer wrong, especially when they have no helper. To judge in this place signifies to punish, as in Exod. vi. 6; Ps. ix. 16, where these words, "the Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth," are thus interpreted by Drusius, The Lord is known by the just punishments which he inflicts: in his Miscellanies, cent. i. cap. 18.

For we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee.] This is the last argument he uses to obtain help from God: the weak condition wherein he and his people were, which made them the objects of the divine pity; especially since they placed all their confidence and hope in him alone. But it may seem strange that he should say they had no might against this multitude, when he had so many hundred men at command, as are mentioned ch. xvii. 14—16, &c. To which it may be replied, that perhaps this was such a sudden invasion, that he had not time to gather a considerable body to oppose them: or rather he distrusted the greatest army, and acknowledged them to be of no force if God was not with them: on whom he entirely relied, and not on the number and valour of his soldiers, though both were very great.

Victorinus Strigelius hath such a devout reflection upon this prayer of Jehoshaphat, that it will not be unacceptable, I persuade myself, to the pious reader, if I here transcribe it: "In this weak and declining condition wherein the church now is, when the devil is very outrageous, because he knows his time to be short, &c. let us say daily with Jehoshaphat, We know not what to do; but our eyes are upon thee. Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory. Thou art our king and our shepherd, we are thy people, and the sheep of thy pasture. Thou only art powerful, we are infirm: but thy power will be perfected in our weakness. Not unto us, O Lord, not

unto us, but to thy name give the glory; for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake. Do not remember our iniquities, but save us for thy mercy's sake; for we are brought very low. Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: deliver us, and be merciful to our sins, for thy name's sake. Save us, O Lord our God, that we may give thanks unto thy holy name, and triumph in thy praise." Such addresses to God (so he concludes) will illustrate this prayer of Jehoshaphat better than the largest commentaries.

Ver. 13.] The more to move the divine compassion towards them.

Ver. 14.] He seems not to have been a prophet before this time: when a sudden inspiration came upon him from God, to comfort this great assembly with assured hope of deliverance before they stirred from the place where they had prayed.

Ver. 15.] As it was God's cause which they now asserted, so they might be assured he would maintain it, by overthrowing their enemies.

Ver. 16. *To-morrow go ye down against them:*] Jerusalem, where they now were, was situated on a high hill, and therefore he saith they should go down against these enemies: who are said in the next words to come up.

Behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz; and ye shall find them at the end of the brook] God was so very gracious to them, as, by this prophet, not only to assure them of victory, but to inform them of the very time, and place, and manner of it. The time was the very next morning: the place is mentioned in the latter end of this verse, as the time is in the beginning: and the manner, in the conclusion of the foregoing verse, that it should be by the hand of God, and not by their own: who should be only spectators of the victory which God himself would give them: so it follows in the next verse.

Ver. 17. *Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you.*] He repeats what he had said before (which he knew would be the greatest comfort to them), that they should have no conflict with their enemies; but only stand still in their place, and see the hand of God overthrowing them all. In which there was a notable accomplishment of Solomon's prayer, which Jehoshaphat recited.

For the Lord will be with you.] "The Word of the Lord will be your helper," as the Targum expounds it.

Ver. 18.] The king gave most humble thanks to God, as did all the people with him, after his example.

Ver. 19. *The Levites,*] Who were then waiting, in their course, at the temple.

Kohathites, and of the children of the Korhites, stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with a loud voice on high.

20 ¶ And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.

21 And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should praise the beauty of holiness as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever.

22 ¶ And when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten.

23 For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them: and when they

Stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with a loud voice] They sung praise to God before the army went out, as if the victory had been already obtained. And they raised their voice as high as they could, to express their full assurance of success. This, I suppose, they did by the order of Jehoshaphat.

Ver. 20. *They rose early in the morning, and went forth*] That is, the army who were to stand, and face the enemy, went forth from Jerusalem.

As they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah,] It is likely he stood in the gate of the city, through which they marched out, and spake these words to the several companies as they passed by him.

Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.] The Targum translates it, "Believe in the Word of the Lord your God, believe his law, and his prophets," &c. God having made them a gracious promise, expected their belief of it, and dependence on it: otherwise they had no reason to hope for victory.

Ver. 21. *When he had consulted with the people,*] That is, with the elders and heads of their tribes, who represented the rest: without whose consent he was loath to do any thing, in a time of common danger.

He appointed singers—that should praise the beauty of holiness,] It may be translated, "should praise his most sacred Majesty." Though it is commonly thought he ordered them to praise the Lord with the same state, pomp, and ornament, that they worshipped in the temple: in the same habit, in that order and magnificence, wherein they appeared in the holy place.

As they went out before the army,] This was an argument of great courage and assurance, that they led on the army: declaring to their enemies, that God (whose ministers they were) was coming against them.

Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth for ever.] This was the usual song, which they sung at the temple (ver. 13).

Ver. 22. *When they began to sing and to praise,*] Before they had marched many steps.

The Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten.] Or "smote one another," as it is in the margin. The Targum

had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another.

24 And when Judah came toward the watch tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude, and, behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped.

25 And when Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away the spoil of them, they found among them in abundance, both riches with the dead bodies, and precious jewels, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away: and they were three days in gathering of the spoil, it was so much.

26 ¶ And on the fourth day, they assembled themselves in the valley of Berachah; for there they blessed the LORD: therefore the name of the same place was called, The valley of Berachah, unto this day.

27 Then they returned every man of Judah and Jerusalem, and Jehoshaphat in the fore-front of them, to go again to Jerusalem with joy: for the LORD had made them to rejoice over their enemies.

translates it, "The Word of the Lord set ambushments," &c. By which that paraphrast understands his angelical ministers which attended him; who smote some of them secretly, and the rest thinking it was done by their neighbours, fell upon them as their enemies. But the meaning seems rather to be, that the ambushments which they had laid against Judah, by a confusion among themselves, made by a divine hand, fell upon part of their own army, mistaking them for their enemies. .

Ver. 23.] They of mount Seir were ordered to fall upon Judah, out of an ambushment; but by some mistake they fell upon the Ammonites, their own confederates: and they and the Moabites fell upon them, till they had entirely destroyed those of Seir. And when that was done, they continued in such confusion, that they fell one upon another, still imagining they were destroying the Jews: who came upon them very early in the morning, as the prophet had directed.

Ver. 24.] Instead of meeting with an enemy to oppose them, they saw them all lie dead upon the ground. For this tower, it is probable, stood upon the cliff of Ziz (mentioned ver. 16), from whence they could behold how their army lay.

Ver. 25.] As they found rich garments upon their bodies, so they found great treasure among their baggage (as we call it), and many precious jewels; which they brought along with them, I suppose, that they might appear the more glorious, in the triumph which they promised themselves over the Jews. They could not carry all the spoil at once, but spent three days in collecting it, and disposing of it. For there was vast provision, no doubt, which they had made for the subsistence of such a multitude; and a great many beasts for the carriages that brought it to them.

Ver. 26.] One cannot think that they deferred to give God thanks for so signal a victory, till four days after it; but then they did it in a more solemn manner than they could at first: the whole body of the people assembling together, to acknowledge God's goodness to them. Which they did in such a remarkable manner, that it gave to the place ever after the name of the valley of blessing.

Ver. 27. *Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, and Jehoshaphat in the fore-front of*

28 And they came to Jerusalem with psalteries and harps and trumpets, unto the house of the LORD.

29 And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries, when they had heard that the LORD fought against the enemies of Israel.

30 So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet; for his God gave him rest round about.

31 ¶ And Jehoshaphat reigned over Judah. He was thirty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and five years in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Azubah the daughter of Shilhi.

32 And he walked in the way of Asa his father, and departed not from it, doing that which was right in the sight of the LORD.

33 Howbeit the high places were not taken

away; for as yet the people had not prepared their hearts unto the God of their fathers.

34 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, first and last, behold they are written in the book of Jchu the son of Hanani, who is mentioned in the book of the kings of Israel.

35 ¶ And after this did Jehoshaphat king of Judah join himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, who did very wickedly.

36 And he joined himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish: and they made the ships in Ezion-gaber.

37 Then Eliezer, the son of Dodavah of Mareshah, prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the LORD hath broken thy works. And the ships were broken, that they were not able to go to Tarshish.

them, to go again to Jerusalem with joy;] This is a farther instance of their thankfulness to God for their victory; that they did not return every man to his own home, after this overthrow: but first went back to Jerusalem, to bless him again for hearing their prayers, and making good his promises.

For the Lord had made them to rejoice over their enemies.] This they did with great joy, wherewith God had filled their hearts, by making them triumph over such powerful enemies.

Ver. 28.] To express by these the greatness of their joy, and proclaim their thankfulness to God.

Ver. 29. And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries,] On all the neighbouring nations, who heard of this glorious victory without fighting.

When they had heard that the Lord fought against the enemies of Israel.] Here the Targum hath it, "When they heard that the Word of the Lord fought," &c.

Ver. 30.] Here again the Targum saith, "The Word of his God gave him rest."

Ver. 31.] See 1 Kings xxii. 42. It is likely, his mother was a very religious woman, who had taken care to bring up Jehoshaphat in the fear of the Lord: and happy had it been for him and his family, if he had taken care to marry his son to such another woman.

Ver. 32.] Whatsoever other faults he had he kept close to the worship of God alone: and did many other good things as the law of Moses directed.

Ver. 33. Howbeit the high places were not taken away:] This shows, that the meaning of those words, xvii. 6, is, that the high places wherein God was worshipped were not taken away: though those wherewith idols were served were destroyed.

For as yet the people had not prepared their hearts unto the God of their fathers.] The reason of it is here given, the people could not bear it: for their hearts were not disposed to serve God exactly according to the law of Moses. But though they renounced idolatry, and worshipped none but the Lord, yet they would not have his worship, by sacrifices, restrained

to one place alone, but have the liberty to sacrifice elsewhere.

Ver. 34.] He was an eminent prophet in the time of Baasha king of Israel, and lived to the end of Jehoshaphat's reign (see 1 Kings xvi. 1, 7). He, as several other prophets, wrote the history of his own time: out of which monuments these books were collected. And his work was so highly esteemed that it was registered in the books of the kings of Israel: which were commentaries, as Huetius thinks, of what daily passed (Demonstr. Evang. p. 202).

Ver. 35. After this] That is, after the Lord had given him such a glorious victory, and struck terror into all his enemies, and given him rest and quiet round about.

Did Jehoshaphat—join himself with Ahaziah—who did very wickedly:] This was a great weakness, to make friendship with the son, when he had been so sharply reproved for joining with his father Ahab (xix. 22), especially since he was no better, but a very wicked idolater. And though he did not join with him in making war, but only in trade: yet God took it ill of him, and threatened to punish him for it (ver. 37). Into this he was betrayed by the affinity which was between them, which shows how dangerous it is to marry with idolaters.

Ver. 36.] They were ships of Tarshish made to go to Ophir, as we learn from 1 Kings xxii. 48, 49, where I have shown how this place and that agree. Borchart thinks there was a place called Tarshish in the Indian Ocean near to Ophir (that is, Taprobana), which the Phœnicians called by the same name with the other Tarshish, because the same commodities came from both (see his Phaleg. lib. iii. cap. 7).

Ver. 37. The Lord hath broken thy works.] In the Targum it is again, "The Word of the Lord hath destroyed thy works." Which he laid to heart so much, that when Ahaziah afterward desired to join in some voyage with him, he would not consent: as we read in 1 Kings xxii. 49.

The ships were broken,] They were shattered in the very place where they were built, in Ezion-gaber (see 1 Kings xxii. 48).

CHAPTER XXI.

1 *Jehoram, succeeding Jehoshaphat, slayeth his brethren. 5 His wicked reign. 8 Edom and Libnah revolt. 12 The prophecy of Elijah against him in writing. 16 Philistines and Arabians oppress him. 18 His incurable disease, infamous death, and burial.*

1 Now Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and Jehoram his son reigned in his stead.

2 And he had brethren, the sons of Jehoshaphat, Azariah, and Jehiel, and Zechariah, and Azariah, and Michael, and Shephatiah: all these were the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel.

3 And their father gave them great gifts of silver, and of gold, and of precious things, with fenced cities in Judah: but the kingdom gave he to Jehoram, because he was the first-born.

4 Now when Jehoram was risen up to the kingdom of his father, he strengthened himself, and slew all his brethren with the sword, and divers also did Libnah revolt from under his hand; because he had forsaken the LORD God of his fathers.

5 ¶ Jehoram was thirty and two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem.

6 And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, like as did the house of Ahab; for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife: and he

wrought that which was evil in the eyes of the LORD.

7 Howbeit the LORD would not destroy the house of David, because of the covenant that he had made with David, and as he promised to give a light to him and to his sons for ever.

8 ¶ In his days the Edomites revolted from under the dominion of Judah, and made themselves a king.

9 Then Jehoram went forth with his princes, and all his chariots with him: and he rose up by night, and smote the Edomites which compassed him in, and the captains of the chariots.

10 So the Edomites revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day. The same time also did Libnah revolt from under his hand; because he had forsaken the LORD God of his fathers.

11 Moreover, he made high places in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit fornication, and compelled Judah thereto.

CHAP. XXI.

Ver. 1.] By his own appointment, as appears from ver. 3. He was designed king in the seventeenth year of the reign of Jehoshaphat; and crowned in the twenty-third year, and afterward reigned eight years; three with his father, and five alone (see ver. 5).

Ver. 2. *And he had brethren, the sons of Jehoshaphat.*] They had the same father, if not the same mother: which made his wickedness in killing them the more unnatural.

Azariah—and Azariah.] The fourth son is distinguished in the Hebrew from the first, by the addition of *hu*; the first being called Azariah, this Azariah.

All these were the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel.] He was king of Israel in a large sense, many of Israel being subject to him. So Ahaz is also called, xxviii. 19, where I shall give some farther account of it.

Ver. 3. *Their father gave them great gifts of silver, and of gold.*] After the manner of the ancient patriarchs (see Gen. xxv. 6).

And of precious things.] The Hebrew word signifies any thing that is excellent in its kind; whether jewels, or garments, or fruits of the earth, as Beckius observes out of Solomon Abu Melech.

With fenced cities in Judah.] Over which he made them governors. This he did very prudently, for providing so well for them, that they might not be tempted to envy the kingdom to their brother; nor quarrel among themselves. But, as Strigelius observes out of Cicero, *Sæpe optime cogitata pessime cadunt*; "things excellently designed have often very ill event." For these riches of theirs made their brother first fear them; and then, being wickedly covetous, he was tempted to make them away, that he might get what they had into his possession.

But the kingdom he gave to Jehoram; because he was the first-born.] He could not but know his wicked disposition, by his inclination to idolatry: but was

swayed purely by his being the first-born, to settle the kingdom upon him, though not so deserving as his brethren. For such was the power of the kings of Judah (as Conringius observes), that they took upon them to dispose of the kingdom, as if it had been their patrimony. Some think he superstitiously observed that law, Deut. xxi. 13, for sometime the younger sons were preferred to the elder, as we find in the sons of Josiah, 2 Kings xxiii. 30. But (as Mr. Selden shows) common usage was otherwise, lib. ii. De Successione ad Pontif. cap. 1, p. 202, where he translates these words, *Regnum autem transmisit*, &c. not he gave, but he "transmitted the kingdom to Jehoram."

Ver. 4. *When Jehoram was risen up to the kingdom of his father, he strengthened himself, and slew all his brethren*] Being advanced to the throne, his first business was to make himself so strong, that he might be able without danger to murder all his brethren. Which he did; that neither they nor their posterity might ever pretend to the crown. Perhaps they were inclined to the true religion, and therefore he made them away; lest they should oppose him, when he went about to alter it, and bring in the old idolatry.

And divers also of the princes of Israel.] Several of the most eminent persons in the country; such as the judges, established by Jehoshaphat in Jerusalem, and in the country; lest they should revenge the death of his brethren (see Grotius).

Ver. 5, 6.] These two verses are the very same with 2 Kings viii. 17, 18, where see what I have noted.

Ver. 7.—10.] There is little difference between these four verses, and what we read in 2 Kings viii. 19—22. I shall only note here, that this was the first punishment God inflicted on him for his sin, in not following his good father, but turning unto idols.

Ver. 11. *He made high places in the mountains of Judah.*] For the worship of strange gods.

And caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit fornication, and compelled Judah thereto.] He not

12 ¶ And there came a writing to him from Elijah the prophet, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of David thy father, Because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Asa king of Judah,

13 But hast walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go a whoring, like to the whoredoms of the house of Ahab, and also hast slain thy brethren of thy father's house, *which were better than thyself*;

only gave them a bad example, and enticed them to idolatry; but by threatenings and compulsions he endeavoured to constrain them to conform to his example.

Ver. 12. *And there came a writing—from Elijah the prophet.*] It is certain Elijah was taken up into heaven in the time of Jehoshaphat: therefore Josephus and the LXX. imagine (as Grotius observes), that from thence he sent a letter. Which is no more wonderful, than that Judas Maccabæus should see in a divine dream Onias and Jeremiah praying for the people (2 Macc. xv.); so that the meaning may be, that Elisha saw Elijah appear to him, and bid him write these words and send them to Jehoram. But our Dr. Lightfoot is of opinion, that it is not meant of that Elijah, who was carried up to heaven, but of another of his name, who sent this letter. His reason is, because he is always called Elijah the Tishbite, and never Elijah the prophet (see him upon Luke i. 17). But in this, I think, he is singular; and it is not true, that he is always called the Tishbite; but sometimes simply Elijah; and in 1 Kings xix. 16, God calls him *prophet*. Therefore Kimchi seems to me to have given the most natural and plainest sense of these words, in his commentary on this place: That Elijah, foreseeing, by the spirit of prophecy, before he went to heaven, the wickedness of Jehoram, spake these words to one of the prophets, and charged him to put them down in writing, and send them in a letter to Jehoram, when he grew so impious as is here related; and let him know, that Elijah commanded this writing to be delivered to him: that so Jehoram, being affected with it, as if it had been sent from heaven, might be moved to repent of the evil he had done. And indeed this passage will bear this sense, if we take the words *from Elijah* not to relate to the first words *there came*, but to the immediately precedent, *a writing*. He did not send a writing, but it was sent as his writing. For there is nothing in the words to intimate that this was written after his death, but delivered after his death: so that it might have been written (for any thing that appears to the contrary) by Elijah himself, before he was taken up into heaven.

Saying, Thus saith the Lord God of David thy father.] He seems to upbraid him with his degeneracy from so pious an ancestor as David was, from whom he descended.

Because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Asa] His sin was the greater, because both his father and his grandfather had left him an excellent example.

Ver. 13. *But hast walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go a whoring.*] He was not only an idolater himself, not only by his example corrupted others, but used his authority to draw, or rather to force them into idolatrous worship, and that of the very worst sort.

And also hast slain thy brethren of thy father's house, which were better than thyself.] This seems

14 Behold, with a great plague will the LORD smite thy people, and thy children, and thy wives, and all thy goods:

15 And thou *shalt have* great sickness by disease of thy bowels, until thy bowels fall out by reason of the sickness day by day.

16 ¶ Moreover, the LORD stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines, and of the Arabians, that *were* near the Ethiopians:

17 And they came up into Judah, and brake into it, and carried away all the substance that

to signify that they were pious persons, who abhorred idolatry: and therefore his sin was the more heinous in cutting them off, proceeding from enmity to God as well as to them.

Ver. 14.] There was no calamity that could be thought of (as Vic. Strigelius observes) which did not befall this wicked prince: whose kingdom was destroyed and depopulated by the fiercest nations; his treasures ransacked; his wives carried into captivity; his children slain; and he himself laboured under a sore disease for two years; and when he was dead had not the honour of royal sepulture, such as his ancestors had. All which calamities were threatened in the writing sent him in the name of Elijah, that he might not think they came by chance, but by the special direction of almighty God, as a punishment for his wickedness. But why should his people suffer, who are threatened in the first place to be plagued? the reason was, because their base fear made them comply with him in his idolatry; and besides, he was punished by the loss of them.

Ver. 15. *Thou shalt have great sickness by disease of thy bowels.*] A dysentery miserably tormented him.

Until thy bowels fall out] For what should he do with bowels, who had no pity and compassion on his own brethren?

By reason of the sickness day by day.] For two years, as it is interpreted ver. 19. *For days* sometimes signifies a year: and in the Hebrew the words are “days upon days,” that is, one year after another.

Ver. 16. *The Lord stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines.*] Who invaded him on the west side of his kingdom, as the Arabians did on the east side: who stood in such awe of his father, that they brought him presents (ch. xvii. 11).

And of the Arabians, that were near the Ethiopians.] It should be translated, “that were near to the Cushites.” A people inhabiting the inmost part of Arabia, not far from Nabathæa and Negid, which was then called Cush, in the confines of the territories of Babylon, which was the ancient Cush: by which name Arabia, or some part of it, is to be understood in many places (see xiv. 9; 2 Kings xix. 9). Whence the *topaz of Cush* must be understood of the topaz of Arabia, not of Ethiopia. In which country, there are no precious stones, as Ludolphus was assured by a priest of Ethiopia, and is confirmed by our merchants (see Dr. Hyde, in his late book *De Relig. Veterum Persarum*, cap. 1. p. 37, and my annotations on the place above mentioned).

The Hebrew *atjad* (*at hand*) is well translated *near* by us, for so it signifies plainly in other places. And Forsterus, perhaps, hath rightly observed, that the bounds and limits of countries were called *jad* (i. e. *a hand*), because a hand was there placed, to denote that there was the end of the territory, which reached no farther.

Ver. 17. *They came up into Judah, and brake into it.*] For his soldiers were not able to defend it from this irruption on both sides.

was found in the king's house, and his sons also, and his wives; so that there was never a son left him, save Jehohaz, the youngest of his sons.

18 ¶ And after all this the LORD smote him in his bowels with an incurable disease.

19 And it came to pass, that, in process of time, after the end of two years, his bowels fell

And carried away all the substance that was found in the king's house, and his son's also,] Whom they slew, ch. xxii. 1.

And his wives;] All except Athaliah: who hid herself, it is likely, in some secret place, with her youngest son.

So that there was never a son left him, save Jehohaz,] Who is also called Ahaziah, ch. xxii. 1, and by the interposition of one letter Azariah, ver. 6.

Ver. 18.] He lived to see all those calamities, which the prophet threatened, come upon him: and then the Word of the Lord, saith the Targum, smote him with a disease, for which there was no remedy.

Ver. 19. *So he died of sore diseases.]* These words seem to import, that there was a complication of other diseases, together with his dysentery: all which were

out by reason of his sickness; so he died of sore diseases: and his people made no burning for him, like the burning of his fathers.

20 Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years, and departed without being desired: howbeit they buried him in the city of David, but not in the sepulchres of the kings.

very grievous, and a suitable punishment to his horrid wickedness.

His people made no burning for him,] See upon ch. xvi. 14.

Ver. 20. *And departed without being desired.]* Some think the meaning is, he was weary of his life, being so full of pain, as to desire to die, rather than live in such misery. But the most natural sense is, that his people did not wish he should live any longer, but were glad his reign was so short: as appeared by their contempt of him, in making no burning for him, nor burying him in the sepulchre of the kings, as it here follows.

They buried him in the city of David, but not in the sepulchres of the kings.] They showed some respect to him, but not such as expressed any esteem for him.

CHAPTER XXII.

1 *Ahaziah succeeding, reigneth wickedly.* 5 *In his confederacy with Joram the son of Ahab, he is slain by Jehu.* 10 *Athaliah, destroying all the seed royal, save Joash, whom Jehoshabeath his aunt hid, usurpeth the kingdom.*

1 AND the inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah his youngest son king in his stead: for the band of men that came with the Arabians to the camp had slain all the eldest. So Ahaziah, the son of Jehoram king of Judah, reigned.

2 Forty and two years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign; and he reigned one year in

Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Athaliah the daughter of Omri.

3 He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab: for his mother was his counsellor to do wickedly.

4 Wherefore he did evil in the sight of the LORD, like the house of Ahab; for they were his

CHAP. XXII.

Ver. 1. *The inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah his youngest son king]* They declared him king, and set him on his father's throne: but the kingdom was his of right, without the suffrage of the people.

For the band of men that came with the Arabians to the camp] Mentioned in the foregoing chapter, ver. 16.

Had slain all the eldest.] This band of men came up with the Arabians, but, it seems, acted by themselves, and killed those in cold blood, whom the Arabians had carried captive (ch. xxi. 17).

Ver. 2. *Forty and two years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem.]* Many ways there are to reconcile this with 2 Kings viii. 26, where it is said he was two-and-twenty years old when he began to reign (see my annotations on that place). The shortest and plainest way is to acknowledge an error in the copyist or transcriber: for some Greek copies have here twenty-two years old; and so it is in the Syriac and Arabic translations: and our great primate Usher found it so, in a copy which he procured, at great charge, from that of the patriarch of Antioch. Piscator also acknowledges, there is no other way, that he knew, to solve this doubt.

His mother's name also was Athaliah the daughter

of Omri.] His grand-daughter, for she was Ahab's daughter (ch. xxi. 6; and see 2 Kings viii. 26).

Ver. 3.] She had the greater power over him, because she had saved him, together with herself, when the other wives and children of Jehoram were carried away captive. And she is said to have advised him "to do wickedly," because she led him into a worse idolatry than that of Jeroboam's. Which is called "the way of the house of Ahab;" not because they were the first inventors of it, but the chief establishers of it in these parts. It did not consist merely in the worship of God by an image, which was the way of Jeroboam, but the worship of other gods besides the God of Israel: viz. Baal-gods, or Baalim. Supposing either by these to have easier access to the sovereign God the Lord of hosts; or that these they might resort unto at all times, and for all matters, as being nearer at hand, and not of so high a dignity. Whereas Jehovah, the God of Israel, Most High, either managed not smaller matters, or might not be troubled with them. For such was the conceit of the heathen, that the souls of great men after death had the honour to be agents between the supreme God and men, as being of a middle nature between them; which the Greeks called demons, and the scriptures call Baalim (see Mr. Mede, book 1. discourse xliiii. 243).

Ver. 4.] His father was so bad, that there was no need any other should endeavour to seduce him, while

counsellors, after the death of his father, to his destruction.

5 ¶ He walked also after their counsel, and went with Jehoram, the son of Ahab, king of Israel, to war against Hazael king of Syria at Ramoth-gilead: and the Syrians smote Joram.

6 And he returned to be healed in Jezreel, because of the wounds which were given him at Ramah, when he fought with Hazael king of Syria. And Azariah, the son of Jehoram king of Judah, went down to see Jehoram, the son of Ahab, at Jezreel, because he was sick.

7 And the destruction of Ahaziah was of God, by coming to Joram; for when he was come, he went out with Jehoram against Jehu, the son of Nimshi, whom the LORD had anointed to cut off the house of Ahab.

8 And it came to pass, that when Jehu was executing judgment upon the house of Ahab, and found the princes of Judah, and the sons of the brethren of Ahaziah, that ministered to Ahaziah, he slew them.

he lived: but when he was dead, his mother's kindred thought it necessary to confirm him in his idolatry.

Ver. 5. *He walked also after their counsel.*] In other matters as well as in religion.

And went with Jehoram, the son of Ahab, king of Israel, to war against Hazael king of Syria.] Though he would not imitate his grandfather in that which was good in him, yet he followed his bad example; in joining with Ahab's son, as Jehoshaphat had with Ahab, in the like war.

Ver. 6.] These two verses have been explained in 2 Kings viii. 28, 29.

Ver. 7.] See how this was done in 2 Kings ix. 21, 27, and what I have noted there.

Ver. 8.] As they were going to Samaria (see 2 Kings x. 13, 14).

Ver. 9.] The story of his death is related here a little more particularly than in the book of the Kings (see what I have noted there concerning the whole, 2 Kings ix. 27, 28).

Ver. 10.] See 2 Kings xi. 1.

9 And he sought Ahaziah: and they caught him, (for he was hid in Samaria,) and brought him to Jehu: and when they had slain him, they buried him: Because, said they, he is the son of Jehoshaphat, who sought the LORD with all his heart. So the house of Ahaziah had no power to keep still the kingdom.

10 ¶ But when Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah, saw that her son was dead, she arose, and destroyed all the seed royal of the house of Judah.

11 But Jehoshabeath, the daughter of the king, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons that were slain, and put him and his nurse in a bed-chamber. So Jehoshabeath, the daughter of king Jehoram, the wife of Jehoiada the priest, (for she was the sister of Ahaziah,) hid him from Athaliah, so that she slew him not.

12 And he was with them hid in the house of God six years: and Athaliah reigned over the land.

Ver. 11. *But Jehoshabeath, the daughter of the king,*] i. e. Of the former king, Jehoram.

Took Joash the son of Ahaziah, &c.] See concerning this my annotations upon 2 Kings xi. 2.

So Jehoshabeath, the daughter of king Jehoram, the wife of Jehoiada the priest, (for she was the sister of Ahaziah.)] She was the sister of Ahaziah by the father's side, though not by the mother's: for Jehoram had many wives, as we read in the foregoing chapter.

Ver. 12.] See in the place above named what I have noted about the place wherein he was hid in the house of God: which the Targum here fancies was in the very holy of holies; into which none but the high-priest might enter, and that but once a year. But if this should pass for truth, we must not understand it of the most holy place itself, but of some chamber over it, as Beckius there observes, which will not justify this exposition; for, as I have observed before, there was no entrance into the room over it; nor is there any ground to think there was any building over it.

CHAPTER XXIII.

1 Jehoiada, having set things in order, maketh Joash king. 12 Athaliah is slain. 16 Jehoiada restoreth the worship of God.

1 AND in the seventh year Jehoiada strengthened himself, and took the captains of hundreds, Azariah the son of Jeroham, and Ishmael the son of Jehohanan, and Azariah the son of Obed, and Maaseiah the son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat the son of Zichri, into covenant with him.

2 And they went about in Judah, and gathered the Levites out of all the cities of Judah, and the chief of the fathers of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem.

3 And all the congregation made a covenant with the king in the house of God. And he said

CHAP. XXIII.

Ver. 1.] It is not to be supposed that he took all the captains of hundreds that were in the nation into confederacy with him: but such whom he could depend upon, whose names are here mentioned.

Ver. 2. *They went about in Judah, and gathered the Levites out of all the cities of Judah.*] These captains went about, and communicated the design to the Levites, as men that might be trusted with it.

And the chief of the fathers of Israel,] Some of

which were under the government of the king of Judah; and others, perhaps, were known to be well affected to religion, and so were invited to give their assistance. But it is most likely that Judah is here called Israel (as in several other places), the principal men of authority of which were acquainted with Jehoiada's intentions.

They came to Jerusalem.] To settle their resolution with Jehoiada.

Ver. 3.] When all the forenamed persons were assembled at the temple, the young king was pro-

unto them, Behold, the king's son shall reign, as the LORD hath said of the sons of David.

4 This is the thing that ye shall do; A third part of you entering on the sabbath, of the priests and of the Levites, shall be porters of the doors;

5 And a third part shall be at the king's house; and a third part at the gate of the foundation: and all the people shall be in the courts of the house of the LORD.

6 But let none come into the house of the LORD, save the priests, and they that minister of the Levites; they shall go in, for they are holy: but all the people shall keep the watch of the LORD.

7 And the Levites shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand; and whosoever else cometh into the house, he shall be put to death; but be ye with the king when he cometh in, and when he goeth out.

8 So the Levites, and all Judah, did according to all things that Jehoiada the priest had commanded, and took every man his men that were to come in on the sabbath, with them that were to go out on the sabbath: for Jehoiada the priest dismissed not the courses.

9 Moreover, Jehoiada the priest delivered to the captains of hundreds spears, and bucklers, and shields, that had been king David's, which were in the house of God.

10 And he set all the people, every man having his weapon in his hand, from the right side of the temple to the left side of the temple, along by the altar and the temple, by the king round about.

duced, and they all swore to be faithful to him. See 2 Kings xi. 4, where, in the following verses, most of this chapter hath been explained already.

Ver. 4, 5.] See 2 Kings xi. 5—7, where this is delivered a little more largely.

Ver. 6. *But let none come into the house of the Lord, save the priests, and they that minister of the Levites;*] Who were then in waiting in their course.

They shall go in, for they are holy:] They were consecrated to the service of God, and were bound to attend there.

But all the people shall keep the watch of the Lord.] That is, of the "house of the Lord," as was said before, ver. 5.

Ver. 7.] It appears by 2 Kings xi. 8, that part of the Levites were assigned to be the king's guard, which did not belong to their office (which was to guard the temple, and minister there); but upon this extraordinary occasion they were thus employed, as men upon whose fidelity Jehoiada might rely.

Ver. 8.] This is more distinctly set down in 2 Kings xi. 7, to which I refer the reader.

Ver. 9.] These seem to have been hung up as trophies in the house of God, after David's victories (see there, ver. 10).

Ver. 10.] See there, ver. 11.

Ver. 11. *Then they brought out the king's son, and put upon him the crown,—and made him king. And Jehoiada and his sons anointed him,*] The same is said in 2 Kings xi. 12, only one thing is here added, that he was anointed by "Jehoiada and his sons." Among whom Zacharias was one, whom the king most basely requited. The Targum here hath a long

11 Then they brought out the king's son, and put upon him the crown, and gave him the testimony, and made him king: and Jehoiada and his sons anointed him, and said, God save the king.

12 ¶ Now when Athaliah heard the noise of the people running and praising the king, she came to the people into the house of the LORD.

13 And she looked, and, behold, the king stood at his pillar at the entering in, and the princes and the trumpets by the king: and all the people of the land rejoiced, and sounded with trumpets; also the singers with instruments of music, and such as taught to sing praise. Then Athaliah rent her clothes, and said, Treason, Treason!

14 Then Jehoiada the priest brought out the captains of hundreds that were set over the host, and said unto them, Have her forth of the ranges: and whoso followeth her, let him be slain with the sword. For the priest said, Slay her not in the house of the LORD.

15 So they laid hands on her: and when she was come to the entering of the horse gate, by the king's house, they slew her there.

16 ¶ And Jehoiada made a covenant between him, and between all the people, and between the king, that they should be the LORD's people.

17 Then all the people went to the house of Baal, and brake it down, and brake his altars and his images in pieces, and slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars.

18 Also Jehoiada appointed the offices of the house of the LORD by the hand of the priests the Levites, whom David had distributed in the house

fable, that this was the crown taken from the head of the king of Ammon, wherein was a magnet, &c.

And said, God save the king.] They said this with clapping their hands, as we read in the book of the Kings.

Ver. 12.] They ran from place to place proclaiming the king, and praising God, for setting him upon the throne. This is more briefly related in 2 Kings xi. 13.

Ver. 13.] In this verse something is added concerning their expressions of joy, with instruments of music, &c. otherwise it is the same with 2 Kings xi. 14.

Ver. 14.] See 2 Kings xi. 15, where this is expressed more plainly.

Ver. 15.] See 2 Kings xi. 16. For no doubt an usurper may be slain, by those who have the supreme power and authority: whether it be in a king, or the senate, or the people, as Grotius speaks. To which he adds, the tutors of young kings who are their pupils, such as Jehoiada, lib. i. De Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 4, sect. 8, where he very wisely subjoins, that he cannot allow any private man to have a right to kill an usurper, sect. 19. Such a one Athaliah was, for she had no right to reign, but invaded the throne, by a tyrannical force, as Schickard calls it (cap. 1, Theor. 3, De Jure Regio).

Ver. 16.] I have explained this in 2 Kings xi. 17, where it is expressly said this covenant was made between the Lord, and the people, and the king (see there). Unto which I may here add, that there is no such difference between these two verses as may be imagined. For Jehoiada the priest sustaining the person of God, the covenant was made with God, not

of the LORD, to offer the burnt-offerings of the LORD, as it is written in the law of Moses, with rejoicing and with singing, as it was ordained by David.

19 And he set the porters at the gates of the house of the LORD, that none which was unclean in any thing should enter in.

20 And he took the captains of hundreds, and

with Jehoiada, who only represented God, to whom they promised obedience.

Ver. 17.] See 2 Kings xi. 18.

Ver. 18.] What is set down briefly, at the end of that eighteenth verse, that the "priests appointed officers over the house of the Lord," is here set down more largely in this verse, and in the next. The first words of which sound thus in the Hebrew, "he put the offices, the offices of the house of the Lord, in the hand of the priests and Levites." Who, perhaps, had been put out of their offices by the former wicked kings, or by Athaliah, and now were restored by Jehoiada, according to the regulations made by David.

Ver. 19.] These also had been constituted by Da-

vid (see 1 Chron. xxvi. 1, &c.). For there is no earthly king, as Maimonides observes, whose palace is not encompassed with strong guards: and therefore much more fit was it that the dwelling-place of God, the King of kings, should be surrounded by his ministers, priests, and Levites, who should carefully watch that nothing did pollute it.

Ver. 20.] He would have those who had begun this work see it accomplished: and therefore they all accompanied the king from the temple to his palace, and saw him set on the throne of his father (see 2 Kings xi. 19), whereby he took possession of the kingdom, to which he had been anointed in the temple.

Ver. 21.] See this explained in 2 Kings xi. 20.

CHAPTER XXIV.

1 *Joash reigneth well all the days of Jehoiada.* 4 *He giveth order for the repair of the temple.* 15 *Jehoiada's death and honourable burial.* 17 *Joash, falling to idolatry, slayeth Zechariah the son of Jehoiada.* 23 *Joash is spoiled by the Syrians, and slain by Zabad and Jehozaab.* 27 *Amaziah succeedeth him.*

1 JOASH was seven years old when he began to reign; and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Zibiah of Beersheba.

2 And Joash did that which was right in the sight of the LORD all the days of Jehoiada the priest.

3 And Jehoiada took for him two wives; and he begat sons and daughters.

4 ¶ And it came to pass after this, that Joash was minded to repair the house of the LORD.

5 And he gathered together the priests and the Levites, and said to them, Go out unto the cities

of Judah, and gather of all Israel money to repair the house of your God from year to year, and see that ye hasten the matter. Howbeit the Levites hastened it not.

6 And the king called for Jehoiada the chief, and said unto him, Why hast thou not required of the Levites to bring in, out of Judah and out of Jerusalem, the collection, according to the commandment of Moses the servant of the LORD, and of the congregation of Israel, for the tabernacle of witness?

7 For the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken up the house of God; and also

CHAP. XXIV.

Ver. 1, 2.] These two verses are the same with those 2 Kings xii. 1, 2.

Ver. 3.] He did not take these two wives for the king, but for himself: which was contrary to the constant tradition of the Jews, that the high-priest was to be so pure as to have but one wife at a time: which they endeavour to prove by scripture, from Lev. xxi. 13, 14. The Gemara Babylonica reports this, and Maimonides asserts it (see Braunius in his *Selecta Sacra*, lib. iii. cap. 2). Therefore Jehoiada is supposed to have had two wives before he was high-priest; or rather, one being dead, he took another. Or, as the Talmudists will have it, after he had divorced one he married another, as Mr. Selden observes, lib. iii. Uxor. Hebr. cap. 19. But, after all, it is not certain that Jehoiada was high-priest, for he is every where called "Jehoiada the priest;" and but once only (ver. 6), "the chief;" which doth not necessarily imply that he was the high-priest, but only a great man, because of his relation to the royal family; or because he was the chief head of the twenty-four families of the priests. But he seems to be distinguished from the

high-priest in 2 Kings xii. 9, 10, and is not mentioned either in Ezra vii. or 1 Chron. vi.

Ver. 4.] As is related something more particularly in 2 Kings xii. 4, &c.

Ver. 5. *Gather of all Israel money to repair the house of your God from year to year.*] That something might be done every year, till the temple was put into good repair. What money this was that they were to collect, we are informed 2 Kings xii. 4.

See that ye hasten the matter. Howbeit the Levites hastened it not.] Things were in so bad a condition, that it required the work should be begun with speed: yet such was the negligence of the Levites, and the backwardness, perhaps, of the people to part with their money, that in the twenty-third of this king's reign nothing was done, as we are informed in 2 Kings xii. 6.

Ver. 6.] Such oblations as were freely made in Moses's time for the building of the tabernacle (see Exod. xxxv. 5). There was also, besides this voluntary oblation, a tax set upon them (see Exod. xxx. 12, 13). It is called the "tabernacle of witness," because here were kept the two tables in the ark, which

all the dedicated things of the house of the LORD did they bestow upon Baalim.

8 And at the king's commandment they made a chest, and set it without at the gate of the house of the LORD.

9 And they made a proclamation through Judah and Jerusalem, to bring in to the LORD the collection that Moses the servant of God laid upon Israel in the wilderness.

10 And all the princes and all the people rejoiced, and brought in, and cast into the chest, until they had made an end.

11 Now it came to pass, that at what time the chest was brought unto the king's office by the hand of the Levites, and when they saw that there was much money, the king's scribe and the high priest's officer came and emptied the chest, and took it, and carried it to his place again. Thus they did day by day, and gathered money in abundance.

12 And the king and Jehoiada gave it to such as did the work of the service of the house of the LORD, and hired masons and carpenters to repair

the house of the LORD, and also such as wrought iron and brass to mend the house of the LORD.

13 So the workmen wrought, and the work was perfected by them, and they set the house of God in his state, and strengthened it.

14 And when they had finished it, they brought the rest of the money before the king and Jehoiada, whereof were made vessels for the house of the LORD, even vessels to minister, and to offer *withal*, and spoons, and vessels of gold and silver: and they offered burnt-offerings in the house of the LORD continually all the days of Jehoiada.

15 ¶ But Jehoiada waxed old, and was full of days when he died; a hundred and thirty years old was he when he died.

16 And they buried him in the city of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, both toward God, and toward his house.

17 Now after the death of Jehoiada came the princes of Judah and made obeisance to the king: then the king hearkened unto them.

18 And they left the house of the LORD God

witnessed the covenant between God and them (see upon Exod. xxv. 16).

Ver. 7. *For the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken up the house of God;*] That is, Ahaziah, and the sons of his brethren, mentioned ch. xxiii. 8. For his brethren themselves were carried captive before their father died (ch. xxi. 17), or, as Abarbanel expounds it, she being a *wicked woman*, played the whore with another man, by whom she had several bastards, who committed this impiety: therefore they are called the *sons of Athaliah*, their father being unknown.

Also all the dedicated things] Which should have been employed in the reparation of it.

Did they bestow upon Baalim.] Gave them either to adorn the temples of those false gods, or to promote their worship.

Ver. 8.] This is more largely related in 2 Kings xii. 9 (see there).

Ver. 9.] One like to that, according as every man should freely offer.

Ver. 10. *And all the princes and all the people rejoiced, and brought in, and cast into the chest,*] The great men set so good an example to the people, that they cheerfully joined with them in this good work.

Until they had made an end.] Till every body had given something, or all that had a mind had offered, and they saw no more would be given: or, till the temple was repaired, and the work finished.

Ver. 11. *At what time the chest was brought unto the king's office by the hand of the Levites,*] Who brought it from the gate of the house of the Lord (ver. 8), that the king's officers might examine what the contribution amounted unto.

The king's scribe and the high priest's officer came and emptied the chest, and took it, and carried it to his place again.] By the hands of the Levites, who brought it thither.

Thus they did day by day.] This is related a little more largely than in 2 Kings xii. 10 (see what I have noted there).

Ver. 12.] See 2 Kings xii. 11—13, &c. where this is more distinctly related. Only here we are told who put the money into the hands of those that were to oversee the work, viz. the king and Jehoiada, which is not there mentioned.

Ver. 13.] For the men were so honest, that there was no time spent in calling them to an account, how they laid out the money; which they did very faithfully (2 Kings xii. 15).

Ver. 14.] It is likely Athaliah and her wicked sons had embezzled the holy vessels, and employed them to the service of Baalim. But till the temple was completely repaired, none of the money was converted to this other pious use, of purchasing vessels for the sanctuary, as we are distinctly told in 2 Kings xii. 13.

Ver. 15.] He seems to have lived long after this work was finished, being well stricken in years when he undertook it. Many such examples of long-lived men are collected by primate Usher, in his *Chronologia Sacra*, par. i. cap. 12, p. 70.

Ver. 16. *They buried him in the city of David*] This shows a good disposition in the king and the people at this time, though they soon changed after he was dead and buried.

Because he had done good in Israel,] The good he had done was in Judah, which is often in this history called Israel: because they were the principal tribe among the Israelites, and were, indeed, the true Israel of God, while they continued to worship him sincerely.

Both toward God, and toward his house.] He had been an instrument of restoring the divine worship, which now they were sensible was a great blessing: and in repairing the decays which were in the temple, and furnishing it with vessels for the divine service.

Ver. 17. *Now after the death of Jehoiada*] In his lifetime they durst not attempt this, for though he was old and feeble he retained great authority.

Came the princes of Judah and made obeisance to the king.] Some of the great men, who in their hearts, continued Baalites, desired to be admitted into the king's presence, and made their addresses with great reverence, pretending the greatest devotion to his service. And so falling into discourse with him concerning the state of religion, and other affairs, desired, at last, they might have leave to worship Baal, which Jehoiada had destroyed.

Then the king hearkened unto them.] To this dangerous discourse he listened and consented to them:

of their fathers, and served groves and idols: and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their trespass.

19 Yet he sent prophets to them, to bring them again unto the LORD; and they testified against them: but they would not give ear.

20 And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people, and said unto them, Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the commandments of the LORD, that ye cannot prosper? because ye have forsaken the LORD, he hath also forsaken you.

for fair words and flatteries easily deceive princes, as Grotius here observes; and they wanted not specious reasons to persuade the king not to be so strict, as to permit no God to be worshipped but only one. Some of the Jews fancy, that they flattered him with a conceit, that he himself was worthy of divine honour, being wonderfully preserved six years in the house of God; as the people flattered Herod after his oration, saying, "It is the voice of a god, not of a man."

Ver. 18. *They left the house of the Lord God of their fathers, and served groves and idols:*] Though at the first, it is likely, these great men only worshipped Baal themselves: yet they had their emissaries who persuaded the people to join with them. So that the house of God was deserted, and they worshipped idols in the groves.

And wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their trespass.] Which God punished by the hand of Hazael king of Syria (see 2 Kings xii. 17, 18).

Ver. 19.] God's goodness was wonderful in sending his messengers to reduce such a base people: whose wickedness was no less wonderful, in that they hearkened to the great men among them rather than to the prophets of Almighty God.

Ver. 20. *And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people.*] He had a divine monition to speak publicly to the people and reprove them: which that he might do and be heard of all, he got up into a high place where they might all both see and hear him. L'Empereur, in his Annotations upon Codex Middoth, p. 80, thinks, he got up into some desk or pulpit in the court of the priests.

Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the commandments of the Lord, that ye cannot prosper?] This he spake with great vehemence, and, it is likely, enlarged upon this subject so long, that it raised their indignation. It is very remarkable, that though he spake by the spirit of prophecy, yet he only applied the general prediction of Moses, Deut. xxxi. 16, unto the present time: that they might all learn to have a greater regard to Moses, and continually meditate in his law: unto which if they had attended, they would have easily discerned who were true prophets and who were false.

Ver. 21. *They conspired against him, and stoned him with stones at the commandment of the king,*] Who, it is likely, was present when he reproveth them; or, being told what he said, sent an order to kill him. Which shows their error, who think Joash was not an idolater himself, but only connived at the great men's idolatry, and gave them liberty to exercise it. Josephus rightly accuses him of this sin, of which, if he had not been guilty, he would not, sure, have slain the Lord's prophets who reproveth it.

In the court of the house of the Lord.] This shows that they were there assembled; of which he took the advantage to put them in mind of their duty: and, if we believe the Jews, it was upon the

21 And they conspired against him, and stoned him with stones, at the commandment of the king, in the court of the house of the LORD.

22 Thus Joash the king remembered not the kindness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but slew his son: and when he died, he said, The LORD look upon it, and require it.

23 ¶ And it came to pass at the end of the year, that the host of Syria came up against him: and they came to Judah and Jerusalem, and destroyed all the princes of the people from among the people, and sent all the spoil of them unto the king of Damascus.

great day of expiation. For, as Bochartus observes (Hierozoicon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 1). Plebeius furor nullos habet limites, maxime cum religionis velum illi obtenditur; "popular fury hath no bounds, especially when the veil of religion is thrown over it."

Ver. 22. *Thus Joash the king remembered not the kindness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but slew his son:*] This sin, besides the contempt of God's prophet, and of the place where he was murdered, had a horrid ingratitude in it: he being the son of him to whom the king owed his life and his kingdom. Who assisted his father at his unction, as some think, because it is said, ch. xxiii. 11, "Jehoiada and his sons anointed him." But if Jehoiada was high-priest, this son is not reckoned among the successors of Aaron in 1 Chron. vi. And therefore it is likely he was a younger son of Jehoiada: for if he had been his eldest, he would have had sufficient authority, without the spirit of prophecy, to reprove Joash for his idolatry: as Azariah resisted Uzziah when he would have usurped his office. Ludovicius Capellus therefore thinks it probable, that his brother the high-priest conniving at Joash's apostacy, this younger brother was inspired by God to reprove it. Which boldness Joash and his courtiers thought they might punish with some colour, by alleging, that he was not moved by God to it, but by his juvenile heat and rashness, which they stirred up the people to chastise (see Chronol. Sacra, p. 285).

When he died, he said, The Lord look upon it, and require it.] And so he did, both by external wars (ver. 23), and by a conspiracy against him (ver. 25). It is not to be thought, that he died with a spirit of revenge; but by the spirit of prophecy foretold God would punish them for their hard usage of him. Thus the apostle, 1 Tim. iv. 14, speaks of Alexander the coppersmith, who had greatly opposed him, "The Lord reward him according to his work:" which may he understood as a sentence pronounced against him.

The Jews tell a strange story in the Gemara Sanhedrin, cap. 11, how Nebuzar-adan, where he burnt the temple, saw blood bubbling up in a certain place; and inquiring into the matter he understood, that a priest and prophet of the Lord had been slain there, because he foretold their destruction. Whereupon he killed all the doctors of the law, but still the blood was not at rest: then all the scholars in their schools, but still it was not quiet: then all the priests, and at last many thousands of the people, but still it continued to bubble. So that he said, Zechariah, Zechariah, wouldst thou have me to destroy all the nation? and then it rested (sect. 24). In other books they say, there were seven transgressions upon this day, in which they killed a priest, a prophet, a judge, shed innocent blood, polluted the court of the Lord's house, and the sabbath, and the day of expiation.

Ver. 23. *At the end of the year, that the host of Syria came up against him:*] God was very speedy

24 For the army of the Syrians came with a small company of men, and the Lord delivered a very great host into their hand, because they had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers: so they executed judgment against Joash.

25 And when they were departed from him (for they left him in great diseases,) his own servants conspired against him, for the blood of the sons of Jehoiada the priest, and slew him on his bed, and he died: and they buried him in the

city of David, but they buried him not in the sepulchres of the kings.

26 And these are they that conspired against him; Zabad the son of Shimeath an Ammonitess, and Jehozabad the son of Shimrith a Moabitess.

27 ¶ Now concerning his sons, and the greatness of the burdens laid upon him, and the repairing of the house of God, behold, they are written in the story of the book of the kings. And Amaziah his son reigned in his stead.

in punishing this, and the rest of the wickedness they had committed.

They came to Judah and Jerusalem, and destroyed all the princes of the people, from among the people,] Who had advised king Joash to restore the worship of Baal. This was a distinct war from that mentioned 2 Kings xii. 17, 18. Here Hazael is not said to have come up, but only his army, and that a small party. There it is not said, he took Jerusalem; but here he destroyed all the princes. There it is said, Joash diverted Hazael from him by presents; here, that they spoiled the city, and sent the prey to Syria. We are therefore thus to understand the whole: that when they did evil in the sight of the Lord, he sent Hazael to afflict them, who, we read in the book of Kings, took Gath, and set his face, as if he meant to set upon Jerusalem: whereupon Joash took the hallowed things, and thereby procured his departure from them. But in the end of the year Zechariah being murdered, this other war began; which is here related in this book.

And sent all the spoil of them unto the king of Damascus.] Who was not here at this invasion, but contented himself to send a few forces against Judah, as the next words tell us.

Ver. 24. *For the army of the Syrians came with a small company of men, and the Lord delivered a very great host into their hand.]* This declared the punishment the more remarkably to proceed from the hand of God, who took away their courage, so that with a great host they could not resist a handful of their enemies.

Because they had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers:] According to the prophecy of Zechariah, ver. 20.

So they executed judgment against Joash.] They left him in a miserable condition: for all punishments are called judgments among the Hebrews.

Ver. 25. *For they left him in great diseases,]* Many think he was sorely wounded in the battle; which brought him into great diseases. And they increased, it is likely, by the grief and anguish of his mind, to see his country ruined; and by the hatred and contempt into which he was fallen, which encour-

aged his own servants (as it follows) to conspire against him.

For the blood of the sons of Jehoiada the priest,] This doth not denote he killed more of his sons than one; but, according to the frequent use of this language, the plural number is put for the singular.

And slew him on his bed,] Perhaps they were of his bed-chamber, and so could more easily compass their design. Howsoever, he was so weak and feeble that he could make no resistance, and was so little esteemed, that his guard minded not what became of him. This bed was in his house of Millo, as we read 2 Kings xii. 21, which is said to be in the way to Silla: because there was another house of Millo, from which this is thus distinguished.

And they buried him in the city of David, but they buried him not in the sepulchres of the kings.] The same is said of Ahaz, xxviii. 27. Though the people could not punish wicked kings for their impieties while they lived; yet they set blots upon their memory when they were dead, as Grotius observes, lih. i. De Jure Belli et Pacis, cap. 3, sect. 16, Egregio temperamento, as he speaks, "by a most admirable temperament:" wherewith the sacredness of the supreme power was preserved, and yet kings out of fear of future judgment were kept from altering religion. But it may be doubted whether this was done perpetually: for we find bad kings builded themselves sepulchres (2 Kings xxi. 18, 26).

Ver. 26.] They were mongrel fellows, whose fathers were Jews, but their mothers aliens. For so the manner of this impious people was, to make marriages contrary to the law.

Ver. 27. *The greatness of the burdens laid upon him,]* Some by burdens understand the sore punishments God inflicted on him, called in scripture "the burden of the Lord:" others, the great tribute laid upon him by the Syrians, which was a heavy burden, and a sore punishment.

Amaziah his son reigned in his stead.] Though the father was not beloved, it did not hinder the succession of his son.

CHAPTER XXV.

1 Amaziah beginneth to reign well. 3 He executeth justice on the traitors. 5 Having hired an army of Israelites against the Edomites, at the word of a prophet he loseth the hundred talents, and dismisseth them. 11 He overthroweth the Edomites. 10, 13 The Israelites, discontented with their dismissal, spoil as they return home. 14 Amaziah, proud of his victory, serveth the gods of Edom, and despiseth the admonitions of the prophet. 17 He provoketh Joash to his overthrow. 25 His reign. 27 He is slain by conspiracy.

1 AMAZIAH was twenty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty

and nine years in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem.

CHAP. XXV.

Ver. 1.] See 2 Kings xiv. 1.

Ver. 2.] He followed the right religion, and wor-

shipped God aright, but not with such sincerity as David his father did (2 Kings xiv. 3). See Grotius upon xxvi. 4, where he observes, his son did in fact what the law required; but not with a solid piety.

2 And he did *that which was right* in the sight of the LORD, but not with a perfect heart.

3 ¶ Now it came to pass, when the kingdom was established to him, that he slew his servants that had killed the king his father:

4 But he slew not their children, but *did as it is written* in the law in the book of Moses, where the LORD commanded, saying, 'The fathers shall not die for the children, neither shall the children die for the fathers, but every man shall die for his own sin.'

5 ¶ Moreover, Amaziah gathered Judah together, and made them captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, according to the houses of *their fathers*, throughout all Judah and Benjamin: and he numbered them from twenty years old and above, and found them three hundred thousand choice *men, able to go forth to war*, that could handle spear and shield.

6 He hired also a hundred thousand mighty men of valour out of Israel for a hundred talents of silver.

7 But there came a man of God to him, saying, O king, let not the army of Israel go with thee;

Ver. 3.] They seem to have been men of some power and interest in the court, whom he durst not meddle withal till he was well settled in his authority (see 2 Kings xiv. 5).

Ver. 4.] The very same is observed there, 2 Kings xiv. 6.

Ver. 5.] All that belonged to one family, he put under the command of one leader, whereby they became the more unanimous. Behold here, how their iniquities had diminished their numbers, since the days of Jehoshaphat (i. e. in the space of eighty-two years), for this king could bring but three hundred thousand fighting men into the field, and Jehoshaphat brought near four times as many (see upon ch. xvii. ult.).

Ver. 6.] In two things he showed his heart was not perfect with God (as it is noted ver. 2): for, first he sinned in making a league with the ten tribes, contrary to what the prophet Azariah had declared, ch. xix.: and secondly, he invited them to battle without any provocation; whereas he should have done as the Lord commanded, 1 Kings xii. 21, and left them to end their quarrels among themselves; only repelling them if they had invaded him, but no more.

Ver. 7. *But there came a man of God to him.*] This was the prophet Amos, father of the prophet Isaiah, if we will believe the Jews, particularly Kimphi upon this place: but this is a foolish tradition, built on a mistake that Amos the prophet was Isaiah's father.

For the Lord is not with Israel, to wit, with all the children of Ephraim.] In the Targum it is, "The Word of the Lord will not help Israel:" who had highly offended him by the idolatry which Jeroboam of the tribe of Ephraim introduced.

Ver. 8.] If he had a settled resolution not to desist, the prophet bade him go and try, whether with the greatest power he could muster up he should be able to prevail against the Lord, who could either help a few, or destroy a great many.

Ver. 9. *What shall we do for the hundred talents which I have given to the army of Israel?*] That which steeke with him was, the money he was likely to lose; for they would not return that, if he dismissed them from his army.

for the LORD is not with Israel, *to wit, with all the children of Ephraim.*

8 But if thou wilt go, do it, be strong for the battle; God shall make thee fall before the enemy: for God hath power to help, and to cast down.

9 And Amaziah said to the man of God, But what shall we do for the hundred talents which I have given to the army of Israel? And the man of God answered, The LORD is able to give thee much more than this.

10 Then Amaziah separated them, *to wit, the army that was come to him out of Ephraim, to go home again*: wherefore their anger was greatly kindled against Judah, and they returned home in great anger.

11 ¶ And Amaziah strengthened himself, and led forth his people, and went to the valley of Salt, and smote of the children of Seir ten thousand.

12 And *other ten thousand left alive* did the children of Judah carry away captive, and brought them unto the top of the rock, and east them down from the top of the rock, that they all were broken in pieces.

The Lord is able to give thee much more than this.]

This objection was presently answered, if he would but obey God, and trust in his goodness, who was able to give his faithful servants more than that came to: and, as Grotius notes, he is rich enough who is impoverished for God's sake.

Ver. 10. *Then Amaziah separated them,—to go home again.*] This argued some goodness in him, though his heart was not perfect with God.

Wherefore their anger was greatly kindled against Judah.] Because they looked upon them as enemies of God, and durst not employ them. St. Jerome thinks they carried idols along with them.

Ver. 11. *Amaziah strengthened himself.*] With his own men only.

Smote of the children of Seir] Who dwelt in mount Seir.

Ten thousand.] See 2 Kings xiv. 7, where this story is told more briefly: for what follows in the next verse is there omitted.

Ver. 12.] This was a very ancient punishment among the Romans, as we learn from Livy, Plutarch, Dionysius Halicarnassus, and others; and was used among other nations, as Mr. Selden shows, lib. i. De Synedriis, cap. 17, where he observes an illustrious example of this among the Israelites; who threw Jezebel down upon the stones out of the windows, by the command of Jehu.

Ver. 13. *But the soldiers of the army which Amaziah sent back, that they should not go with him to battle.*] The men of Ephraim, whom the prophet forbade him to join withal; and were therefore sent home.

Fell upon the cities of Judah.] They went away from Amaziah in a great rage (ver. 10), which instigated them to revenge the affront put upon them in this manner; taking hold of the fair opportunity which presented itself, by his war with Edom; which had drained his country of all the forces that should have opposed them.

And smote three thousand of them, and took much spoil.] Thus Amaziah was punished for having entered into a society with idolaters, though at the prophet's reproof he broke it off: and God, it is not unlikely, also suffered this calamity to fall upon him,

13 ¶ But the soldiers of the army which Amaziah sent back, that they should not go with him to battle, fell upon the cities of Judah, from Samaria even unto Beth-horon, and smote three thousand of them, and took much spoil.

14 ¶ Now it came to pass, after that Amaziah was come from the slaughter of the Edomites, that he brought the gods of the children of Seir, and set them up to be his gods, and bowed down himself before them, and burned incense unto them.

15 Wherefore the anger of the LORD was kindled against Amaziah, and he sent unto him a prophet, which said unto him, Why hast thou sought after the gods of the people which could not deliver their own people out of thine hand?

16 And it came to pass, as he talked with him, that the king said unto him, Art thou made of the king's counsel? forbear; why shouldst thou be smitten? Then the prophet forbore, and said, I know that God hath determined to destroy thee, because thou hast done this, and hast not hearkened unto my counsel.

17 ¶ Then Amaziah king of Judah took advice, and sent to Joash the son of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu king of Israel, saying, Come, let us see one another in the face.

18 And Joash king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife:

and there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trod down the thistle.

19 Thou sayest, Lo, thou hast smitten the Edomites, and thine heart lifteth thee up to boast: abide now at home, why shouldst thou meddle to thine hurt, that thou shouldst fall, even thou, and Judah with thee?

20 But Amaziah would not hear; for it came of God, that he might deliver them into the hand of their enemies, because they sought after the gods of Edom.

21 So Joash the king of Israel went up, and they saw one another in the face, both he and Amaziah king of Judah, at Beth-shemesh, which belongeth to Judah.

22 And Judah was put to the worse before Israel; and they fled every man to his tent.

23 And Joash the king of Israel took Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Joash, the son of Jehoahaz, at Beth-shemesh, and brought him to Jerusalem, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, from the gate of Ephraim to the corner gate, four hundred cubits.

24 And he took all the gold and the silver, and all the vessels that were found in the house of God with Obed-edom, and the treasures of the king's house, the hostages also, and returned to Samaria.

25 ¶ And Amaziah, the son of Joash king of Judah, lived after the death of Joash, son of Jehoahaz king of Israel, fifteen years.

because he used his victory over the Edomites with too much cruelty.

Ver. 14. *He brought the gods of the children of Seir,*] Which he should have burnt with fire.

And set them up to be his gods, and bowed down himself before them,] A most prodigious sottishness, as the prophet shows him in the next verse. Ahaz was wiser (though very wicked), who sacrificed to the gods of those people who had overcome him: hoping they might be persuaded to help him also (xxviii. 23). Or perhaps Amaziah worshipped them for fear they should owe him a spite, and contrive some mischief against him, in revenge of what he had done against the Edomites (see Dr. Jackson, in his book of the Original of Belief, ch. 17, par. 5, 10).

Ver. 15.] Nothing need be said more to convince him of his monstrous stupidity, of which no account could be given. Unless we suppose them to have been such beautiful images, that he looked upon them till he fell in love with them, and doted upon them, so that he was bewitched into a senseless idolatry. Fabius Maximus (as Strigelius here notes) was much wiser; who, having conquered Tarentum, and being asked what should be done with their gods, Deos iratos Tarentinis relinqui jussit, "bade them leave their gods that were angry with the Tarentines." For what vanity is it (as he adds) to hope for any safety from those that cannot preserve themselves! but such is the madness of idolaters, that it is reproved by sober heathens.

Ver. 16. *Art thou made of the king's counsel?*] Yes, undoubtedly, for he was made so by God; and did nothing but what belonged to his office (Jer. i. 10). But Amaziah thought not of this; but scornfully asked him, who made him a counsellor of state?

Forbear; why shouldst thou be smitten?] He bids him meddle no more in this matter, lest he should be

provoked to deal with him as they did with Zechariah (xxiv. 21).

Then the prophet forbore, and said, I know that God hath determined to destroy thee,] He forbore to advise or reprove him any further, but only denounced the sentence God had passed upon him for this contempt of him, and his other sins; which came to pass, ver. 20, 27.

Ver. 17. *Then Amaziah king of Judah took advice,*] He would not be advised by the prophet, but consulted those that led him to his destruction.

And sent to Joash, the son of Jehoahaz,] He was advised, it seems, without first desiring satisfaction for the damage done him (ver. 12), in which perhaps Joash had no hand, to make war upon him, and provoke him to battle (see 2 Kings xiv. 8, &c. where this and the following verses are explained).

Ver. 18, 19.] See this explained there, 2 Kings xiv. 9, 10.

Ver. 20.] God blinds the minds of those whom he intends to destroy for their sins.

Ver. 21.] For there was another Beth-shemesh in the tribe of Naphtali (Josh. xix. 38; Judg. i. 33).

Ver. 22.] These two verses are in the same words, 2 Kings xiv. 11, 12.

Ver. 23.] See there, ver. 13.

Ver. 24. *He took—all the vessels that were found in the house of God with Obed-edom,*] The Targum here explains it, that Obed-edom consecrated these vessels to God's service, when David brought the ark to his house; and God blessed him for his care in looking after it. But Kimchi judges better, who takes Obed-edom to have been set over these treasures, in the custody of which his son succeeded him.

The hostages also,] These hostages the Targum takes for the sons of the principal men of the city, with whom the generality of the Hebrew interpreters

26 Now the rest of the acts of Amaziah, first and last, behold, *are* they not written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel!

27 ¶ Now after the time that Amaziah did turn away from following the LORD, they made a con-

agree. So Jarchi; the children of Israel did not restore to Amaziah the kingdom of Judah, but upon condition, that he should give him the children of great men for a security of his fidelity, and that he should not rebel against him hereafter.

Ver. 25.] See upon 2 Kings xiv. 17.

Ver. 26.] See there, ver. 18.

Ver. 27.] He turned from God before the death of Joash; therefore this conspiracy was laid a great while before it was discovered; and then he fled to

spiracy against him in Jerusalem; and he fled to Lachish: but they sent to Lachish after him, and slew him there.

28 And they brought him upon horses, and buried him with his fathers in the city of Judah.

Lachish, where it took effect. Or, as Jacobus Capellus conjectures (in his *Hist. Sacra et Exotica*), the wars abroad put a stop to this sedition at home; but when they were over, and he returned home, and had a son, then the conspiracy was renewed again, under the specious name of being guardians to the young prince, and taking better care of him than his father was likely to do.

Ver. 28.] That is, in the city of David, as it is explained 1 Kings xiv. 20.

CHAPTER XXVI.

1 *Uzziah succeeding, and reigning well in the days of Zechariah, prospereth. 16 Waxing proud, he invadeth the priest's office, and is smitten with leprosy. 22 He dieth, and Jotham succeedeth him.*

1 THEN all the people of Judah took Uzziah, who *was* sixteen years old, and made him king in the room of his father Amaziah.

2 He built Eloth, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers.

3 Sixteen years old *was* Uzziah when he began to reign; and he reigned fifty and two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also *was* Jecoliah of Jerusalem.

4 And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah did.

5 And he sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God: and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him to prosper.

6 And he went forth, and warred against the Philistines, and brake down the wall of Gath, and the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod, and built cities about Ashdod, and among the Philistines.

7 And God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians that dwelt in Gurbaal, and the Mehunims.

8 And the Ammonites gave gifts to Uzziah: and his name spread abroad *even* to the entering in of Egypt; for he strengthened *himself* exceedingly.

9 Moreover, Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the corner gate, and at the valley gate, and at the turning *of the wall*, and fortified them.

10 Also he built towers in the desert, and

CHAP. XXVI.

Ver. 1. *Uzziah,*] Who was called also Azariah, 2 Kings xiv. 21; xv. 1.

Who was sixteen years old, and made him king] They made him king when he was sixteen years old; for his father left him an infant of four years old: so that there was an interregnum of twelve years; the kingdom being administered by a viceroy, or by the high-priest and the elders (see Ludovicus Capellus, in his *Chronologia Sacra*, p. 182).

Ver. 2.] He repaired it, after he had retaken it from the Israelites: this being, I suppose, one of the cities, that the soldiers, whom his father Amaziah dismissed, had taken (2 Kings xiv. 22), and which, while he lived, he could not recover.

Ver. 3, 4.] These two verses are the very same with those 2 Kings xv. 2, 3 (see there).

Ver. 5. *He sought God in the days of Zechariah,*] He persisted in the true religion, as long as Zechariah lived. By whom is not meant him whose book of prophecies is extant in the Bible, for he lived three hundred years after: nor the son of Jehoiada, who was slain some years ago: but, it is probable, the son of that Zechariah, who was called after his father's name, and was eminent for his divine wisdom.

Who had understanding in the visions of God:] It is not said he was a prophet, but that he was a man very skillful in expounding the ancient prophecies,

and giving instruction out of them, as Grotius understands it.

As long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper.] Of which he gives instances in the following verses.

Ver. 6.] From this verse unto the fifteenth, this divine writer shows how excellent a prince this was, and how God prospered him, while he continued truly religious. For he was skilled in husbandry as well as in warlike affairs: and was very solicitous for the good of his people. The former of these is mentioned ver. 10, and the other in the rest of the verses: which tell us, how prudently he demolished all the fortifications of his enemies on the frontiers; and provided his own frontiers with works, garrisons, arms, and engines of war.

Ver. 7.] I have noted often before, that these Mehunims were a people in Arabia Deserta. See 1 Chron. iv. 41; 2 Chron. xx. 1; Judg. x. 11, 12, of which this place gives a clear proof.

Ver. 8. *The Ammonites gave gifts to Uzziah:*] Made him presents, that they might preserve his friendship.

And his name spread abroad, even to the entering in of Egypt; for he strengthened himself exceedingly.] His power grew so very great, that he was formidable, not only to the Philistines in the west, and to the Arabians and others in the east, but to the borders of Egypt in the south.

digged many wells: for he had much cattle, both in the low country and in the plains; husbandmen *also*, and vine-dressers in the mountains, and in Carmel: for he loved husbandry.

11 Moreover, Uzziah had a host of fighting men, that went out to war by bands, according to the number of their account by the hand of Jeiel the scribe, and Maaseiah the ruler, under the hand of Hananiah, *one* of the king's captains.

12 The whole number of the chief of the fathers of the mighty men of valour *were* two thousand and six hundred.

13 And under their hand *was* an army, three hundred thousand and seven thousand and five hundred, that made war with mighty power, to help the king against the enemy.

14 And Uzziah prepared for them, throughout all the host, shields, and spears, and helmets, and habergeons, and bows, and slings *to cast* stones.

15 And he made in Jerusalem engines, in-

vented by cunning men, to be on the towers and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones withal: and his name spread far abroad; for he was marvellously helped till he was strong.

16 ¶ But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to *his* destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense.

17 And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the LORD, *that were* valiant men:

18 And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, *It appertaineth* not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed: neither *shall it be* for thine honour from the LORD God.

19 Then Uzziah was wroth, and *had* a censer

Ver. 9.] In his father's time the wall of Jerusalem was broken down four hundred cubits, as we read in the foregoing chapter, ver. 23, which, it is likely, was built again before this time. But Uzziah made it stronger by towers, which he built for its defence. One of which was at that very gate where the breach ended, viz. the corner-gate.

Ver. 10. *He built towers in the desert.*] To defend the shepherds from the sudden incursions of their enemies; particularly the Arabs, who had formerly broken in upon them (xxi. 16).

Husbandmen also, and vine dressers in the mountains.] Some therefore take the towers forementioned to have been country-houses, where husbandmen dwelt: and where their cattle in hard weather were sheltered; and the fruits of the earth were laid up.

In Carmel.] By this is not meant the famous mount of that name (for that was not in the tribe of Judah), but a very fertile country, as the word *Carmel* signifies in several places (Isa. xvi. 10; Jer. ii. 7; xlviii. 33).

For he loved husbandry.] As the greatest men (I have often observed) did in ancient times, and followed the plough, and fed cattle themselves (see 1 Kings xix. 19).

Ver. 11. *Uzziah had a host of fighting men that went out to war by bands.*] They were sent out by parties, several ways, for it appears by what follows they were very numerous.

According to the number of their account by the hand of Jeiel the scribe.] He was the secretary of war (as we now speak), who took an account of the several bands of men that went out, and of the number whereof they consisted.

And Maaseiah the ruler, under the hand of Hananiah.] These two, I suppose, were great officers, who were to oversee Jeiel; that there was no fraud in his account.

Ver. 12.] This is sufficient to show he had a very great army (there being so many principal persons employed to command them); but a particular account is given of them in the next verse.

Ver. 13.] Perhaps these were a standing force, ready to repel their enemies if they invaded them; besides that host, which went forth by bands, to annoy their enemies on all sides (ver. 11): and then he was grown much more powerful than his father (see xxv. 5).

Ver. 14.] All sorts of arms; both defensive and offensive: but here is no mention of swords; with which, I suppose, all the people were always provided.

Ver. 15. *He made in Jerusalem engines, invented by cunning men, to be on the towers.*] The Targum by these engines understand towers perforated: whereas the text plainly tells us they were engines, out of which they shot arrows and threw stones, from the towers and from the walls. Bochartus thinks the word properly imports, they were contrived for the projection of stones (lib. iii. of his Phaleg. cap. 7, and in his Canaan, lib. i. cap. 35).

His name spread far abroad.] Beyond the entering in of Egypt (ver. 8), unto distant countries.

For he was marvellously helped.] God aided him so wonderfully in all his undertakings, that he feared no enemy (ver. 7).

Ver. 16. *But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction.*] To the loss of all his authority. How hard is it to bear great prosperity with moderation and humble thankfulness!

For he transgressed against the Lord his God, and went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense.] What should tempt him to this folly, it is hard to give an account. Perhaps he had a vain ambition to imitate heathen princes; who in many places executed the priesthood also. And Jacobus Capellus thinks, that which puffed him up with pride was, that he had not only a son, viz. Jotham, but a grandson, Ahaz (ad A. N. 3231).

Ver. 17.] See my annotations on 1 Chron. vi. 10.

Ver. 18. *They withstood Uzziah the king.*] It is plain by this, that they did not withstand his attempt by force of arms: but by reasons, persuasions, and exhortations. And, perhaps, they surrounded the altar, so that he could not, without offering violence to them, approach it.

It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord, but to the priests.] They represented to him, that he invaded the office of the priests who were consecrated to this service: which he was not, and therefore ought not to meddle with it.

Go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed.] Had gone too far already, in going into the holy place; thereby he had offended the divine majesty: but they beseech him to proceed no further.

Neither shall it be for thine honour from the Lord God.] They represent to him, that he could get no honour, but lose very much by aspiring to this dignity of the priesthood, which the Lord had placed in other hands.

Ver. 19. *Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense.*] Which he would

in his hand to burn incense; and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar.

20 And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he *was* leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hastened also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him.

21 And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house,

not lay aside upon their admonition: but fell into a great passion, because he was hindered in that which he designed.

While he was wroth with the priests.] And perhaps, threatening that he would have his will.

The leprosy even rose up in his forehead] Where it could not be concealed, but was apparent to all that were present.

Before the priests in the house of the Lord, from beside the incense altar.] Where they stood to keep him from it.

Ver. 20. *Behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence;*] There was no need to use force to thrust him out, for he hastened himself, as it follows, to be gone: therefore they only admonished him most earnestly to depart, because the law permitted not a leper to remain in a city, much less to come into the house of God.

Yea, himself hastened also to go out, because the Lord had smitten him.] And he was afraid of a sorer punishment, if he stayed there (see Grotius, *De Imperio S. P. circa Sacra*, p. 251).

Ver. 21. *And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death.*] The punishment was capital for meddling rashly with divine ministrations, as we see from the beginning in the case of Nadab and Abihu (Lev. x. 1, 2, and see Num. iii. 10; xviii. 7). Now

being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD; and Jotham his son *was* over the king's house, judging the people of the land.

22 ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, first and last, did, Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz, write.

23 So Uzziah slept with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the field of the burial which *belonged* to the kings; for they said, *He is a leper:* and Jotham his son reigned in his stead.

the leprosy was a kind of death, because it separated those who were smitten with it, from the society of men, as if they were dead, and no part of this world.

And dwelt in a several house, being a leper;] In the Hebrew the words are, "he dwelt in a house of freedom;" so such places were called, because such as were there were exempt from the common affairs and shut up from the conversation of men: whence such as are laid in their grave, are said to be "free among the dead" (Ps. lxxxviii. 5), because removed from all the affairs and conversation of the world (see Dr. Hammond upon that place, annot. e).

Jotham his son was over the king's house.] See 2 Kings xv. 5.

Ver. 22.] This shows, the prophets were wont (as I have before observed) to write the history of their own times. For Isaiah prophesied in the beginning of Uzziah's reign, and, as Abarinel thinks, before Hosea, who lived in the same period of time; and prophesied before Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

Ver. 23. *They buried him with his fathers in the field of the burial which belonged to the kings;*] This was in the city of David, as we read in 2 Kings xv. 17.

For they said, He is a leper:] Therefore he was not buried in the sepulchre of the kings his predecessors; but had a *several* burial-place when he was dead, as he had a several house while he lived.

CHAPTER XXVII.

1 Jotham reigning well prospereth. 5 He subdueth the Ammonites. 7 His reign. 9 Ahaz succeedeth him.

I JOTHAM was twenty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also *was* Jerushah, the daughter of Zadok.

2 And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Uzziah did: howbeit he entered not into the

temple of the LORD. And the people did yet corruptly.

3 He built the high gate of the house of the LORD, and on the wall of Ophel he built much.

4 Moreover, he built cities in the mountains of Judah; and in the forests he built castles and towers.

CHAP. XXVII.

Ver. 1, 2.] The very same is said in 2 Kings xv. 33, 34.

Howbeit he entered not into the temple of the Lord.] Some imagine he was so frightened at what befel his father, that he did not so much as go into the court of the temple, or that he did not offer sacrifices in the temple, but in high places. But this doth not well agree with the words foregoing: therefore the meaning rather is, that he imitated his father in all that was good in him; but did not profanely enter into the temple to offer incense, as he did.

The people did yet corruptly.] For they offered incense in high places, 2 Kings xv. 35, and, as some think, committed idolatry.

Ver. 3. *He built the high gate of the house of the*

Lord.] It was built before by Solomon, but he repaired it (2 Kings xv. 35), and, as some think, added a very glorious structure to it.

And on the wall of Ophel he built much.] The Targum translates it, "a palace:" but others understand by *ophel* a high place, or cliff, where there was a tower. Pellicanus thinks, the meaning is, that he much beautified, as well as repaired, the porch of the Lord's house, which was a hundred and twenty cubits high.

Ver. 4.] That is, he took care to fortify his kingdom strongly on all sides against his enemies.

Ver. 5. *He fought also with the king of the Ammonites, and prevailed against them.*] This people had been entirely subdued by David, as we read 2 Sam. x. xii. 31, but now it seems they had recovered so much strength, that they invaded the country of Judah; but were overthrown by Jotham.

II. CHRONICLES.

5 ¶ He fought also with the king of the Ammonites, and prevailed against them. And the children of Ammon gave him the same year a hundred talents of silver, and ten thousand measures of wheat, and ten thousand of barley. So much did the children of Ammon pay unto him, both the second year and the third.

6 So Jotham became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the LORD his God.

The children of Ammon gave him the same year a hundred talents of silver, &c.] He made them tributaries to him; and they began the very same year to pay the tribute.

Both the second year, and the third.] Either this was the agreement, that for three years they should make this acknowledgment; or, at the three years' end they grew so strong again, that they refused to continue it longer.

Ver. 6.] Directed his counsels and actions aright, according to the rule of God's word. Solomon Jarchi here observes, that all the kings of Judah had some ill thing laid to their charge, but only Jotham: for David himself sinned grievously in the matter of Uriah; Solomon was drawn away by his wives to countenance idolatry; Rehoboam forsook the law of God: and Abijah walked in his steps; Asa took the treasures of God's house, and sent them to the king of Syria; and likewise put the prophet in the stocks; Jehoshaphat entered into society with the wicked; and so he goes on with the rest. But in Jotham (saith he,) there is no fault found; which is a wonder, when there were so few good people among them: for his integrity was not so great, as the corruption of his

7 ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all his wars, and his ways, lo, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah.

8 He was five and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem.

9 ¶ And Jotham slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David: and Ahaz his son reigned in his stead.

people; who immediately after his death joined with Ahaz in his abominable idolatries.

Ver. 7. *Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all his wars,]* He had wars not only with the Ammonites, but with the Syrians, and with the ten tribes, as may be gathered from 2 Kings xv. 37.

Lo, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah.] The affairs of the kings of Judah are commonly said to be recorded in the chronicles of the kings of Judah: but this king's actions, it seems, were so eminent, that the Israelites also recorded some of them in their books.

Ver. 8.] This was said before, ver. 1, and it is not easy to give an account why it is here repeated. Unless it be true, which Kimchi saith, that Jotham was born the same year that his father was struck with a leprosy; but was not king till he grew up, and was instructed in the government; which was managed during his minority by the princes of the people. But Jacobus Capellus rather thinks he reigned sixteen years by himself alone; and then took his son into society with him, in the government of his kingdom.

Ver. 9.] See 2 Kings xv. 38.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

1 Ahaz reigning very wickedly is greatly afflicted by the Syrians. 6 Judah being captivated by the Israelites is sent home by the counsel of Oded the prophet. 16 Ahaz sending for aid to Assyria is not helped thereby. 22 In his distress he groweth more idolatrous. 26 He dying, Hezekiah succeedeth him.

1 AHAZ was twenty years old when he began to reign; and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem: but he did not *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, like David his father:

2 For he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made also molten images for Baalim.

3 Moreover, he burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and burnt his children in the fire, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.

4 He sacrificed also, and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree.

5 Wherefore the LORD his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria; and they smote him, and carried away a great multitude of them captives, and brought *them* to Damascus; and he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who smote him with a great slaughter.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Ver. 1.] See 2 Kings xvi. 2, where there are the very same words.

Ver. 2.] He not only worshipped the golden calves (which was the way of the kings of Israel), but many other gods of the nations round about: which are all comprehended under the name of Baalim (see what I have noted upon Judg. ii. 11).

Ver. 3. *He burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom,]* Where Moloch was worshipped.

And burnt his children in the fire,] Or, made them to pass through the fire: for the words are ambiguous. The Targum here saith, The Word of the Lord snatched Hezekiah out of the fire; because he foresaw three saints would spring from him: and here he tells a

long tale of Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, who were thrown into the fiery furnace.

After the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord had cast out] This was the most detestable idolatry that was practised among the ancient inhabitants of Canaan, as appears from Lev. xviii. 21, xx. 2-4, &c.

Ver. 4.] Not unto God, but unto his idols, whom he worshipped also "on the hills, and under every green tree," as it here follows.

Ver. 5. *The Lord his God]* The Lord is called "his God," because he was so by the right of his dominion over him, and his kindness to him for his father's sake.

Delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria;] That by this punishment he might return from his

6 ¶ For Pekah the son of Remaliah slew in Judah a hundred and twenty thousand in one day, *which were* all valiant men; because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers.

7 And Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim, slew Maaseiah the king's son, and Azrikam the governor of the house, and Elkanah *that was* next to the king.

8 And the children of Israel carried away captive of their brethren two hundred thousand, women, sons, and daughters, and took also away much spoil from them, and brought the spoil to Samaria.

9 But a prophet of the LORD was there, whose name *was* Oded; and he went out before the host that came to Samaria, and said unto them, Behold, because the LORD God of your fathers was wroth with Judah, he hath delivered them into your hand, and ye have slain them in a rage *that* reacheth up unto heaven.

10 And now ye purpose to keep under the children of Judah and Jerusalem for bondmen and bondwomen unto you: *but are there* not with you, even with you, sins against the LORD your God?

11 Now hear me, therefore, and deliver the captives again, which ye have taken captive of your brethren: for the fierce wrath of the LORD *is* upon you.

12 Then certain of the heads of the children of Ephraim, Azariah the son of Johanan, Berechiah the son of Meshillemoth, and Jehizkiah the son of Shallum, and Amasa the son of Hadlai, stood up against them that came from the war,

13 And said unto them, Ye shall not bring in the captives hither: for whereas we have offended against the LORD *already*, ye intend to add *more* to our sins and to our trespass; for our trespass is great, and *there is* fierce wrath against Israel.

14 So the armed men left the captives and the spoil before the princes and all the congregation.

15 And the men which were expressed by name rose up, and took the captives, and with the spoil clothed all that were naked among them, and arrayed them, and shod them, and gave them to eat and to drink, and anointed them, and carried all the feeble of them upon asses, and brought them to Jericho the city of palm trees, to their brethren: then they returned to Samaria.

evil ways. These two kings, Rezin king of Syria, and Pekah king of Israel, seem to have come upon him together, whereby he was put to some distress.

They smote him,] That is, the Syrians slew many of his people.

And brought them to Damascus,] This was after that invasion mentioned 2 Kings xvi. 5.

Ver. 6.] Who therefore forsook them, and took away their courage, that they could make no resistance; for otherwise, it had not been possible to make so great a slaughter in one day.

Ver. 7.] They seem to have taken Jerusalem (though they did not keep it), and to have slain these great persons. The Targum translates the last words, "the arkapta of the king:" that is, as some interpret it, the captain of his host. But our translation comes nearest to the Hebrew, "second to the king." Who was inferior to the king alone; inasmuch that the LXX. translate it *Δεσποζον*, he that immediately followed the king, and succeeded him. His *vicerey*, as some interpret it.

Ver. 8. *The children of Israel carried away captive of their brethren two hundred thousand, women, sons, and daughters,]* This is an argument that they were quite dispirited, and had no heart to defend themselves, being not only slaughtered like sheep, but carried captive by droves.

And brought the spoil to Samaria,] Into their own country, towards Samaria: but they had not yet brought it into the city of Samaria (ver. 13).

Ver. 9. *But a prophet of the Lord was there, whose name was Oded:]* By this it appears that God continued his prophets among the Israelites, to bring them to repentance, if they would have hearkened to their admonitions.

He went out before the host that came to Samaria,] Bringing their captives and spoil in great triumph thither.

Because the Lord God of your fathers was wroth with Judah, he hath delivered them into your hand,] He would not have them lifted up with their victory; which was not to be ascribed so much to their valour, as to the anger of God against Judah, who abandoned them to their fury.

And ye have slain them in a rage that reacheth up unto heaven,] That had no measure, and cried to heaven for vengeance upon the Israelites.

Ver. 10. *And now ye purpose to keep under the children of Judah and Jerusalem]* This seems to denote that they had sacked Jerusalem.

For bondmen and bondwomen unto you:] To use them as slaves of another nation, of whom they might make money, by selling them to their neighbour, or make them drudges to serve them for nought.

But are there not with you,—sins against the Lord your God?] He bids them consider that they who thought themselves God's favourites because he had made them so victorious, had sins enough to answer for: for which if he punished them as they deserved, they might be reduced to the same condition with the brethren of Judah.

Ver. 11.] If they did not set them at liberty, he threatens sudden destruction, which was ready to break forth upon them for their cruelty.

Ver. 12.] These persons had some goodness in them, as well as courage, and great authority with the people and soldiers.

Ver. 13. *Ye shall not bring in the captives hither:]* That is, into the city of Samaria.

We have offended against the Lord already,] By making such an unmerciful slaughter of their brethren.

For our trespass is great, and there is fierce wrath against Israel,] Or, "though our trespass is great," and deserves to be punished with a fierce wrath, as we have exercised against Judah.

Ver. 14.] To dispose of them as they pleased. A wonderful instance of obedience; in restoring not only the captives which were very valuable, but all the spoil also, which, no doubt, was considerable. What might not these great men have done, to bring them to repent of their idolatry, if they had been truly religious, and exerted their authority?

Ver. 15.] There were some nominated and appointed, I suppose, by the heads of the people, to take care of the captives, and see them well treated, who not only gave them necessary sustenance, but refreshed their weariness, like the good Samaritan in

16 ¶ At that time did king Ahaz send unto the kings of Assyria to help him.

17 For again the Edomites had come and smitten Judah, and carried away captives.

18 The Philistines also had invaded the cities of the low country, and of the south of Judah, and had taken Beth-shemesh, and Ajalon, and Gederoh, and Shocho with the villages thereof, and Timnah with the villages thereof; Gimzo also and the villages thereof: and they dwelt there.

19 For the Lord brought Judah low, because of Ahaz king of Israel: for he made Judah naked, and transgressed sore against the Lord.

20 And Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria

the parable, who poured oil and wine into the wounds of a poor traveller. This was an extraordinary goodness, not only to release poor captives without doing them hurt, or making any gain of them, but to dismiss them with a *viaticum* (as Strigelius speaks), giving them all things necessary for their return home. And it was still a greater kindness to provide *vehicles* for the infirm multitude, and bring them to their own country without hard travel. So great was the power of the prophet at this time, that he turned their barbarous cruelty into the tenderest humanity. But, as I said, they were not so easily converted from idolatry: unto which they had so strong an inclination, that nothing could persuade them to forsake it.

Ver. 16.] When Rezin king of Syria had invaded him, 2 Kings xvi. 6, 7. This is the first time that we read of the king of Assyria, except in 2 Kings xv. 19, where Pul, king of Assyria, is mentioned as a powerful prince, who invaded the Israelites. Before his time we read nothing of that monarchy, which grew by degrees to its greatness from small beginnings. For in David's time, or whensoever Ps. lxxxiii. was written, the king of Assyria was but a petty prince, like those of Moab and Ammon, and the like, with whom he joined (ver. 8), to enslave the Israelites: but now had swallowed up all those little princes, and grown to such a height that none could stand before them. But if their large empire had been of long standing, we should in all probability have heard of them before this time, as we do often afterward.

Ver. 17.] When Rezin fell upon them, the Edomites took that advantage, and made great ravage in the land of Judah.

Ver. 18. *The Philistines also had invaded the cities of the low country.*] Which lay next to them.

And of the south of Judah,—and they dwelt there.] They prevailed so far as to make an inroad further into the country of Judah; and not only possessed themselves of the cities here mentioned, but settled in them. For in this weak condition into which Ahaz was fallen, they took their revenge for the mischief which Uzziah had done them, who subdued them as far as Gath (ch. xxvi. 6).

Ver. 19. *For the Lord brought Judah low because of Ahaz*] It was purely upon his account that God gave them up into the hand of the Philistines; for that very year in which Ahaz died, the prophet Isaiah foretold his son should afflict them (Isa. xiv. 27—29), and accordingly Hezekiah smote them as far as Gaza (2 Kings xviii. 8.)

King of Israel;] We cannot gather from hence that he is called "king of Israel," because he walked in their ways, for a good king is so called, xx. 2. And the Masorites observe, that six times we read the king of Israel instead of the king of Judah, because they all descended from Israel. So Beckius here ex-

came unto him, and distressed him, but strengthened him not.

21 For Ahaz took away a portion *out* of the house of the Lord, and *out* of the house of the king, and of the princes, and gave it unto the king of Assyria: but he helped him not.

22 ¶ And in the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the Lord: *this is that king Ahaz.*

23 For he sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, which smote him: and he said, Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, *therefore will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me.* But they were the ruin of him, and of all Israel.

pounds it, in a large sense, he was king of Israel: for Israel is not here opposed to Judah, but comprehends it. Therefore the Targum hath the *king of Judah*: and so the LXX. and the Vulgar Latin. For Israel was once the name of the whole people, and after the division of the kingdom, the two tribes were still a part of Israel, in the ancient state of the world. See Buxtorf; who observes, out of the Hebrew grammarians, that the manner of the scripture is to put the genus sometimes for the species, and the species for the genus (Vindiciæ Hebr. Vcritatis, cap. 7, par. ii.)

For he made Judah naked.] Deprived them of the divine protection by his foul transgressions.

And transgressed sore against the Lord.] The Targum renders it, "The house of Judah ceased from the worship of God." Which Ahaz, in a manner wholly abolished, and thereby transgressed more grievously than all his predecessors.

Ver. 20. *Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria came unto him.*] As he desired by the messengers he sent to him (ver. 10).

And distressed him, but strengthened him not.] In 2 Kings xvi. 9, it is said, that he did *help* him; how therefore did he *distress* him? Both these are true, for as he did come to his assistance against the king of Syria, so he took Damascus, carried the people captive, and delivered Ahaz from the power of the Syrians (2 Kings xvi. 7—9). But this did Ahaz little good, for he helped him not to recover the cities the Philistines had taken from him, nor did he lend him any forces, nor enable him to recruit his own; but rather weakened him by exhausting his treasures, and by destroying Samaria, whereby the way was opened to invade his country the more easily in the next reign. Thus many countries in latter ages, by calling in the assistance of some foreign prince against their enemies, have been overrun, and conquered by those who came to their help.

Ver. 21.] Did not make his condition better, but so much the worse (see 2 Kings xvi. 8).

Ver. 22. *In the time of his distress did he trespass yet more.*] He was not at all amended by the calamities which fell on him, but introduced more idolatry than had been practised before.

This is that king Ahaz.] The word *hu* is sometimes a word of contempt, as Kimchi observes (Gen. xxxvi. ult. Num. xxvi. 9). And Ahaz deserved to be branded, as the most notorious offender that had ever been among the kings of Judah; and was remarkable for this also, that he never prospered in any thing he undertook.

Ver. 23. *For he sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, which smote him.*] A most monstrous stupidity, to imagine they had any power over him, who could not defend themselves from Tilgath-pilneser: but being of opinion that they were gods, he sacrificed to

24 And Ahaz gathered together the vessels of the house of God, and cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God, and shut up the doors of the house of the LORD, and he made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem.

25 And in every several city of Judah he made high places to burn incense unto other gods, and provoked to anger the LORD God of his fathers.

them to appease them, that they might do him no further hurt; doing as the ancient Romans, who wooed by larger sacrifices the gods of their enemies to come over to their side, and be their friends, as Dr. Jackson discourses, in his Original of Unbelief, ch. 17, parag. 5.

Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, therefore will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me.] Not against the Syrians, but he foolishly imagined they might help him against the Edomites, Philistines, and other enemies.

But they were the ruin of him, and of all Israel.] They were so far from being his friends, that they proved the destruction of him, and of his whole country: for though it was not in their power to do him either harm or good, yet his worshipping of them undid him and all his people.

Ver. 24. Ahaz—cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God,] That the priests might not be able to minister before God for want of them (xxix. 19), and that he might employ the money he made of them (for what he cut in pieces, I suppose, he sold) in building altars (as it follows) in every corner of Jerusalem.

26 ¶ Now the rest of his acts, and of all his ways, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel.

27 And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city, even in Jerusalem; but they brought him not into the sepulchres of the kings of Israel: and Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead.

And shut up the doors of the house of the Lord,] That no man might come to worship God there, but sacrifice every where, but only where they should; and this continued till the beginning of his son's reign (xxix. 3).

Ver. 25. In every several city of Judah he made high places] He took care the people should not think of going up to Jerusalem; by erecting, at his own charge, high places in every city, wherein to perform divine service to what God they pleased.

And provoked to anger the Lord God of his fathers.] With whom he did not join other gods, but worshipped him not at all.

Ver. 26.] In 2 Kings xvi. 19, it is only said, they were written in the book of the kings of Judah: but Ezra, it seems, found that the book of the kings of Israel contained some memorable passages of his reign; there being, as is here recorded, great wars between them and Judah.

Ver. 27. The kings of Israel:] They are called the kings of Israel, because they had an ancient right to govern the whole twelve tribes.

CHAPTER XXIX.

1 Hezekiah's good reign. 3 He restoreth religion. 5 He exhorteth the Levites. 12 They sanctify themselves, and cleanse the house of God. 20 Hezekiah offereth solemn sacrifices, wherein the Levites were more forward than the priests.

1 HEZEKIAH began to reign when he was five and twenty years old; and he reigned nine and twenty years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Abijah the daughter of Zechariah.

2 And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father had done.

3 ¶ He, in the first year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of the house of the LORD, and repaired them.

4 And he brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them together into the east street,

5 And said unto them, Hear me, ye Levites; sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the LORD God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place.

6 For our fathers have trespassed, and done that which was evil in the eyes of the LORD our God, and have forsaken him, and have turned

CHAP. XXIX.

Ver. 1.] See upon 2 Kings xviii. 1, 2, where I have noted, that Ahaz therefore was very young when he begat Hezekiah. And we may grant, as Jacobus Capellus thinks, that he was but ten years old (though, as I have there shown, Bochartus thinks he was more); for though this was wonderful, yet not incredible, as his words are. For he refers us to Scaliger in his first oration against Pareus, where he mentions a city, in which a boy not twelve years old begat a child of a girl, a cousin of his, not ten years old: and adds, Rem notam narro, &c. "I tell a known story," whose memory is still fresh in Aquitain (see his Histor. Sacra et Exotica, ad Annum Mundi, 2292).

Ver. 2.] The same is recorded in 2 Kings xviii. 2.

Ver. 3. He, in the first year of his reign, in the first month.] This demonstrates his great piety and zeal for God, that he began so soon to reform religion, and did not stay till he was established in his throne.

For the surest way to establish himself, he thought, was to establish true religion; though he ran a great hazard in attempting the abolishing idolatry, which had been confirmed by some years' prescription.

Opened the doors of the house of the Lord,] Which his father had shut up (ch. xxviii. 24).

And repaired them.] For by long neglect they were gone to decay.

Ver. 4.] And he brought in the priests and the Levites,] Whose business it was to take care of religion, and look after things sacred, and admonish kings of their duty. But Hezekiah was before-hand with them, and prevented their endeavours; not only exciting them to reform what was amiss, but using the most proper arguments to press them to it.

And gathered them together into the east street,] Which was before the east gate of the temple, where the entrance into it was.

Ver. 5.] The abomination, as the Jews translate it; that is, the altar of Damascus, and all the idols that

away their faces from the habitation of the LORD, and turned *their* backs.

7 Also they have shut up the doors of the porch, and put out the lamps, and have not burned incense nor offered burnt offerings in the holy place, unto the God of Israel.

8 Wherefore the wrath of the LORD was upon Judah and Jerusalem, and he hath delivered them to trouble, to astonishment, and to hissing, as ye see with your eyes.

9 For, lo, our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons, and our daughters, and our wives, are in captivity for this.

10 Now *it is* in mine heart to make a covenant with the LORD God of Israel, that his fierce wrath may turn away from us.

11 My sons, be not now negligent: for the LORD hath chosen you to stand before him, to serve him, and that ye should minister unto him, and burn incense.

12 ¶ Then the Levites arose, Mahath the son

were upon it (see 2 Kings xvi. 10, &c.). These were brought by Ahaz into the temple; that is, into the court of the priests, which is called the *holy place* in Lev. vi. 16, &c.

Ver. 6. *For our fathers have trespassed, and done that which was evil*] He urges them to this pious work, from the consideration of the great sin of their forefathers, and their horrible contempt of the service of God, as it follows in the next words.

And have turned away their faces from the habitation of the Lord, and turned their backs.] This seems to signify that Ahaz brought in a way of worship directly contrary to the law of God; which commanded them to worship towards the ark, which was placed in the west. But he ordered they should turn their backs upon that (which was a disrespect and contumely to the Divine Majesty), and worship towards the east, where he had set his altar. And at last he shut up the doors of the temple, that they should not worship there at all, as it is again observed in the next verse.

Ver. 7. *Also they have shut up the doors of the porch,*] That none might enter into the temple, but it might be left a desolate place.

And put out the lamps,] The priests having nothing to do there.

And have not burned incense nor offered burnt-offerings in the holy place,] But made high places in every city, to burn incense unto other gods, as it is ver. 25 of the foregoing chapter.

Ver. 8.] After the confession of their sins, he represents to them the calamities wherewith God had punished them. And also sent such a panic fear and terror into them (such as is mentioned ch. xx. 22), that they could not stand before their enemies, but became a scorn to them. For it had not been possible that they should slay such a vast number of them in one day (as we read ch. xxviii. 6) if they had not been perfectly astonished, and bereaved of their senses.

Ver. 9. *Are in captivity for this.*] Or rather, *were* in captivity, till the tender mercy of God released them. And it is likely some were still in captivity to other nations, though the Israelites had dismissed their captives: for they were distressed in Ahaz's time by the Edomites, and the Philistines; the former of which carried away captives, as we read xxviii. 17, 18.

Ver. 10.] He resolved therefore to renew the cove-

of Amasai, and Joel the son of Azariah, of the sons of the Kohathites; and of the sons of Merari; Kish the son of Abdi, and Azariah the son of Jehialelel; and of the Gershonites; Joah the son of Zimmah, and Eden the son of Joah:

13 And of the sons of Elizaphan; Shimir, and Jeiel: and of the sons of Asaph; Zechariah, and Mattaniah:

14 And of the sons of Heman; Jehiel, and Shimei: and of the sons of Jeduthun; Shemaiah, and Uzziel.

15 And they gathered their brethren, and sanctified themselves, and came, according to the commandment of the king, by the words of the LORD, to cleanse the house of the LORD.

16 And the priests went into the inner part of the house of the LORD to cleanse *it*, and brought out all the uncleanness that they found in the temple of the LORD into the court of the house of the LORD. And the Levites took *it*, to carry *it* out abroad into the brook Kidron.

nant between God and the people, because he foresaw there was immediate destruction impending upon the whole nation for their iniquities, unless they did heartily and speedily repent of them; for they were grown to the greatest height of impiety, his father having by degrees proceeded to the utmost pitch of idolatry: which, though God had many ways punished very severely, yet he persisted in his wickedness; and to the very end of his life amended nothing, but grew worse and worse: therefore this good king thought it absolutely necessary forthwith to make a thorough reformation, and engage the whole nation in a solemn covenant to worship God purely. Thus Conradus Pellicanus.

Ver. 11. *My sons, be not now negligent:*] He beseeches the Levites, in the most tender language, no longer to go along with the people in their error, but to bestir themselves to make them better.

For the Lord hath chosen you—to minister unto him, and burn incense.] This was the work of the priests, unto whom he speaks as well as to the Levites, remembering them what their office was to which they were peculiarly chosen, viz. to take care to see his laws observed, and to minister to him, according to his directions; and therefore not to omit the performance of their duty in the house of God, now that it was open to them.

Ver. 12—14.] These were the principal persons among the Levites, who readily complied with the king's exhortation, and engaged their brethren also (as it here follows) in the same work, which they undertook, of cleansing the house of the Lord.

Ver. 15. *They gathered their brethren, and sanctified themselves,*] By washing their bodies, I suppose, and other rites prescribed by the law.

And came, according to the commandment of the king, by the words of the Lord, to cleanse the house of the Lord.] The king had a great power in things commanded by God: the exercise of which power is here very properly called "the commandment of the king, by the words of the Lord:" or, as in the margin, "in the business of the Lord." The like we read, ch. xxx. 12 (see Grotius, in his book De Imperio Summarum Potestatum circa Sacra, p. 59).

Ver. 16. *The priests went into the inner part of the house of the Lord,*] That is, into the sanctuary (for into the most holy none might go but the high-priest), whither the Levites might not come.

And brought out all the uncleanness—into the

17 Now they began on the first *day* of the first month to sanctify, and on the eighth day of the month came they to the porch of the **LORD**: so they sanctified the house of the **LORD** in eight days; and in the sixteenth day of the first month they made an end.

18 Then they went in to Hezekiah the king, and said, We have cleansed all the house of the **LORD**, and the altar of burnt-offering, with all the vessels thereof, and the shew-bread table, with all the vessels thereof.

19 Moreover, all the vessels, which king Ahaz in his reign did cast away in his transgression, have we prepared and sanctified, and, behold, they are before the altar of the **LORD**.

court of the house of the Lord.] That is, the court of the priests, where the Levites attended upon them, and ministered unto them.

To carry it out abroad into the brook Kidron.] They cast the filth into the valley of the son of Hinnom, or Tophet, through which Kidron ran (2 Kings xxiii. 10, 12).

Ver. 17. *Now they began on the first day of the first month to sanctify.*] This was the month Abib, as our great primate Usher observes, but not on the day he was made king, but nine months after his father's death (see his Chronol. Sacra, p. 82).

On the eighth day of the month came they to the porch of the Lord.] Which they cleansed together with the outward courts, and the chambers of the temple, in which they spent eight days more, as the next words signify. The house having been long shut up, and nobody coming into it, must needs be full of dust, and the vessels become rusty: in the scouring of which, and restoring them to their splendour, and wiping the walls of the house, they must necessarily spend a great deal of time, for the neglect had been great, and their diligence extraordinary: it being probable, that this sanctification was by washing both the walls of the house, and the floor, and every thing else.

So they sanctified the house of the Lord in eight days.] The pollution was so universal, and their exactness so great in restoring all things to their purity, that they could not finish their work in less time. Some think they spent eight days in cleansing all the places from filth; and other eight days in sanctifying the temple, and all belonging to it: though how this sanctification was performed we are not told.

Ver. 18.] All which they set in their right places, after they had removed all defilements from them.

Ver. 19. *All the vessels, which king Ahaz in his reign did cast away in his transgression.*] The Targum explains it very significantly, "Which he profaned, and rendered abominable by idols of other countries, particularly from Damascus." And so Kimchi, "Which he translated to idolatrous uses."

Have we prepared and sanctified.] The Targum gives a quite contrary sense of the words, "We have set them apart and hidden them, and prepared others in their place." And, indeed, the Talmudists (as Beckius here observes upon the Targum) are of opinion, that all the vessels which Ahaz profaned in his reign were set aside, and others consecrated in their stead: for they thought them not any longer fit to be employed in the divine service. But Kimchi understands these words as we do, that they purged and purified the vessels which he had profaned.

They are before the altar of the Lord.] Before the altar of burnt-offering (I suppose), unto which

20 ¶ Then Hezekiah the king rose early, and gathered the rulers of the city, and went up to the house of the **LORD**.

21 And they brought seven bullocks, and seven rams, and seven lambs, and seven he goats, for a sin-offering for the kingdom, and for the sanctuary, and for Judah: and he commanded the priests, the sons of Aaron, to offer *them* on the altar of the **LORD**.

22 So they killed the bullocks, and the priests received the blood, and sprinkled *it* on the altar: likewise, when they had killed the rams, they sprinkled the blood upon the altar: they killed also the lambs, and they sprinkled the blood upon the altar.

they went the next morning, and offered sacrifices; with the blood of which, perhaps, they were further purified.

Ver. 20.] Now he engaged the principal persons in the city to join with him in his reformation of religion, when all things were ready for the performance of the duties thereof.

Ver. 21.] It is very observable that the word *tsaphir*, which here signifies the *he-goat*, was never used by the Hebrews till after the captivity of Babylon, when we find it in Daniel, who lived in the captivity (ch. viii. 21). And here being used, and in no other place beside, it is some argument that Ezra was the author of this book, which he wrote after their return from that captivity, in which he had learned the Chaldee language, and hence mixed some Chaldee words with the Hebrew, whereof this is one. And therefore Daniel, to explain it, adds the Hebrew word *seir* to it, just as in the New Testament the word *ἄ παρῆρ* is added to *abba*.

He commanded the priests, the sons of Aaron, to offer them on the altar of the Lord.] There are two laws in the book of Moses, requiring a sacrifice to be offered for the sin of the whole congregation, when they were in an error. The first is in Lev. iv. 13, 14, where a bullock is required to be offered, when they were ignorantly seduced to do something forbidden by the law, though they did not forsake their religion. The other is in Numb. xv. 22—24, where a goat is commanded to be offered together with a bullock, when they acted contrary to their religion, and were fallen by error into the practice of external rites. And the bullock was offered for a burnt-offering in token that they owned no other God but the **LORD**, nor any other religion but that prescribed by Moses; and the goat for a sin-offering, that they might expiate the guilt they had contracted, by doing contrary to their religion. Now this good king Hezekiah, being sensible, that they had not only acted contrary to their religion, but in effect abolished it, by shutting up the doors of the temple, and omitting the daily sacrifice, and every where exercising strange worship, appointed seven bullocks for a burnt-offering, and as many goats for a sin-offering (though the law never required more than one goat), thinking these numerous sacrifices (together with rams and lambs) were, if not necessary, yet very fit, because of the great and long neglect of his divine service, and because of the multitude and long continuance of their other sins against the **LORD**, for which they now begged forgiveness. Thus after the captivity they offered twelve bullocks for burnt-offerings and twelve goats for sin-offerings (Ezra viii. 35), according to the number of the children of Israel: for, as they knew one goat was necessary, so they thought a great number would be becoming in such cases.

23 And they brought forth the he-goats *for* the sin-offering before the king and the congregation; and they laid their hands upon them:

24 And the priests killed them, and they made reconciliation with their blood upon the altar, to make an atonement for all Israel; for the king commanded, *that* the burnt-offering and the sin-offering *should be made* for all Israel.

25 And he set the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet; *for so was* the commandment of the Lord by his prophets.

26 And the Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets.

27 And Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt-offering upon the altar. And when the burnt-offering began, the song of the Lord began *also* with the trumpets, and with the instruments *ordained* by David king of Israel.

28 And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded: and *all this continued* until the burnt-offering was finished.

Ver. 23.] According to the direction of the law, Lev. viii. 15.

Ver. 23.] As the law also directed, Lev. iv. 14, 15; viii. 22.

Ver. 24.] The burnt-offering, to acknowledge the Lord to be the only God: and the sin-offering, to make expiation for all their offences against his supreme authority. And they were made not only for Judah but for all Israel: a great many of the ten tribes being now joined to them.

Ver. 25.] What king David had ordained was approved by the prophets: who liked the design, and, by authority from God, settled this course of divine service (1 Chron. xxiii. 5; xxv. 1; 2 Chron. viii. 14; xxiii. 18). The Targum here translates the last words, "For by the Word of the Lord this ordinance was made by the prophets."

Ver. 26.] Which were ordained by Moses, Numb. x. 10.

Ver. 27. *When the burnt-offering began, the song of the Lord began also*] When the drink-offering was poured out, then began the song: as the practice is described in aftertimes, by the son of Sirach, Eccles. i. 25, 26, &c. (see Dr. Lightfoot in his Temple Service). What the song of the Lord was, we are told ver. 30.

With the trumpets, and with the instruments ordained by David] See Chron. xxv. 1, 6. These hymns and doxologies were in the nature of prayers to God, as Mr. Mede observes, book ii. ch. 6, p. 365.

Ver. 28.] They all adored, as soon as the sacrifice and the praises of God began: and continued praising God till all was done.

Ver. 29.] As they began so they concluded the service, with adoration of the divine majesty.

Ver. 30. *Hezekiah the king and the princes*] Who now joined with him in furthering the reformation.

Sing praise unto the Lord with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer.] These were the prophets who composed the songs that the Levites sung, as I observed upon 1 Chron. xxv. 6. But the author of the psalms ascribed to Asaph (in the book of Psalms), seems to be one that lived in aftertimes: perhaps of the same family with this famous Asaph, who lived in David's days, and so called by his name.

29 And when they had made an end of offering, the king and all that were present with him bowed themselves, and worshipped.

30 Moreover, Hezekiah the king, and the princes, commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the Lord with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer: and they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped.

31 Then Hezekiah answered and said, Now ye have consecrated yourselves unto the Lord, come near, and bring sacrifices and thank-offerings into the house of the Lord. And the congregation brought in sacrifices and thank-offerings; and as many as were of a free heart, burnt-offerings.

32 And the number of the burnt-offerings, which the congregation brought, was threescore and ten bullocks, a hundred rams, and two hundred lambs: all these *were* for a burnt-offering to the Lord.

33 And the consecrated things *were* six hundred oxen, and three thousand sheep.

34 But the priests were too few, so that they could not slay all the burnt-offerings: wherefore their brethren the Levites did help them till the work was ended, and until the *other* priests had

They sang praises with gladness.] Not only upon this day, but continually, as David had appointed; and Jehoshaphat in his reign restored (xx. 19, 20). But this order had been interrupted in the time of succeeding idolatrous princes, especially in the time of Ahaz; but now revived by this good king Hezekiah.

Ver. 31. *Now ye have consecrated yourselves unto the Lord.*] By offering sacrifices of reconciliation with him, whom they had acknowledged to be their Lord; and were anew entered into their office.

The congregation brought in sacrifices and thank-offerings.] These were peace-offerings, whereby they acknowledged God's great goodness to them: and gave him thanks for this happy change of religion.

And as many as were of a free heart, burnt-offerings.] These were not like the sacrifices of thanksgiving, as Kimchi observes, which were in great part eaten by the offerers: for burnt-offerings were entirely consumed upon the altar, in honour of God: and therefore it argued greater piety and largeness of heart to offer them.

Ver. 32.] These were not so many in number as had been offered in former times; for the nation was now grown poorer, in comparison to what it was heretofore.

Ver. 33.] All these were devoted to the service of God, besides the burnt-offerings before mentioned.

Ver. 34. *But the priests were too few.*] For they who had sacrificed to idols were excluded from their ministry: and they who had not, were not at all prepared and sanctified to do their duty. For it appears by what follows, they were backward unto this work to which Hezekiah called them; and therefore could not prepare all the burnt-offerings (which was their proper work, Lev. i. 5), much less all the other sacrifices, which were numerous.

So that they could not slay all the burnt-offerings.] This was the work of the priests (Lev. i. 6), and could not be done but by those who were skilful in the business. So Bochartus observes out of the heathen poet, that it was practised with great art and industry (*Μισθόλορον ἐπιστάμιον*;) by those who had knowledge and skill to do it dexterously (Hieroicozon, par. i. lib. ii. cap. 33, p. 324).

sanctified themselves; for the Levites *were* more upright in heart to sanctify themselves than the priests.

35 And also the burnt-offerings *were* in abundance, with the fat of the peace-offerings, and the drink-offerings for *every* burnt-offering.

Their brethren the Levites did help them, till the work was ended.] In cases of great necessity, they did not stand nicely upon the observation of the ceremonial law. For both now, and in the days of Josiah (xxxiv. 11), some things were admitted, which that law did not allow. For, as now the Levites flayed the sacrifices (which was the work of priests alone, Lev. i. 6), so all the people were allowed to keep the passover in the second month; and the Levites offered the paschal lambs, which were brought by those that were unclean, and the unclean ate them.

And until the other priests had sanctified themselves;] Then the Levites might no longer continue to do their proper work.

For the Levites were more upright in heart to sanctify themselves than the priests.] In the foregoing reign, as Jarchi thinks, such as feared God (that is, would not worship idols) were forced to conceal themselves, and lie hid: so that when Hezekiah came

So the service of the house of the Lord was set in order.

36 And Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people, that God had prepared the people: for the thing was *done* suddenly.

to the crown, they did not presently appear, nor were they forward to be cleansed and sanctified. But the Levites were men of greater integrity than the priests: at least there were more men of zeal found among them, that readily offered themselves to the service of God (see xxx. 17).

Ver. 35.] This is another reason why the number of the priests was not sufficient to discharge the work of this day: because there were not only abundance of burnt-offerings to be flayed, but the fat of peace-offerings to be burnt, and a drink-offering to attend every burnt-offering, which must necessarily employ many hands.

Ver. 36. *Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people, that God had prepared the people;*] Had given this good mind to them, to join so forwardly in this reformation.

For the thing was done suddenly.] Which argued a divine motion; whereby they were excited without long persuasion.

CHAPTER XXX.

1 *Hezekiah proclaimeth a solemn passover on the second month for Judah and Israel.* 13 *The assembly, having destroyed the altars of idolatry, keep the feast fourteen days.* 27 *The priests and Levites bless the people.*

1 AND Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, to keep the passover unto the Lord God of Israel.

2 For the king had taken counsel, and his

princes, and all the congregation in Jerusalem, to keep the passover in the second month.

3 For they could not keep it at that time, because the priests had not sanctified themselves sufficiently, neither had the people gathered themselves together at Jerusalem.

CHAP. XXX.

Ver. 1. *Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh.*] I look upon the last words as signifying, that more particularly he wrote letters to these two tribes, as he sent messengers to the rest: for they were the tribes nearest to him. Whom he could not command, but only invite and admonish them of their duty. For they were bound by the law, as well as the people of Judah (see ver. 5), and great numbers of them had settled themselves in the land of Judah, in the reign of Asa (xv. 9).

That they should come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, to keep the passover unto the Lord God of Israel.] This was a festival that used to be celebrated in this very month wherein he began his reformation: which he resolved therefore to keep with great solemnity; and it could be kept nowhere but at Jerusalem; whither he invited the Israelites to come: and it seems, Hoshea king of Israel, at this time, did not forbid the messengers of Hezekiah to come and invite them, nor his people to go; as Jacobus Capellus observes: which I cannot but look upon as a remarkable instance of God's goodness towards this sinful people in the kingdom of the ten tribes, that he raised up, at the very last, when they were ripe for destruction, such a king to reign over them, as had so much goodness in him, that he did not hinder any of his subjects who would go and worship at Jerusalem.

Nor did he prohibit those from coming into his country, who were sent to invite them to it: so that the Israelites could not pretend they were compelled to be idolaters, for fear of the king's displeasure.

Ver. 2.] The time being elapsed (by such means as here follow) for its observation in the first month (which was the proper season), he took advice with those who were his proper council in such matters, to keep it in the next. For by the "princes, and all the congregation in Jerusalem," are meant the great synagogue, consisting of the senate of that city, and the other senators called from other places. So Grotius understands it upon St. Matt. x. 17. And thus our Mr. Thorndike also, in fewer words; He means the consistory called the *princes*, as they are called in the prophet Jeremiah, xxvi. 10, 11 (see Rites of the Church, p. 231). For Jehoshaphat having settled judges in every city, it is likely they remained in some authority till this time.

Ver. 3. *For they could not keep it at that time,*] At the time appointed by the law, on the fourteenth day of the first month: for the reason here following.

Because the priests had not sanctified themselves sufficiently, neither had the people gathered themselves together] Ahaz had made such confusion in the worship of God, by shutting up the doors of the temple (that no divine service might be there performed), and by erecting idols every where, and many other ways; that as the priests, by long disuse, could not be sanctified so soon as was necessary, nor the

4 And the thing pleased the king and all the congregation.

5 So they established a decree, to make proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beer-sheba unto Dan, that they should come to keep the passover unto the LORD God of Israel at Jerusalem; for they had not done it of a long time in such sort as it was written.

6 So the posts went with the letters from the king and his princes throughout all Israel and Judah, and according to the commandment of the king, saying, Ye children of Israel, turn again unto the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and he will return to the remnant of you that are escaped out of the hand of the kings of Assyria.

7 And be not ye like your fathers, and like your brethren, which trespassed against the LORD God of their fathers, who, therefore, gave them up to desolation, as ye see.

8 Now be ye not stiffnecked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the LORD, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified

for ever; and serve the LORD your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you.

9 For if ye turn again unto the LORD, your brethren and your children shall find compassion before them that lead them captive, so that they shall come again into this land: for the LORD your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him.

10 So the posts passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh, even unto Zebulun: but they laughed them to scorn and mocked them.

11 Nevertheless divers of Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem.

12 Also in Judah, the hand of God was to give them one heart to do the commandment of the king and of the princes, by the word of the LORD.

13 ¶ And there assembled at Jerusalem much people to keep the feast of unleavened bread in the second month, a very great congregation.

14 And they arose, and took away the altars

people have time to assemble: so the temple itself could not be purged till the sixteenth day of the first month (xxix. 17), and consequently the time was passed for keeping the passover, which was to have been on the fourteenth: they thought it best therefore to adjourn it to the next month, rather than stay till the next year; especially since God himself allowed, in some cases, those that could not keep it in the first month to keep it in the second (Num. ix.) And what was allowed to particular persons they thought might be allowed to the whole congregation of Israel.

Ver. 4.] The advice of the great council was approved by the king, and by every one else.

Ver. 5. *So they established a decree.*] This was the work of a court, or great council.

To make proclamation] By the king's authority.

From Beer-sheba even to Dan.] From one end of the country to the other.

That they should come to keep the passover unto the Lord God of Israel at Jerusalem;] The ten tribes had never kept it, since the division of the kingdom by Jeroboam (at least not in such manner as the law prescribed), being hindered by his threatening interdicts from going to Jerusalem; as their forefathers were by their long tedious travels in the wilderness (Josh. v). And as for Judah, it appears from ver. 26, they had never kept it with such solemnity, since the time of Solomon.

Ver. 6. *So the posts went with the letters from the king and his princes*] They sent posts, that timely notice might be given to every one, to prepare themselves for this service.

The kings of Assyria.] That is, Pul and Tiglath-pileser, who had carried a great many of them captive (2 Kings xv. 29; 1 Chron. v. 26).

Ver. 7.] And would certainly give them up also, if they continued to provoke him, as they did.

Ver. 8. *Be ye not stiffnecked.*] It is a metaphor (as I have observed elsewhere) from refractory oxen, which will not go forward; but withdraw their necks and their shoulders from the yoke, and go backward.

But yield yourselves] In the Hebrew, "give your hand;" concerning which phrase, see 1 Chron. xxix. 24.

And enter into his sanctuary which he hath sanctified for ever;] Come to worship at Jerusalem: which

was the only place appointed by God for his service, as long as that law lasted.

That the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you.] Which otherwise was ready to make an utter end of them, as it had done of their brethren.

Ver. 9.] These were the contents of the letter, which Hezekiah sent throughout all Israel: concluding with a most exuberant grace (as Strigelius justly calls it), which not only promised to them that they should continue in their land: but they also, who were carried captive, should be restored to them. This, no doubt, Hezekiah had authority from God to declare to them, that he might move them to repentance. For Moses had declared this, which Hezekiah applies to them in their circumstances.

Ver. 10.] Being long accustomed to serve other gods, their hearts were so hardened, that the generality of the ten tribes scoffed at this most gracious invitation to repentance. For which they paid very dearly shortly after: Shalmaneser coming six years after this, and taking Samaria, and carrying the whole nation captive (2 Kings xvii. 6; xviii. 10).

Ver. 11.] Here is not so much as one of Ephraim mentioned: but in some other tribes there were those found who laid to heart their apostasy, and came to Jerusalem, humbly begging pardon. Yet Ephraim is mentioned afterward as partaking of the passover (ver. 18), some of them, it is likely, upon consideration following the example of their brethren, though at first they mocked at the message.

Ver. 12. *In Judah, the hand of God was to give them one heart to do the commandment of the king and of the princes.*] There was a marvellous unanimity in Judah, who were so obedient to the motions of the divine grace (without which so great a change could not have been made), as generally to comply with the king's proclamation, made with the consent of the princes.

By the word of the Lord.] They looked upon it as a divine command, which was brought to them by that authority. And it appeared so to be, by the mighty power of God, which wrought their hearts to a cheerful obedience.

Ver. 13.] This confutes the fancy of the Talmudists, who say, Hezekiah added a month to this year by intercalation; that is, made another month, Adar,

that were in Jerusalem, and all the altars for incense took they away, and cast them into the brook Kidron.

15 Then they killed the passover on the fourth day of the second month: and the priests and the Levites were ashamed, and sanctified themselves, and brought in the burnt-offerings into the house of the LORD.

16 And they stood in their place after their manner, according to the law of Moses the man of God: the priests sprinkled the blood, which they received of the hand of the Levites:

17 For there were many in the congregation that were not sanctified; therefore the Levites had the charge of the killing of the passovers for every one that was not clean, to sanctify them unto the LORD.

18 For a multitude of the people, even many of Ephraim and Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet did they eat the passover otherwise than it was written:

which was the last month in the year: and so kept this passover in the first month of the next year. But this is directly contrary to the express words of this verse, which says, they kept it in the second month. Nor is the opinion of the Karaites truer, who fancy, that though they kept the passover in the second month, yet they did not keep all the parts of it, but only offered the sacrifice of the paschal lamb; the feast of unleavened bread being performed in the first month. But this doth not agree with ver. 21, which saith expressly, "they kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days."

Ver. 14. *They arose and took away the altars that were in Jerusalem, and all the altars for incense*] They began as soon as they came to Jerusalem, to show their zeal against idolatry, by throwing down the altars that Abaz had erected in high places, either for sacrifice or burning incense, which were very many (see xxviii. 24).

And cast them into the brook Kidron.] They stamped them to powder, I suppose, and then cast it into this brook.

Ver. 15. *The priests and the Levites were ashamed.*] They blushed to see the people so forward, and themselves so negligent.

And sanctified themselves, and brought in the burnt-offerings] They that had not done it already (xxix. and ver. 3 of this chapter) now sanctified themselves, that they might perform their office; there being many sacrifices to be offered upon this day (see upon Deut. xvi. 2).

Ver. 16. *And they stood in their place after their manner.*] That they might despatch their business the more readily.

The priests sprinkled the blood, which they received of the hand of the Levites.] Private persons, as well as the Levites, might receive the blood from the beast, but the priests alone could sprinkle it.

Ver. 17. *The Levites had the charge of the killing of the passovers*] The passover doth not only signify the paschal lamb, but all the sacrifices that accompanied it, as I have shown in the forenamed place (Deut. xvi. 2).

For every one that was not clean, to sanctify them unto the Lord.] Abundance of the people that came to keep this passover were not clean; and therefore they needed the more sacrifices to be offered for their cleansing, which was one reason why the Levites

but Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, The good LORD pardon every one

19 *That prepareth his heart to seek God, the LORD God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary.*

20 And the LORD hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people.

21 And the children of Israel that were present at Jerusalem kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness: and the Levites and the priests praised the LORD day by day, singing with loud instruments unto the LORD.

22 And Hezekiah spake comfortably unto all the Levites that taught the good knowledge of the Lord: and they did eat throughout the feast seven days, offering peace-offerings, and making confession to the LORD God of their fathers.

23 And the whole assembly took counsel to keep other seven days: and they kept other seven days with gladness.

were employed in it, otherwise there had not been a sufficient number to perform this duty.

Ver. 18. *For a multitude of the people,—had not cleansed themselves.*] And therefore ought not, according to the law, to have come to the sanctuary, much less eaten the passover.

Yet did they eat the passover otherwise than it was written.] They did not understand after such a long night of ignorance and superstition, what ceremonies were required for their cleansing; or rather they had not time to use them. Yet, having an eager and pious desire to commemorate their wonderful deliverance out of the Egyptian bondage, they were permitted in their uncleanness to eat the passover, lest they should be discouraged, if they were denied it, in their return to the true religion.

The good Lord pardon every one] He had a confidence that God was so gracious, that he would not stand strictly upon the observation of external rites, when he saw men's hearts honest and upright.

Ver. 19. *That prepareth his heart to seek God.*] Who with pure and holy intentions came disposed to worship God, and acknowledge him to be the Lord.

Though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary.] But wanted such ritual purifications as were required of those that were admitted to worship God at the sanctuary.

Ver. 20.] Some imagine that God smote them with some disease, because of their impurity, which upon his prayer was cured. But the scripture uses this phrase, for granting pardon, and freeing men from the guilt of sin, as is apparent from Isa. vi. 10, "Lest they should be converted, and be healed;" i. e. pardoned.

Ver. 21. *The children of Israel—kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days*] Which was appointed to be observed after the killing of the passover (see Exod. xii. 15, 16, &c.). All the seven days they sang praises to God with music, when the sacrifices were offered.

Ver. 22. *Hezekiah spake comfortably unto all the Levites that taught the good knowledge of the Lord.*] He encouraged them to continue to instruct the people more fully in their duty, by commending them for their care and diligence; and promising, it is likely, to reward them for what they had done in propagating the true knowledge of God.

Making confession to the Lord] Acknowledging his great goodness unto them, which is called confessing in the holy language (1 Chron. xvi. 23, 24).

24 For Hezekiah king of Judah did give to the congregation a thousand bullocks and seven thousand sheep; and the princes gave to the congregation a thousand bullocks and ten thousand sheep: and a great number of priests sanctified themselves.

25 And all the congregation of Judah, with the priests and the Levites, and all the congregation that came out of Israel, and the strangers

Ver. 23. *The whole assembly took counsel*] They advised, it is likely, with those mentioned ver. 2.

They kept other seven days with gladness.] They did not observe other seven days of unleavened bread, but offered sacrifices, with praises and thanksgivings, and feasting seven days.

Ver. 24. *For Hezekiah—did give to the congregation a thousand bullocks, and seven thousand sheep, &c.*] Part of these sacrifices was offered unto God, and the priests had another part, and the rest was distributed to the multitude, that they might feast and be merry all the seven days, which was an extraordinary solemnity; but by this means not only all the Israelites were provided for who kept this great feast, but all the strangers also that came with them to Jerusalem.

And a great number of the priests sanctified themselves.] So that there was a sufficient number to offer the sacrifices, and to sprinkle the blood, though not to slay them all.

Ver. 25.] From hence we may conclude, that many strangers that were in the kingdom of Israel became proselytes, at this time, to the true religion revived in Judah.

that came out of the land of Israel, and that dwelt in Judah, rejoiced.

26 So there was great joy in Jerusalem: for since the time of Solomon the son of David king of Israel *there was* not the like in Jerusalem.

27 ¶ Then the priests the Levites arose and blessed the people: and their voice was heard, and their prayer came up to his holy dwelling-place, *even* unto heaven.

Ver. 26.] He held a wonderful great feast for a vast number of people fourteen days, as we read 1 Kings viii. 65.

Ver. 27. *Then the priests the Levites arose and blessed the people:*] That is, such of the Levites as were priests stood up and dismissed the congregation with a blessing: for it was their office alone to bless (1 Chron. xxiii. 13), and this blessing is ordained in the law of Moses, by a divine commandment (Numb. vi. 22, 23), and was continued by them as long as the sanctuary stood. Yea, it was used, if we may believe the Jews, not only in the temple, but in the synagogues; not only in the land of Canaan, but in all countries where they met to worship God, and they think themselves bound to it by the divine law (see Campegius Vitrina, in his book *De Synagoga Veteri*, par. ii. lib. iii. cap. 20).

Their voice was heard, and their prayer came up to his holy dwelling-place.] This shows that their blessing was a prayer to God to bless them, of which the blessing ordained by Moses is a proof. And, perhaps, God at this time, by some visible token, testified his acceptance of them: but it is not likely the divine writer would have concealed such a miracle.

CHAPTER XXXI.

1 *The people is forward in destroying idolatry.* 2 *Hezekiah ordereth the course of the priests and Levites, and provideth for their work and maintenance.* 5 *The people's forwardness in offerings and tithes.* 11 *Hezekiah appointeth officers to dispose of the tithes.* 20 *The sincerity of Hezekiah.*

1 Now when all this was finished, all Israel that were present went out to the cities of Judah, and brake the images in pieces, and cut down the groves, and threw down the high places and the altars out of all Judah and Benjamin, in Ephraim also and Manasseh; until they had ut-

terly destroyed them all. Then all the children of Israel returned every man to his possession into their own cities.

2 ¶ And Hezekiah appointed the courses of the priests and the Levites after their courses, every man according to his service, the priests

CHAP. XXXI.

Ver. 1. *When all this was finished.*] In the latter end of the second month, after the passover, and the following festivals were over, and they had received good instructions from the pious Levites (xxx. 22), they now produced the fruit of all this, by destroying the monuments of idolatry which Ahaz had made in all the fenced cities of Judah (xxviii. 25).

Out of all Judah and Benjamin, in Ephraim also and Manasseh;] They had no authority in the kingdom of Israel, to which Ephraim and Manasseh belonged: but some think, that as Hezekiah sent letters to all Israel to come and keep the passover, so he went by a divine motion to those tribes which were nearest to him, and, without the consent of Hoshea king of Israel, destroyed their images, and other idolatrous monuments. But these words may signify no more than that he did this in all parts of Ephraim and Manasseh, who were fallen off to Judah, and come under his government (ch. xv. 9).

Then all the children of Israel returned every man to his possession,] This argues great zeal, that they would not return home till they had done all they could to establish and promote true religion. Of so great import it is (as Pellicanus here observes) to have a good king, and a well instructed people.

Ver. 2. *Hezekiah appointed the courses of the priests and the Levites after their courses.*] He restored the order which David had instituted; which had been interrupted since the days of Jehoshaphat, who walked in the ways of David (ch. xvii. 3). Not only upon such solemn feasts as the passover (which they had lately kept), but every day they sung praise to God, when the sacrifices were offered.

In the gates of the tents of the Lord.] That is, in the Lord's house: which anciently was a tent, as he represents to David, 2 Sam. vii. 6. And all houses were called by that name, Ps. lxxix. 25.

Ver. 3.] There was a particular sacrifice, I suppose, offered for the king every day, at his own cost and charge. Besides which, Hezekiah likewise main-

and Levites for burnt-offerings and for peace-offerings, to minister, and to give thanks, and to praise in the gates of the tents of the LORD.

3 *He appointed* also the king's portion of his substance for the burnt-offerings, *to wit*, for the morning and evening burnt-offerings, and the burnt-offerings for the sabbaths, and for the new moons, and for the set feasts, as *it is* written in the law of the LORD.

4 Moreover, he commanded the people that dwelt in Jerusalem to give the portion of the priests and the Levites, that they might be encouraged in the law of the LORD.

5 ¶ And as soon as the commandment came abroad, the children of Israel brought in abundance the first-fruits of corn, wine, and oil, and honey, and of all the increase of the field; and the tithe of all *things* brought they in abundantly.

6 And *concerning* the children of Israel and Judah that dwelt in the cities of Judah, they also brought in the tithe of oxen and sheep, and the tithe of holy things which were consecrated

tained the morning and evening sacrifices every day, and especially on the sabbaths, and new moons, and solemn feasts: because the condition of the people was so low, that they could not every one pay the tax that was laid on them on purpose for the maintenance of these sacrifices. Yet the first-fruits and the tenths he ordered to be carefully paid, as it here follows. And these words it is possible may mean no more, but that he made an allowance out of his own estate, for the support of all the expenses, ordinary and extraordinary at the altar.

Ver. 4.] *He commanded the people that dwell in Jerusalem*] That by their good example others might be stirred up to their duty.

To give the portion of the priests and the Levites.] For the service of God could not be maintained, unless there was a due provision made for the maintenance of his ministers, who were always supported out of the public stock. For they who minister to the community, ought by the law of nature (as Estius well observes) to be maintained by it. For their ministry is not appointed for themselves, but for the salvation of all the people.

Ver. 5. *Honey.*] The Targum translates the word "honey of dates," as the Jews commonly understand it, and so expound Deut. viii. 8, where seven sorts of things are mentioned, of which they brought the first-fruits. But though honey was not offered in sacrifice to God (which is their reason why they will not here understand *honey*, properly so called), yet I see no reason why they might not bring the first-fruits of it, and give it to the priests for their own use.

Of all the increase of the field;] Which Kimchi expounds of the fruits of the rest of the trees; viz. fig-trees and pomegranates.

All the tithe of all things] They paid tithe, saith he, not only of the corn, but of the fruit-trees, and of the herbs, which were not due by the law: such herbs as those mentioned by our Saviour, mint, anise, and cummin (Mat. xxiii. 23), though these seem to have been of a later date, invented by the Pharisees.

Ver. 6. *Concerning the children of Israel and Judah, that dwell in the cities of Judah.*] As many of the Israelites as were under the power and dominion of Judah did the same that they did.

They also brought in the tithe of oxen and sheep.] As the inhabitants of Jerusalem had brought in the tithe of such things as are forementioned, which they

unto the LORD their God, and laid *them* by heaps.

7 In the third month they began to lay the foundation of the heaps, and finished *them* in the seventh month.

8 And when Hezekiah and the princes came and saw the heaps, they blessed the LORD, and his people Israel.

9 Then Hezekiah questioned with the priests and the Levites concerning the heaps.

10 And Azariah the chief priest, of the house of Zadok, answered him and said, *Since the people* began to bring the offerings into the house of the LORD we have had enough to eat, and have left plenty: for the LORD hath blessed his people: and that which is left is this great store.

11 ¶ Then Hezekiah commanded to prepare chambers in the house of the LORD; and they prepared *them*,

12 And brought in the offerings, and the tithes, and the dedicated *things*, faithfully; over which Cononiah the Levite was ruler, and Shimei his brother was the next.

had in their store-houses; so they in the country brought in also the tithe of oxen and sheep, which were not kept in the cities.

The tithe of holy things which were consecrated unto the Lord] That is, saith Jarchi, the tithe which the Levites paid to the priests. But Kimchi takes it for things consecrated, which they had dedicated to God's service; of which they also gave tithe, though they were exempted from the law of tithing.

Laid them by heaps.] In a great abundance, as is before said.

Ver. 7.] They began to offer first-fruits in the third month, when their harvest began; and finished the tithing in the seventh month, when their harvest was ended (Exod. xxiii. 16).

Ver. 8.] They gave thanks to God, who had given them such plenty of good things, and likewise given them a heart to offer so plentifully: and they commended the people, and prayed God to increase their store. For that is the meaning of blessing the people, praising their liberality, and praying God to reward it.

Ver. 9.] Asking them, as some understand it, what they meant to let them lie so carelessly, as if they were neglected, and not lay them up in some safe place. But others think he means, how it came to pass, that there were still such great heaps left, and no more spent. Which the following answer seems to favour, though the next words incline to the former.

Ver. 10. *Azariah the chief priest of the house of Zadok*] The head of the family of the priests, of the line of Zadok.

Since the people began to bring the offerings] Which was from the very beginning of harvest.

We have had enough to eat, and have left plenty, &c.] His meaning seems to be, that they had not spared to make use of the plentiful provision which was brought to them; and had also laid up as much as they had room to receive, and all these heaps were still left.

Ver. 11.] To build new store-houses, besides those which Solomon had made; because there was not room enough wherein to lay all the offerings, and tithes, and other dedicated things.

Ver. 12.] As he took care they should all be faithfully laid up, so he set trusty persons to see that they were no less faithfully preserved, for their proper uses. Of which these two brethren were the chief.

13 And Jehiel, and Azariah, and Nahath, and Asahel, and Jerimoth, and Jozabad, and Eliel, and Ishmachiah, and Mahath, and Benaiah, *were* overseers, under the hand of Cononiah and Shimei his brother, at the commandment of Hezekiah the king, and Azariah the ruler of the house of God.

14 And Kore the son of Imnah the Levite, the porter toward the east, *was* over the free-will-offerings of God, to distribute the oblations of the Lord, and the most holy things.

15 And next him *were* Eden, and Miniamin, and Jeshua, and Shemaiah, Amariah, and Shecaniah, in the cities of the priests, in *their* set office, to give to their brethren by courses, as well to the great as to the small:

16 Beside their genealogy of males, from three years old and upward, *even* unto every one that entereth into the house of the Lord, his daily portion for their service in their charges, according to their courses;

Ver. 13. *And Jehiel, &c. were overseers under the hand of Cononiah and Shimei his brother.*] These were inferior officers, under the command of the two forenamed brethren, who had the principal oversight, and these were assistant to them.

At the commandment of Hezekiah the king, and Azariah] For so it was ordered by the king, with the advice of Azariah, who was before mentioned (ver. 10), as a chief person among the priests.

Ver. 14. *And Kore—the porter toward the east,*] At the entrance of the house of God.

Was over the free-will-offerings of God to distribute the oblations] Unto the priests and Levites, to whose uses they were appointed by God: or, as some think, to give out so much flour, oil, wine, frankincense, &c. as was necessary for the sacrifices.

The most holy things.] So they called the burnt-offerings, and the offerings for sin, and the trespass-offerings, and the two lambs for peace-offerings, on the last day of the feast of tabernacles, as Beekius observes out of Maimonides.

Ver. 15.] These were to take care of those who stayed in their cities, while others came in their courses to wait at Jerusalem. None of which wanted the portion allotted to them, both for themselves and for their little children.

Ver. 16.] Though none of the Levites were permitted to come into the house of the Lord, to do service, till they were twenty years old; yet their males (as Mr. Selden observes from this place), who were three years old or more, were allowed to come into the temple with their parents; and in the distribution, the other infants being pretermitted, these were provided for. Kimchi here observes, that males under three years old were not capable of entering into the house of the Lord: but females, neither then, nor after they were older, were capable of this privilege.

Ver. 17.] These words “twenty years old” (as the same great person observes) relate not to the priests, but to the Levites: who, according to the law of

17 Both the genealogy of the priests by the house of their fathers, and the Levites from twenty years old and upward, in their charges by their courses:

18 And to the genealogy of all their little ones, their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, through all the congregation: for in their set office they sanctified themselves in holiness:

19 Also of the sons of Aaron the priests, *which were* in the fields of the suburbs of their cities, in every several city, the men that were expressed by name to give portions to all the males among the priests, and to all that were reckoned by genealogies among the Levites.

20 ¶ And thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah, and wrought *that which was* good and right and truth before the Lord his God.

21 And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did *it* with all his heart, and prospered.

Moses, were not obliged to their function, till they were thirty years old, Numb. iv. 3. But David, in the latter end of his reign, a little before the building of the temple, admitted them to officiate at the age of twenty years, 1 Chron. xxiii. 26, 27 (see Selden, De Successione, ad Pontif. lib. ii. cap. 4).

Ver. 18.] The forenamed officers gave to every family their portion; not only to the priests, but to their wives and children: of which (it appears by these verses) an exact register was kept, according to which they made their distribution.

They sanctified themselves in holiness:] Or, rather, according to the Hebrew, “For in faith,” or “with fidelity” (some translate it in the margin *in trust*), “they sanctified themselves in holiness;” that is, attended upon their ministry at the house of God, nothing doubting they should be provided of all things necessary. For this seems to be a reason, why such care was taken of their wives and children, because their husbands were wholly given up to the service of God, and could not follow any other employment whereby to provide for the maintenance of their families.

Ver. 19.] Care was taken of those that lived in the country, though at the greatest distance, as well as of those that lived in or near Jerusalem, or waited in their courses there. They that were not in waiting, but at home with their families, had provision made for them, as if they had been at the house of God. The forenamed persons were entrusted with this business, to see that none wanted a maintenance.

Ver. 20.] Whatsoever he thought was pleasing to God, conformable to the law, and profitable for his people, he performed with integrity of heart.

Ver. 21.] Whatsoever he went about, either for the advancement of religion, or the good government of his people, he did it sincerely, and with great zeal; so that God prospered him both in peace and in war.

CHAPTER XXXII.

1 *Sennacherib invading Judah, Hezekiah fortifieth himself, and encourageth his people.* 9 *Against the blasphemies of Sennacherib, by message and letters, Hezekiah and Isaiah pray.* 21 *An angel destroyeth the host of the Assyrians, to the glory of Hezekiah.* 21 *Hezekiah praying in his sickness, God giveth him a sign of recovery.* 25 *He waxing proud is humbled by God.* 27 *His wealth and works.* 31 *His error in the ambassage of Babylon.* 32 *He dying, Manasseh succeedeth him.*

I AFTER these things, and the establishment thereof, Sennacherib king of Assyria came, and entered into Judah, and encamped against the fenced cities, and thought to win them for himself.

2 And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib was come, and that he was purposed to fight against Jerusalem,

3 He took counsel with his princes and his mighty men to stop the waters of the fountains, which were without the city; and they did help him.

4 So there was gathered much people together, who stopped all the fountains, and the brook that ran through the midst of the land, saying, Why

should the kings of Assyria come and find much water?

5 Also he strengthened himself, and built up all the wall that was broken, and raised it up to the towers, and another wall without, and repaired Millo in the city of David, and made darts and shields in abundance.

6 And he set captains of war over the people, and gathered them together to him in the street of the gate of the city, and spake comfortably to them, saying,

7 Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him:

CHAP. XXXII.

Ver. 1. *After these things, and the establishment thereof,*] After the reformation of religion, and the establishment of it, by settling the maintenance of the priests and Levites (whom he appointed, according to the ordinance of David, to attend in their courses), he prospered so, that he resolved to be subject no longer to the king of Assyria: who thereupon came and invaded his country (2 Kings xviii. 7).

Sennacherib—entered into Judah,] This was in the fourteenth year of the reign of Hezekiah, 2 Kings xviii. 13.

And encamped against the fenced cities,] Many of which he took: God thinking fit to try the faith of Hezekiah, and by disappointing Sennacherib, to get himself the greater glory.

And thought to win them for himself,] To conquer the whole country, even Jerusalem itself.

Ver. 2.] His success puffed him up, so that he designed, as plainly appeared, to besiege the capital city of the kingdom.

Ver. 3. *He took counsel with his princes and his mighty men*] Though the prophet Isaiah had assured him of God's protection, he did not neglect to consult the best means of his preservation.

To stop the waters of the fountains,] To fill them up with earth, that it might not be known there was any water there; which they turned another way, and by pipes and channels under ground brought it to Jerusalem.

They did help him,] Assisted him in this work.

Ver. 4. *Who stopped all the fountains, and the brook that ran through the midst of the land,*] That is Gihon, as Kimchi understands it, which some take to be Kidron. It was no easy thing to dry up this brook: but it is supposed the head of it was not far from the city, which being stopped up they diverted the current, and, by conveyance under ground, brought it into great pits within the city; which received the water for the use of the people. For we read afterward (ver. 30), of his stopping up a course of water, which was above; and bringing it down to this west side of the city.

Why should the kings of Assyria come and find much water?] Water was scarce in this country; therefore they thought it prudent to distress their enemies by the want of it. He speaks of *kings*, in the plural number either because there were many kings that served under the king of Assyria, or because he was the *great king*, as he styled himself.

Ver. 5. *And built up all the wall that was broken,*] There was a great breach made in it by Joash king of Israel in the days of Amaziah (ch. xxv. 23): which, I suppose, was repaired in his son's days, who was a very powerful prince (ch. xxvi. 9), and therefore he speaks here of some other breach, which had been made since that time; and perhaps in the same place, where through neglect the wall might possibly be fallen down.

And raised it up to the towers,] It was broken down from the gate of Ephraim to the corner-gate (as we read in the forenamed places), where there were towers, for the defence of the gates, unto which he carried the wall: so that it was entirely raised up again.

And another wall without,] He compassed the city with another wall without the old one; for its stronger defence.

And repaired Millo] Some understand by *Millo* the wall that was about Zion, on the north part of the city: or the street within the city from the palace to the temple. Which he repaired, that is, fortified and made strong with a wall, to defend the entrance of it.

And made darts and shields in abundance,] Both offensive and defensive weapons; of which he took care there should be no want.

Ver. 6. *In the street of the gate of the city,*] In the street of the principal gate, which was very large.

And spake comfortably to them,] Encouraged them to stand by him, in defence of their city, religion, and liberties: which he assured them God would protect, as it follows in the next verse.

Ver. 7.] It is the part of a good commander to show himself undaunted before his soldiers; but especially to persuade them, that, having a good cause, God is on their side: which the Targum in the next verse explains thus: "The Word of the Lord

8 With him *is* an arm of flesh: but with us *is* the LORD our God, to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.

9 ¶ After this did Sennacherib king of Assyria send his servants to Jerusalem, (but he *himself* laid siege against Lachish, and all his power with him,) unto Hezekiah king of Judah, and unto all Judah that *were* at Jerusalem, saying,

10 Thus saith Sennacherib king of Assyria, Whereon do ye trust, that ye abide in the siege in Jerusalem?

11 Doth not Hezekiah persuade you to give over yourselves to die by famine and by thirst, saying, The LORD our God shall deliver us out of the hand of the king of Assyria?

12 Hath not the same Hezekiah taken away his high places and his altars, and commanded Judah and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall worship before one altar, and burn incense upon it?

13 Know ye not what I and my fathers have done unto all the people of *other* lands? were the gods of the nations of those lands any ways able to deliver their lands out of mine hand?

14 Who *was there* among all the gods of those nations, that my fathers utterly destroyed, that could deliver his people out of mine hand, that your God should be able to deliver you out of mine hand?

15 Now therefore let not Hezekiah deceive

our God is our helper." Which signifies as Beckius there thinks, more persons than one in the holy Trinity.

Ver. 8.] Relied on what he said, as if it had been spoken to them by God himself.

Ver. 9.] See 2 Kings xviii. 17, &c.; in which place, and in ch. xix. 10, &c. the following speech is set down more largely: which here is abridged.

Ver. 10.] See 2 Kings xviii. 19. The last words seem to signify, that for fear of the king of Assyria, they durst not stir out of the gates of Jerusalem: for so we translate the last words in the margin, *the strong hold of Jerusalem*.

Ver. 11.] See 2 Kings xviii. 22. He did not intend, it appears by this, to storm the city, but to keep them pent up till they were starved.

Ver. 12.] It is evident from hence, that the worship of one God alone was known to be the religion of the Jews. But Sennacherib would have had them believe, Hezekiah had dishonoured him by confining his worship and service to one narrow corner: which was before diffused and spread all over the city and country: and therefore would not help them (see there, 2 Kings xviii. 22).

Ver. 13.] If the Lord had a mind to help them, he would have them believe that he was not able: because no gods had been able to deliver those that worshipped them from his power.

Ver. 14.] Upon this argument he enlarges himself very much in 2 Kings xviii. 32—35.

Ver. 15.] See 2 Kings xviii. 29, 30.

Ver. 16.] The Targum translates it, "They spake perversely against the Word of the Lord God," &c. Which plainly declares, that paraphrast took the *Word of God* to be a divine person, whose servant Hezekiah was.

Ver. 17. *He wrote also letters*] One of these letters is set down at large in 2 Kings xix. 9—14.

you, nor persuade you on this manner, neither yet believe him; for no god of any nation or kingdom was able to deliver his people out of mine hand, and out of the hand of my fathers: how much less shall your God deliver you out of mine hand?

16 And his servants spake yet *more* against the LORD God, and against his servant Hezekiah.

17 He wrote also letters to rail on the LORD God of Israel, and to speak against him, saying, As the gods of the nations of *other* lands have not delivered their people out of mine hand, so shall not the God of Hezekiah deliver his people out of mine hand.

18 Then they cried with a loud voice, in the Jews' speech, unto the people of Jerusalem that *were* on the wall, to affright them, and to trouble them, that they might take the city.

19 And they spake against the God of Jerusalem as against the gods of the people of the earth, *which were* the work of the hands of man.

20 And for this *cause* Hezekiah the king, and the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz, prayed and cried to heaven.

21 ¶ And the LORD sent an angel, which cut off all the mighty men of valour, and the leaders and captains, in the camp of the king of Assyria: so he returned with shame of face to his own land. And when he was come into the house of his god, they that came forth of his own bowels slew him there with the sword.

As the gods of the nations of other lands have not delivered their people, &c.] He insists upon this so often and so long, it being the most popular argument he could use.

Ver. 18.] By a surrender of it into their hand (see 2 Kings xviii. 26, 27, &c.)

Ver. 19.] They ignorantly fancied, there was no difference between the God of the universe, whom the Jews worshipped, and the gods of particular countries, who pretended to no power but only there; though in truth they had no power at all, being made by those that worshipped them.

Ver. 20.] See 2 Kings xix. 1, 2, &c. 25, 26, &c.

Ver. 21.] *The Lord sent an angel, which cut off all the mighty men of valour, and the leaders and captains,*] With a vast number of common soldiers, as we read 2 Kings xix. 35. The Hebrew text no where mentions the name of the angel, nor of the time of the year when this stroke was given, nor the kind of plague whereby they were destroyed: but the Targum saith, The Word of the Lord sent Gabriel to do this execution, who in the passover night smote them with lightning. Which is related in the Babylonian Talmud, after the same manner, as Beckius observes upon the Targum.

One would think, that Artabanus had read or heard something of this sudden and dreadful overthrow, when he dissuaded Xerxes from invading Greece, being sworn with confidence that nothing could withstand him. "Dost thou not observe (saith he) how the highest and magnificent buildings are wont to be struck with thunder, when the lower escape? Φυλέει γὰρ ὁ Θεὸς τὰ ὑπερέχοντα πάντα κολούειν," "for God loves to depress all things that are lifted up." And a little after, in the same speech, he admonishes him, Οὐ γὰρ ἐγὼ φρονεῖν ἄλλοι μίγα ὁ Θεὸς ἢ ἑαυτῶν "for God doth not allow any other to think highly of

22 Thus the LORD saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria, and from the hand of all *other*, and guided them on every side.

23 And many brought gifts unto the LORD to Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah king of Judah: so that he was magnified in the sight of all nations from thenceforth.

24 ¶ In those days Hezekiah was sick to the death, and prayed unto the LORD: and he spake unto him, and he gave him a sign.

25 But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit *done* unto him; for his heart was lifted up: and therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem.

26 Notwithstanding, Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, *both* he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the

LORD came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah.

27 ¶ And Hezekiah had exceeding much riches and honour: and he made himself treasuries for silver, and for gold, and for precious stones, and for spices, and for shields, and for all manner of pleasant jewels;

28 Store-houses also for the increase of corn, and wine, and oil; and stalls for all manner of beasts, and cotes for flocks.

29 Moreover he provided him cities, and possessions of flocks and herds in abundance; for God had given him substance very much.

30 This same Hezekiah also stopped the upper water-course of Gihon, and brought it straight down to the west side of the city of David. And Hezekiah prospered in all his works.

31 ¶ Howbeit, in *the business* of the ambassa-

themselves, but only himself" (Herodotus, lib. vii. cap. 10).

When he was come into the house of his god, they that came forth of his own bowels, slew him there.] See 2 Kings xix. 37. And with him the Assyrian empire began to fall, and never recovered its former strength, though it still continued in great power. For the next year after Sennacherib's death the Medes revolted, being encouraged to it, no doubt, by this great defeat at Jerusalem: and by their example several other nations fell off from the Assyrians and asserted their liberty, as Hermannus Conringius hath observed out of Herodotus, in his *Adversaria Chronologica*, cap. 4. But still their monarchy continued, as appears by what follows in the next chapter of this book.

Ver. 22.] That is, defended them from all their enemies; just as a shepherd doth his sheep, whom he leads into places of safety.

Ver. 23. *Many brought gifts unto the Lord to Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah*] His neighbours were so far from molesting him, that many came to worship God, and to do honour to Hezekiah, who was so highly in God's favour.

So that he was magnified in the sight of all nations] That is, all the neighbouring countries, who heard of these things, had him in great esteem.

Ver. 24.] Or, as it is in the margin, "wrought a miracle for him." See a large account of this in the twentieth chapter of the second book of the Kings, and my annotations there. Unto which this may be added, that Pliny saith, "The application of a very fat fig to a hard swelling is a present remedy;" *Carbunculi, si sine ulcere est, quam pinguissimum fecum imponi, sine singulare remedium est* (lib. xxiii. Nat. Hist. cap. 7). But the *shechin* wherewith Hezekiah laboured (which we translate *bile*) was not of this sort: for the word signifies the worst kind of ulcers: and therefore there was nothing in this application of a lump of figs to lessen the wonder.

Ver. 25. *But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him*:] In his deliverance from so powerful an enemy as he could not resist: and from such a dangerous disease, as was incurable, without the special band of God.

For his heart was lifted up:] By the embassy sent to him from the king of Babylon, who came to inquire of the wonder done in the land. Which, together with the slaughter of Sennacherib's army, his shameful retreat, the presents which had been sent him from other countries, and the fame which he had got, made him have too high an opinion; though not of his power, which was very small; yet of his piety, which

was very great. But instead of making him thankful, he grew so presumptuous of God's favour as to be forgetful of his benefits.

There was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem.] Who, it seems, were as insensible as himself of the mercies they had received: contenting themselves, that they were not idolaters, though they were not truly pious, and mindful of God's benefits.

Ver. 26. *Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart*.] Upon the admonition which the prophet Isaiah gave him; and the severe sentence he pronounced against him, and his family.

Both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem,] Who were awakened by the same threatening.

So that the wrath of the Lord came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah.] But peace and truth were in his days, as he speaks, 2 Kings xx. 19.

Ver. 27.] All which he showed to the king of Babylon's ambassadors (2 Kings xx. 13).

Ver. 28.] In the Hebrew the words are, "for beast and beast;" that is, every beast: as in Esther ix. 21. "Year and year;" that is, every year: and ver. 28, "Generation and generation;" i. e. every generation.

Ver. 29.] The great riches of these countries consisted in abundance of cattle, of all sorts, as I have often observed.

Ver. 30. *Hezekiah also stopped the upper water-course of Gihon*.] He seems to speak of the same thing which is mentioned before, ver. 4, being a work of such great labour and art, that Ezra thought to make it memorable, by taking a more particular notice of it, among his great works. From the mention of the *upper water-course*, Kimchi gathers, there were several streams of the torrent.

And brought it straight down to the west side of the city of David.] The rivulet, I suppose, had many windings before, and did not come straight down to the city, as now it was made to do.

Hezekiah prospered in all his works.] It is likely, he contrived many other things for the benefit of the city of Jerusalem; none of which miscarried.

Ver. 31. *Howbeit, in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon*.] Which is mentioned at large, 2 Kings xx. 10, 11; Isa. xxxviii. 7, 8. In the former of which places I have endeavoured to give an account of it. But Bochartus, I find, strongly opposes the opinion of the body of the sun's going back: in his *Canaan*, lib. i. cap. 14, p. 4, where he observes, that the scripture in both places speaks of the shadow's going back ten degrees; and then it is said, the *sun went back*, that is, the shadow of the sun, or the light of the sun, which succeeded to the

dors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to inquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him to try him, that he might know all *that was* in his heart.

32 ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and his goodness, behold, they *are* written in the vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz,

going back of the shadow. And it must be confessed, that if the sun had gone back, it would not have been a miracle in Judea alone, but all the world over: and the king of Babylon needed not have sent to inquire about the wonder in that land, because it would have been a wonder in his land, and in all lands, as well as in Judea. And so it was, for I have observed there out of Herodotus, that in Egypt they knew something of the unusual motion of the sun: and, perhaps, they now observed it in Babylon, and only sent to inquire whether Isaiah foretold it, which was a great wonder. I have met also with one, who thinks, that the Babylonians being worshippers of the sun, it was part of Hezekiah's sin, that he did not take this occasion to persuade the ambassadors to worship God, who made and commanded the sun; and could stop the course of it when he pleased.

God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart.] God suffered him to behave himself according to his own inclinations, without any special motion from him; that Hezekiah might know he was not so strong as he imagined, if he were left to himself without God. But it is generally thought, the last words relate rather to God: who made proof of him, as he had done of many other good men, whether he would entirely obey him, or not. He tries none in that sense of which St. James speaks; viz. for an ill intent, or to lead men to destruction; but

and in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel.

33 And Hezekiah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the chiefest of the sepulchres of the sons of David: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did him honour at his death. And Manasseh his son reigned in his stead.

for a good end, to improve them, and bring them to salvation. Thus he tempted Abraham, Gen. xxii. 1, and the children of Israel, Exod. xv. 25; xvi. 5, and Ezekiel, and many others, that it might appear how they stood affected to him: which God, no doubt, knew, and now saw the pride and vanity that lurked in Hezekiah's heart: which was hid from every one but God himself, who now suffered him to discover it for his humiliation. For it was a greater crime to be again puffed up, as he had been before his dangerous sickness.

Ver. 32. *They are written in the vision of Isaiah*] Who hath recorded his prayer, which he made to God in his sickness.

The book of the kings of Judah] See xxvii. 7. *They buried him in the chiefest of the sepulchres of the sons of David:*] Which was a part of that honour which they did him, mentioned in the next words; for he deserved it above all the kings which they had since the time of David.

All Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did him honour at his death.] Buried him, perhaps, with such solemnity and expenses as were made at the funeral of king Asa, ch. xvi. 14. Maimonides saith, they appointed a company of students in the law to sit at his sepulchre, and to mourn seven days together (see Schickard, in his Jus Regium, p. 173). But this I look upon as merely rabbinical.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

1 *Manasseh's wicked reign.* 3 *He setteth up idolatry, and would not be admonished.* 11 *He is carried into Babylon.* 12 *Upon his prayer to God he is released, and putteth down idolatry.* 18 *His acts.* 20 *He dying, Amon succeedeth him.* 21 *Amon reigning wickedly, is slain by his servants.* 25 *The murderers being slain, Josiah succeedeth him.*

1 MANASSEH was twelve years old when he began to reign: and he reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem:

2 But did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.

3 ¶ For he built again the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down, and he

reared up altars for Baalim, and made groves, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them.

4 Also he built altars in the house of the LORD, whereof the LORD had said, In Jerusalem shall my name be for ever.

5 And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD.

6 And he caused his children to pass through

CHAP. XXXIII.

Ver. 1.] See 2 Kings, ch. xxi. 1, where his mother's name is set down, which is here omitted.

Ver. 2.] The very same words are in the forenamed place, ver. 2. And here it follows, ver. 9, that he did worse than those abominable heathens; not only committing all the sins of his forefathers, but endeavouring to exceed them, and leave nothing undone wholly to subvert the worship of God.

Ver. 3. *He reared up altars for Baalim,*] Imitated Ahab king of Israel, as it is explained there, 2 Kings xxi. 3.

And made groves,] These groves, I suppose, were made about the temple, which was utterly forbidden (Deut. xvi. 21), being a heathenish rite (Judg. vi. 25);

and mentioned by Isaiah (lxvi. 17), among the abominable idolatries they practised secretly in their gardens. Yet the Jews in aftertimes did plant trees about their *proscenae*, their oratories, or place of prayer, as Scaliger observes in his *Fragmenta*, at the end of his book *De Emend. Temporum*, p. 25. But they were not in the law touching the temple.

Ver. 4. *Also he built altars in the house of the Lord.*] In the court of the priests (see 2 Kings xxi. 4).

Whereof the Lord had said, In Jerusalem shall my name be for ever.] This was the greater profanation, because God had chosen this place to settle his presence in it.

Ver. 5.] In the court of the people of Israel, and in the court of the gentiles (see there, ver. 5).

Ver. 6. *He caused his children to pass through the*

the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger.

7 And he set a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God, of which God had said to David, and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen before all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever:

8 Neither will I any more remove the foot of Israel from out of the land which I have appointed for your fathers: so that they will take heed to do all that I have commanded them, according to the whole law and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses.

9 So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabit-

fire] There is mention made only of his son in the book of the Kings, but here of *his children*, whom he consecrated to Moloch.

Also he observed times, and used enchantments,] He seems to have studied to find out what God had forbidden in his law, that he might practise it (see there, 2 Kings xxi. 6).

Ver. 7.] This verse and the next are the same with 1 Kings xxi. 7, 8, where see my annotations. I shall only add here, that this seems to have been an image of more than ordinary note, which he set up with a great deal of ceremony. For among the heathens, whom he imitated, *images* did not become gods, that is, were not made objects of worship, till being placed in the most holy part of their temples, there they were consecrated by being anointed and crowned by sacrifices, prayers, and adorations; and then setting up candles burning before them: all which was concluded with a festival, which sometimes was made anniversary. Many plain instances there are of this, particularly in Minutius Felix, who mentions the unctions, coronation, adoration, and prayers, whereby they were consecrated.

Ver. 9.] A most prodigious change, from the height of piety in his father's time into the sink of impiety in this: which strange vicissitude of things should admonish us not to be secure, as Victorinus Strigelius notes. Who being professor of theology at Heidelberg, left this remark in his lectures on this place near a hundred and forty years ago:

"Now we have the word of God abundantly in all wisdom; and pious princes patronise both those that preach, and those that learn the gospel. But this plenty of the word we now enjoy (I tremble to speak it, but I must speak it, because it will come to pass) shall be taken away: and that sad mournful time will come, when the public assemblies of the church shall be scattered, and a few pious souls shall meet with fear in a corner, to communicate among themselves the fragments of the heavenly doctrine, and give God thanks for those remainders;" which we have seen fulfilled in that country, and in France, and other places.

Ver. 10. *The Lord spake to Manasseh, and to his people:]* By his servants the prophets (see ver. 18). The Jews say in Seder Olam Rabba (cap. 20), that Joel, Nahum, and Habakkuk, prophesied in his time; but he was so wicked, that they would not so much as mention his name in the beginning of their prophecies, which is not a good reason.

But they would not hearken.] Neither he nor his people regarded what they said.

Ver. 11. *The Lord brought upon them the cap-*

ants of Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the heathen, whom the Lord had destroyed before the children of Israel.

10 And the Lord spake to Manasseh, and to his people; but they would not hearken.

11 ¶ Wherefore the Lord brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon.

12 And when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers,

13 And prayed unto him; and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God.

14 Now after this he built a wall without the

tains of the host of the king of Assyria.] The royal family failing in Babylon, the king of Assyria (Esarhaddon) brought that kingdom under his yoke again, and held it thirteen years, as primate Usher observes in his Annals. And he hearing, from the ambassadors of Merodach-baladan, what great treasures were in Jerusalem, and that Hezekiah was dead, and Manasseh had forsaken that God who did such great things for his father, sent an army against him which he could not withstand.

Which took Manasseh among the thorns,] In a thicket where he had hid himself, but was discovered.

Bound him with fetters,] With iron chains fastened to his wrists, or to his legs, as we understand it.

Carried him to Babylon.] Which the king of Assyria, it is likely, had made his seat, to secure his late conquests. This was in the twenty-second year of his reign, as the Jews compute in Seder Olam Rabba, cap. 24, when they carried away with him the idol in Dan, according to Judg. xviii. 30. But however that be, it is very evident that the Assyrian monarchy was not fallen by the defection of the Medes and other nations, which I before mentioned, but still continued in great power; Babylon itself, which rebelled at the same time with the Medes, being again subdued to its obedience, as appears by their sending Manasseh bound thither. So that they had not only Cæle-Syria and Phœnicia, but Mesopotamia and Chaldea under their dominion, as Conringius observes, in the book beforenamed, upon the foregoing chapter, ver. 21. How long their power continued the scripture doth not tell us; but Manasseh, after his return from his captivity, seems to have been a free prince, subject unto none, maintaining forces in all his fenced cities (ver. 14 of this chapter).

Ver. 12.] This was three and thirty years before his death, as the Jews make account, in the book before mentioned. But both Kimchi and Abarinel confess that this relies upon a weak foundation, as doth the other thing, that he was carried away in the twenty-second year of his reign.

Ver. 13.] So true it is that *vexatio dat intellectum*, "trouble and vexation give understanding," and make men know God and themselves. Which is not universally true; for some are far from being brought to a right sense by their miseries: as Ahaz, this king's grandfather, was never without some sore affliction or other, and yet never relented. But though R. Johanan was so charitable as to think that Manasseh had his part in the other world, yet the doctors in the title Sanhedrin (cap. 11, sect. 1) exclude him from any portion in it, and say he was only restored to his kingdom, but not to life eternal. For this is the doc-

city of David, on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, even to the entering in at the fish gate, and compassed about Ophel, and raised it up a very great height, and put captains of war in all the fenced cities of Judah.

15 And he took away the strange gods, and the idol-out of the house of the LORD, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the LORD, and in Jerusalem, and cast *them* out of the city.

16 And he repaired the altar of the LORD, and sacrificed thereon peace-offerings and thank-offerings, and commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel.

17 Nevertheless, the people did sacrifice still in the high places, *yet* unto the LORD their God only.

18 ¶ Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and his prayer unto his God, and the words of the seers that spake to him in the name of the LORD God of Israel, behold, they *are written* in the book of the kings of Israel.

19 His prayer also, and *how God* was entreated of him, and all his sins, and his trespass, and the

trine they there laid down: There were three kings, and four private men, who have no portion in eternal life: the three kings are Jeroboam, Ahab, and Manasseh; the four private men, Balaam, Doeg, Ahithophel, and Gehazi. But they have no ground for this sentence pronounced upon Manasseh, but the wickedness of his successor; from whence they argue the father's repentance was not sincere. The folly of which sufficiently appears from this history of him and his father Hezekiah.

Ver. 14.] He provided for the safety of his kingdom, and in the first place built a wall for the defence of Jerusalem; which some think was that which his father made (ch. xxxii. 5), which he repaired and strengthened, after it had been thrown down, perhaps by the king of Assyria's forces, when they carried him captive. The *fish-gate* was the gate where they sold fish (as the Targum expounds it), which was brought from Joppa. Concerning Ophel, see xxviii. 3.

Ver. 15.] He had profaned the house of the Lord, but had not shut up the doors as Ahab did; and therefore he is said only to have purged it from idols, but not to have opened it as Jacobus Capellus observes. Here particular notice is taken of the idol mentioned verse 7, which confirms what I have noted there.

Ver. 16. He repaired the altar of the Lord, and sacrificed thereon] For now he was sensible there was no other God but the Lord, who had wonderfully delivered him out of captivity, and restored him to his kingdom when he implored his mercy.

And commanded Judah to serve the Lord] This was a proof of his true repentance, that he endeavoured to bring his people back to the service of God, whom he had misled (ver. 9) to the worship of idols. But, as Kimchi notes, he was not able to do so much good as he had done mischief, for the people continued their inclination to idolatry; and neglected the study of the law of God. For in Josiah's reign (which presently followed) it was a matter of great surprise that they found the book of the law, when they were repairing the temple: the copies of it, as the Jews think, having been destroyed in the time of Manasseh and Amon. But it is not credible, which were preserved in the hands of the ten tribes, and without which the church could not have been reformed.

Ver. 17.] This was an error so rooted that very

places wherein he built high places, and set up groves and graven images, before he was humbled, behold, they *are written* among the sayings of the seers.

20 ¶ So Manasseh slept with his fathers, and they buried him in his own house: and Amon his son reigned in his stead.

21 ¶ Amon was two and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned two years in Jerusalem.

22 But he did *that which was evil* in the sight of the LORD, as did Manasseh his father: for Amon sacrificed unto all the carved images which Manasseh his father had made, and served them:

23 And humbled not himself before the LORD, as Manasseh his father had humbled himself: but Amon trespassed more and more.

24 And his servants conspired against him, and slew him in his own house.

25 ¶ But the people of the land slew all them that had conspired against king Amon: and the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his stead.

good kings could not correct it, such as Asa and Jehoshaphat, in whose days the people worshipped the true God, but in an unlawful place, as they now did.

Ver. 18.] So Judah is now called, who with Benjamin were all that were left of the children of Jacob, who was named Israel. But these books here mentioned are not those which we now have, but others that were lost in the captivity.

Ver. 19. His prayer also, and how God was entreated of him.] He mentions his prayer again; because, I suppose, he made more than one. As if he had said, "how he continued to pray till God was entreated of him."

And set up groves] This is one of the places which plainly prove (as I have often noted) that *asherim* (which we translate *groves*) signifies not the groves themselves, but the images or statues that were set up in them. For groves are *planted*, not set up or erected, as it is here said of Manasseh, that "he set up groves:" that is dedicated and consecrated, as that word signifies among Greek and Roman writers (see xxxiv. 1: 2 Kings xiv. 23: Jer. xvii. 2.

They are written among the sayings of the seers.] Or of *Hosai* (as we translate it in the margin), who was a prophet, it is likely, in those times, by whom many memorable things in his reign were recorded: particularly *his prayer*, which he recorded, as Isaiah did the prayer of Hezekiah his father.

Ver. 20.] See 2 Kings xxi. 18. It is likely he left it in his last will, that he would be buried privately, as not worthy to lie by his ancestors.

Ver. 21.] As the sons of Jeroboam, and of Baasha, and of Ahab, reigned two years and no longer.

Ver. 22.] See 2 Kings xxi. 20, 21.

Ver. 23. And humbled not himself—as Manasseh his father] He followed him in his sin, but not in his repentance.

But Amon trespassed more and more.] Some of the Jews say, that he burnt the book of the law: others, that he lay with his own mother. But the great sin which the holy scriptures charge him with, is his idolatry, which he more and more introduced, and never repented of it.

Ver. 24, 25.] These two verses are the very same with those 2 Kings xxi. 23, 24, (see there).

CHAPTER XXXIV.

1 *Josiah's good reign.* 3 *He destroyeth idolatry.* 8 *He taketh order for the repair of the temple.* 14 *Hilkiah having found a book of the law, Josiah sendeth to Huldah to inquire of the Lord.* 23 *Huldah prophesieth the destruction of Jerusalem, but respite thereof in Josiah's time.* 29 *Josiah, causing it to be read in a solemn assembly, reneweth the covenant with God.*

1 JOSIAH was eight years old when he began to reign: and he reigned in Jerusalem one and thirty years.

2 And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand nor to the left.

3 ¶ For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father: and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images.

4 And they brake down the altars of Baalim, in his presence: and the images that were on high above them he cut down: and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images, he brake in pieces, and made dust of them, and strewed it upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them.

5 And he burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars, and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem.

6 And so did he in the cities of Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphtali, with their mattocks round about.

7 And when he had broken down the altars and the groves, and had beaten the graven images into powder, and cut down all the idols throughout all the land of Israel, he returned to Jerusalem.

8 ¶ Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land, and the house, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God.

9 And when they came to Hilkiah the high priest, they delivered the money that was brought into the house of God, which the Levites that kept the doors had gathered of the hand of Ma-

CHAP. XXXIV.

Ver. 1, 2.] These two verses are the same with 2 Kings xxii. 1, 2, only there the name of his mother is set down, which here is omitted.

Ver. 3. *While he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David*] He gave very early proofs of his pious inclinations; for when he was but sixteen years old, and had newly taken on him the administration of affairs, he began to worship God publicly, and propounded David to himself for his pattern.

In the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, &c.] When he was twenty years old, he began to bring others to the true religion, by reforming abuses in the worship of God. For now he had got more authority, and therefore destroyed idolatrous worship, which he was inclined to do before, and had it in his mind when he was a mere youth. This is not so distinctly noted in the book of the Kings, where nothing is recorded of him till what he did in the eighteenth year of his reign. And this is the more remarkable, because he began the reformation here spoken of before Jeremiah began to prophesy, which was not till the next year, in the thirteenth of king Josiah (see Jer. i. 2.)

Ver. 4. *They brake down the altars of Baalim, in his presence.*] I have elsewhere observed that Baalim were demi-gods, as Mr. Mede truly calls them.

And the images that were on high above them he cut down.] The Hebrew word *chamamim*, which we translate *images*, as most think, hath some relation to the sun; because it comes from a word that signifies heat. And Aben Ezra translates it "houses made for the worship of the sun." The LXX. sometimes translate it εἰδωλα, sometimes βδελύματα, but do not tell us what *idols* and *abominations* these were. Jo. Geusius thinks it was the idol called Thammuz, by which name Osiris, Jupiter Ammon, or the sun, was understood. And, indeed, the worship of all the host of heaven is mentioned together with the worship of Baalim, in the idolatry which Manasseh committed, ch. xxxiii. 3.

And the groves, &c. he brake in pieces.] Here again *asherim* signifies the "idols in the groves;" for the groves themselves were not "broken in pieces," but cut down.

And made dust of them, and strewed it upon the graves of them that had sacrificed] To declare his detestation of the smallest remainders of them.

Ver. 5.] Whereby he polluted these altars, and made them abominable, and purged the nation from their idolatry, which was very great. For it is likely these were not Levitical priests, but priests made by their idolatrous kings, either of other nations, or such as they could draw in of their own nation (after the manner of Jeroboam), to officiate to their strange-gods.

Ver. 6. *So did he in the cities of Manasseh, &c.*] Though Shalmaneser had carried away the main body of the ten tribes from their own land, yet there remained a great many of the poor people behind, as appears from this place, and from ver. 9, 33.

Mattocks] Some translate it *mauls*, others *forks*, or such-like instruments.

Ver. 7.] For it appears by the book of the Kings more fully, that he went himself in person through the whole country to see this work done, which otherwise might have been performed negligently.

Ver. 8. *In the eighteenth year of his reign.*] When he was twenty-six years old he proceeded farther, having disposed the people to offer freely towards the reparation of the house of God, as it here follows.

The house.] That is, the house of God. Here is a more perfect narrative of the reparation of the temple than was given in the book of the Kings, where only Shaphan is mentioned as sent to Hilkiah; but here two other men of great authority are joined with him, and ordered to see the work set forward.

Ver. 9.] These last words import, that these Levites (having received what was given at the door of the tabernacle which they kept) travelled all the country over, to collect what money they could gather from well-disposed people, who contributed to this work. Which money the three forenamed persons received

nasseh and Ephraim, and of all the remnant of Israel, and of all Judah and Benjamin, and they returned to Jerusalem.

10 And they put *it* in the hand of the workmen that had the oversight of the house of the LORD, and they gave it to the workmen that wrought in the house of the LORD, to repair and amend the house;

11 Even to the artificers and builders gave they *it*, to buy hewn stones and timber for couplings, and to floor the houses which the kings of Judah had destroyed.

12 And the men did the work faithfully: and the overseers of them were Jahath and Obadiah, the Levites, of the sons of Merari; and Zechariah and Meshullam, of the sons of the Kohathites, to set *it* forward: and *other* of the Levites, all that could skill of instruments of music.

13 Also *they were* over the bearers of burdens, and *were* overseers of all that wrought the work in any manner of service; and of the Levites *there were* scribes, and officers, and porters.

14 ¶ And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiah the priest found a book of the law of the LORD *given* by Moses.

15 And Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law

from them when they returned to Jerusalem: and, besides this, Shaphan alone seems to have been sent to Hilkiah, to sum up the money that had been offered at the temple for this use (2 Kings xxii. 4.)

Ver. 10. *They put it in the hand of the workmen that had the oversight*] Who were appointed to take care of the work, and to see it done. The overseers gave it to the artificers mentioned in the next verse, who were to buy materials, and employ them in the reparation.

Ver. 11. It seems both the outside and inside, the floor and the roof, were run to ruin by long neglect, since the days of Joash, when the temple was last repaired: which the Jews (in Seder Olam Rabba, cap. 24) make account was two hundred and eighteen years.

Ver. 12. *The men did the work faithfully:*] So that no account was taken of them.

And other of the Levites, all that could skill of instruments of music.] That is, all those who were well skilled in music, and performed their part in the service of the temple: which is here mentioned to signify that the principal Levites were set over this work to see it well done.

Ver. 13. *And were overseers of all that wrought the work*] There being great numbers of them, they might well inspect every person that was employed in this work.

And of the Levites, there were scribes, and officers, and porters.] These overseers were deputed to several employments; for which none so fit as the Levites, who understood all manner of things belonging to the house of God: being to do constant service there.

Ver. 14. *When they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the Lord,*] And thereupon had begun the reparation of the house.

Hilkiah the priest found a book of the law of the Lord given by Moses.] The word *given* is not in the Hebrew: which must be applied not to the *book*, but to the *law of the Lord* given by Moses. For we can-

not certainly from hence conclude, that this was the very authentic book which Moses laid up by the ark (see 2 Kings xxii. 8); because in the Hebrew it is said the book of the law of the Lord "by the hand of Moses." Which doth not signify the book was written by his own hand, but that the law therein contained was delivered to the people "by the ministry of Moses." So the phrase, "by the hand," is used in very many places, Exod. xxxv. 29; Lev. x. 11; xxvi. 45; Num. iv. 37, 45, &c. (see 2 Kings xviii. 8, and in this book, xxxv. 6).

16 And Shaphan carried the book to the king, and brought the king word back again, saying, All that was committed to thy servants, they do *it*.

17 And they have gathered together the money that was found in the house of the LORD, and have delivered it into the hand of the overseers, and to the hand of the workmen.

18 Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath given me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king:

19 And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the law, that he rent his clothes.

20 And the king commanded Hilkiah, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Abdon the son of Micah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king's, saying,

21 Go, inquire of the LORD for me, and for them that are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found: for great *is* the wrath of the LORD that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do after all that is written in this book.

22 And Hilkiah, and *they* that the king *had*

not certainly from hence conclude, that this was the very authentic book which Moses laid up by the ark (see 2 Kings xxii. 8); because in the Hebrew it is said the book of the law of the Lord "by the hand of Moses." Which doth not signify the book was written by his own hand, but that the law therein contained was delivered to the people "by the ministry of Moses." So the phrase, "by the hand," is used in very many places, Exod. xxxv. 29; Lev. x. 11; xxvi. 45; Num. iv. 37, 45, &c. (see 2 Kings xviii. 8, and in this book, xxxv. 6).

Ver. 15.] Who read it, 2 Kings xxii. 9.

Ver. 16.] When he came to give an account to the king, how he had executed his command (ver. 8, 9, &c.), he delivered the book to him.

Ver. 17.] See 2 Kings xxii. 9.

Ver. 18, 19.] These two verses are word for word in 2 Kings xxii. 10, 11, where I have explained them. I shall only here add, that Jacobus Capellus thinks, the reading of the law, on every sabbath and festival (which was divided for that purpose into several sections), was as old as the time of Joshua; but was neglected in the reign of wicked kings, particularly in that of Abaz. If it were again restored by Hezekiah (which is uncertain), it was again abolished by Manasseh; and perhaps not renewed when he repented: howsoever, discontinued again by Amon. So that both priests and people, omitting the reading of the law, both publicly and privately (for the public omission caused a private neglect), no wonder, that upon finding the book of the law, and hearing it read, they were startled at it; as if one were risen from the dead (Histor. Sacra et Exotica, ad A. Mundi 3372).

Ver. 20.] He that is called here Abdon, is in 2 Kings xxii. 12, called Achbor: otherwise there is no difference in this verse and that.

Ver. 21—23.] There is little difference in the words between these verses and 2 Kings xxii. 14, 15, &c. and none in the sense. He that is called there Harbas,

appointed, went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvath, the son of Hasrah keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college;) and they spake to her to that *effect*.

23 ¶ And she answered them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell ye the man that sent you to me,

24 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, *even* all the curses that are written in the book which they have read before the king of Judah:

25 Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be poured out upon this place, and shall not be quenched.

26 And as for the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, so shall ye say unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, *concerning* the words which thou hast heard;

27 Because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest his words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and humbledst thyself before me, and didst read thy clothes, and weep before me; I have even heard *thee* also, saith the LORD.

28 Behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers,

is here called Hasrah (some pronouncing his name one way, and some another). And the Targum translates those words (ver. 27), "Thou didst humble thyself before God," &c. in this manner: "Thou didst humble thyself before the Word of the Lord, when thou didst hear his words against this place." Which plainly suppose the Word to be a divine Person, who spake to Moses, and gave him the law.

Ver. 29.] See 2 Kings xxiii. 2.

Ver. 30. *The priests, and the Levites,*] In 2 Kings xxiii. 2 it is said, "the priests and the prophets" went up. The Levites are omitted there, as the prophets are omitted here: but both make up a complete narrative of the persons that went up to the house of the Lord. For among the priests and Levites there were some prophets, such as Jeremiah, Zephaniah, and others.

He read in their ears all the words of the book] One cannot think that Josiah and all the nation were wholly strangers to the words contained in this book (though perhaps they seldom had read it), who considers that Jeremiah and other prophets were now living, who were very conversant in this book, and instructed the people out of it. But they did not sufficiently attend to the words of it; and therefore Josiah gathered a solemn assembly on purpose, that they

and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place, and upon the inhabitants of the same. So they brought the king word again.

29 ¶ Then the king sent and gathered together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem.

30 And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests, and the Levites, and all the people, great and small; and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of the LORD.

31 And the king stood in his place, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book.

32 And he caused all that were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand *to it*. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers.

33 And Josiah took away all the abominations out of all the countries that *pertained* to the children of Israel, and made all that were present in Israel to serve, *even* to serve the LORD their God. *And* all his days they departed not from following the LORD, the God of their fathers.

might hear it read, and be moved to observe that which most affected them. But it is not to be supposed that the whole book was all read at one time, but by parcels at several times, that they might consider and weigh it. Especially that passage in Deut. xxviii. 38, where Moses foretold the captivity of Samaria, and afterward of Judah, and their king: which, Kimchi thinks, Hilkiah might bid Shaphan take special notice of, and read it to the king, which, (if it be true) no doubt, he remarked to the people, that, if it were possible, they might be brought to repentance, and prevent the great calamities which were threatened to them.

Ver. 31.] See 2 Kings xxiii. 3.

Ver. 32.] He did not compel them, but they offered themselves freely, upon his persuasion, to renew their covenant with God, and promised to be firm to it: which, perhaps, at that time they really resolved; though they soon revolted.

Ver. 33.] This is more largely related in 2 Kings xxiii. 4—6, and the following verses. He persuaded them to perform all acts of religious worship unto God, and unto none else. But though he suppressed all external idolatry, yet in their hearts they strongly inclined to it, and often practised it, as appears from Jer. iii. 10; xxv. 3, 4, &c.

CHAPTER XXXV.

1 *Josiah keepeth a most solemn passover. 20 He, provoking Pharaoh-necho, is slain at Megiddo. 25 Lamentations for Josiah.*

1 MOREOVER Josiah kept a passover unto the LORD in Jerusalem: and they killed the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month.

2 And he set the priests in their charges, and encouraged them to the service of the house of the LORD,

3 And said unto the Levites that taught all Israel, which were holy unto the LORD, Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David king of Israel did build; *it shall not be a burden upon your shoulders; serve now the LORD your God, and his people Israel,*

4 And prepare yourselves by the houses of your fathers, after your courses, according to the writing of David king of Israel, and according to the writing of Solomon his son;

5 And stand in the holy place, according to the divisions of the families of the fathers of your brethren the people, and after the division of the families of the Levites:

6 So kill the passover, and sanctify yourselves, and prepare your brethren, that they may do according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

7 And Josiah gave to the people, of the flock, lambs and kids, all for the passover-offerings, for all that were present, to the number of thirty thousand, and three thousand bullocks: these were of the king's substance.

8 And his princes gave willingly unto the people, to the priests, and to the Levites: Hilkiah and Zechariah and Jehiel, rulers of the house

CHAP. XXXV.

Ver. 1. *Josiah kept a passover unto the Lord*] This was in the eighteenth year of his reign, immediately after he had made a glorious reformation, by abolishing all idolatry. And accordingly it is related next to that in 2 Kings xxiii. 21—23, but very briefly, as the other is very largely.

On the fourteenth day of the first month.] At the time prescribed by the law, Exod. xii. 6. For there was no need, it seems, to adjourn it till the second, as they did in the days of Hezekiah.

Ver. 2.] To do their duty in their several places, so that nothing might be omitted, which was required to be done at this great festival.

Ver. 3. *And said unto the Levites that taught all Israel, which were holy unto the Lord,*] That is, the Levites were holy unto the Lord. And therefore may be rendered "and were holy," &c. i. e. peculiarly dedicated to this service of ministering to the priests, and instructing the people.

Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon—did build;] Jarchi thinks that Manasseh, or his son Amon, had removed the ark from its place, as other enormous things had been done by such wicked kings (2 Kings xvi. 14; xxviii. 24, of this book), which may give a more probable sense of those words, xxxiii. 23, that "Amon trespassed more and more," than that which some of the Jews mention: for it was a great addition to his sin, if he displaced the ark. Other Jews, indeed, interpret it after another manner, and make a fable out of these words, as Const. L'Empereur observes upon Codex Middoth, p. 97, and Dr. Lightfoot of the Temple, p. 91. But nothing is more natural than to think that Hilkiah himself had removed the ark while the temple was repairing, there being defects in the most holy place as well as other parts of it: and it was not fit to let the ark be exposed to the workmen. Yet Jacobus Capellus thinks it better to say, the word *tenu* ought not to be translated *put*, but *keep*, or *look after*, the ark in the house which Solomon built. For now, that they were eased of carrying it on their shoulders, they ought to employ themselves more carefully in all other offices about it; ad A. Mundi 3374.

It shall not be a burden upon your shoulders;] That is, hereafter: for they were to carry it to a settled place, there to remain; and then they would be

obliged no further to bear it on their shoulders, as they had done before it was fixed in the temple.

Serve now the Lord your God, and his people Israel,] Serve God in singing, and playing upon instruments, when the sacrifices of God's people are offered, and you shall be excused from your former burdens.

Ver. 4. *After your courses,*] See 1 Chron. xxiii; xxiv., and the following chapters.

The writing of Solomon] See 2 Chron. viii. 14.

Ver. 5. *Stand in the holy place,*] In the court of the priests, where they were wont to stand when they ministered unto God.

According to the divisions of the families of the fathers of your brethren the people,] Who were to bring for every family a lamb, as Moses commanded, Exod. xii. 3.

After the division of the families of the Levites,] Who were appointed to kill the lamb for them.

Ver. 6. *Prepare your brethren,*] That they might be capable to eat of it.

Do according to the word of the Lord by the hand of Moses,] Who commanded it to be eaten in one house, Exod. xii. 46. He seems to require, that as the rest of the tribes came according to their families, into which they were divided; so the Levites would give them a good example, and come according to their families.

Ver. 7. *Josiah gave to the people, of the flock, lambs and kids,*] For the lamb might be taken either from the sheep or from the goats (Exod. xii. 5). That the people might be at no charge; at least thirty thousand families were provided for at the king's charge.

Three thousand bullocks;] These bullocks were for offerings upon the seven days of unleavened bread which followed the passover.

Ver. 8. *His princes gave willingly unto the people, to the priests, and to the Levites;*] As Josiah provided paschal lambs for the people, so some great men provided not only for them, but for the priests and the Levites, that they also might offer without charge.

Hilkiah and Zechariah and Jehiel,] It appears by these words, that the princes here mentioned were not rulers of the people, but the chief of the priests. For Hilkiah was the high-priest; and the other two were the heads of the two great families of the priests, Eleazar and Ithamar: who are called the "captains of the host," as I observed upon 1 Chron. xxv. 1 (see my annotations there). This is a little more largely

of God, gave unto the priests for the passover-offerings two thousand and six hundred *small cattle*, and three hundred oxen.

9 Conaniah also, and Shemaiah, and Nathaneel, his brethren, and Hashabiah, and Jeiel, and Jozabad, chief of the Levites, gave unto the Levites for passover-offerings five thousand *small cattle*, and five hundred oxen.

10 So the service was prepared, and the priests stood in their place, and the Levites in their courses, according to the king's commandment.

11 And they killed the passover, and the priests sprinkled *the blood* from their hands, and the Levites flayed *them*.

12 And they removed the burnt-offerings, that they might give according to the divisions of the families of the people, to offer unto the LORD, as it is written in the book of Moses: and so *did they* with the oxen.

13 And they roasted the passover with fire according to the ordinance: but the *other holy offerings* sod they in pots, and in caldrons, and in pans, and divided *them* speedily among all the people.

14 And afterward they made ready for themselves, and for the priests: because the priests

the sons of Aaron *were busied* in offering of burnt-offerings and the fat until night; therefore the Levites prepared for themselves, and for the priests the sons of Aaron.

15 And the singers the sons of Asaph, *were* in their place, according to the commandment of David, and Asaph, and Heman, and Jeduthun the king's seer; and the porters *waited* at every gate: they might not depart from their service; for their brethren the Levites prepared for them.

16 So all the service of the LORD was prepared the same day, to keep the passover, and to offer burnt-offerings upon the altar of the LORD, according to the commandment of king Josiah.

17 And the children of Israel that were present kept the passover at that time, and the feast of unleavened bread seven days.

18 And there was no passover like to that kept in Israel, from the days of Samuel the prophet; neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a passover as Josiah kept, and the priests, and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel that were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

19 In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah was this passover kept.

20 ¶ After all this, when Josiah had prepared

and distinctly expressed by Bertram, in his Republica Judaica, cap. 15, where he saith Zechariah was the chief among the second priests of the race of Eleazar, who was properly called *nagid*, the captain of the temple: as Jehiel was the most illustrious person among the second priests, who were the progeny of Ithamar, and was properly called *pakid*; and was set over the Gershonites and Merarites, as Zechariah was over the Kohathites.

Rulers of the house of God.] Who were the same with those who in the New Testament are called the *συναγωγοὶ* of the temple, who governed the rest of the priests (so Bertram, De Republica Judaica, p. 296, 300).

Small cattle.] That is, lambs and kids.

Three hundred oxen.] That through the whole festival they might be able to rejoice with their brethren.

Ver. 9. *Conaniah also, and Shemaiah, &c.*] Who were men of estates, as well as in great offices among their brethren.

Gave unto the Levites.] That they might be provided for as well as the priests, to make it a time of universal joy.

Ver. 10.] All things were disposed for the offering the paschal sacrifice; the priests standing in their place and the Levites attending them.

Ver. 11. *They killed the passover.*] That is, the Levites killed the lamb, and gave the blood to the priests.

The priests sprinkled the blood.] For they alone could perform this part of the service.

The Levites flayed them.] That the priests might have nothing to do, but to sprinkle the blood of every one of them: which took up a great deal of time (see xxix. 34).

Ver. 12. *They removed the burnt-offerings, that they might give according to the divisions of the families of the people, to offer unto the Lord.*] It seems, some of the lambs were given by Josiah for burnt-offerings: and these they despatched as fast as they could, that they might give the paschal lamb to every family according to their divisions, after it had been offered to the Lord. For this was the principal offering upon this day.

So did they with the oxen.] All of which were not given for peace-offerings, but some for burnt-offerings: which they also offered as fast as they could, that they might not hinder the paschal lamb from being offered.

Ver. 13. *They roasted the passover.*] See Exod. xii. 8, 9. Though the paschal lamb was to be roasted; yet the other eucharistical sacrifices which attended it (as the Targum expounds it) might be boiled in water.

Divided them speedily among all the people.] Gave every one of the people a portion of the oxen that were offered for peace-offerings: and did it so speedily, that they had time to take care of themselves, as it here follows.

Ver. 14.] This is a great instance of the zeal and diligence of the priests, for whom the principal persons among them had made a large provision; but they did not eat of the paschal lamb nor of the peace-offerings till night, being employed in offering burnt-sacrifices, and burning the fat till that time: against which the Levites prepared for them and for themselves.

Ver. 15.] This seems to import that the singing and music continued till all the sacrifices were offered, that is, till night; and none were suffered to depart from the service, the porters standing at every gate to hinder them, if they attempted it. And their brethren, who were not singers, took care to provide for them their portion, when they had done.

Ver. 16, 17.] These two verses are a summary account of what went before, that the whole solemnity was performed in every part of it, according to the king's direction.

Ver. 18.] We do not read in the book of Samuel of any passover kept in his days; therefore the book wherein this was recorded is lost, as many other books of the prophets are. The last clause shows wherein this passover went beyond all other. David and Solomon were greater kings than he, and in several respects kept greater festivals; the number of people, while the ten tribes were united to the other two, being greater, and the multitude of sacri-

the temple, Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against Charchemish by Euphrates: and Josiah went out against him.

21 But he sent ambassadors to him, saying, What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? *I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war; for God commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not.*

22 Nevertheless, Josiah would not turn his

faces also greater: but in this Josiah excelled them all, that being nothing so rich, he was notwithstanding so liberal, as to provide all the sacrifices for the priests, the Levites, and the people, at this feast.

Ver. 19.] In the same year wherein he repaired the house of God, and the book of the law was found and brought to him; which, it is likely, put him in mind of this duty, ch. xxxiv. 8.

Ver. 20. *After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple,]* Some time after the temple was repaired, and made fit for the service of God, and they expected great happiness to ensue such pious works, there was an unexpected change, which is here noted, to teach us not to be confident, nor rashly enterprise any thing, remembering the vicissitude of all earthly things.

Necho king of Egypt] Whom the Targum calls "Pharaoh the Lame," and so Kimchi, who saith he was lame in his feet, and thence called by the name of Claudus, as the Romans would have expressed it: who, from the like disposition of their bodies, gave names to their emperors; such as Crassus, Barbarosa, and others, as Beckius observes. This lameness proceeded from some wound he had received, for *necho signifies wounded.*

Came up to fight against Charchemish by Euphrates:] The city of Carcium stood upon that river, and belonged to the Assyrians, with whose king Necho came to fight (2 Kings xxiii. 29).

Josiah went out against him.] See what I have noted there: unto which I shall here add, that by this it seems probable Josiah was in friendship with the king of Assyria, to whose assistance he seems to have voluntarily gone with his forces, by giving a diversion to the Egyptians. Certain it is, the Assyrian empire was not yet fallen; for in Josiah's days the prophet Zephaniah foretells the destruction of Nineveh (ch. ii. 13, &c.) Now Josiah reigned in the time of Cyaxarus king of the Medes, by whom Nineveh was destroyed, as Herodotus tells us. But it was then in a flourishing condition, for Phraortis, the predecessor of Cyaxarus, not contented with the kingdom of the Medes, but invading the Assyrians, after he had subdued the Persians, was defeated, and lost a vast army before Nineveh: which Herodotus Coringius thinks might possibly move Josiah to court the king of Assyria's favour, by opposing himself to the king of Egypt when he came to invade him. But a most judicious person in this kind of learning (whom I have often consulted) thinks this all wrong; and that though Nineveh was not yet destroyed, yet the empire was, in the eighteenth year of Josiah; from which some governor got some little part, and kept Nineveh till it was destroyed by Nabopolassar, in the first year of his reign. Therefore I should have said, Josiah was a friend of the king of Babylon, rather than of the king of Assyria. But I must leave those that are better skilled than I am in these matters to judge of them.

Ver. 21. *What have I to do with thee, thou king*

face from him, but disguised himself, that he might fight with him, and hearkened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God, and came to fight in the valley of Megiddo.

23 And the archers shot at king Josiah: and the king said to his servants, Have me away; for I am sore wounded.

24 His servants therefore took him out of that chariot, and put him in the second chariot that he had; and they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died, and was buried in one of the sepulchres

of Judah?] He had no controversy with him, and therefore prays him not to meddle in this war.

For God commanded me to make haste:] And therefore desires him not to give him any stop in his expedition. Some think he only pretended this, because he knew Josiah had a great reverence to God, and in obedience to him might desist from his purpose: and the Targum, with some of the Jews, thinks he calls his own idol by the name of God; though Kimchi thinks he speaks of the true God, who perhaps admonished him in a dream, as he did Abimelech, or sent him such a message by the prophet Jeremiah (as Grotius supposes), many of whose prophecies are directed to foreign nations: or, perhaps, he meant, that he felt a strong impulse unto this undertaking, which he took to be from God.

That he destroy thee not.] Of which there was great danger, if he opposed the divine command.

Ver. 22. *Josiah—disguised himself, that he might fight with him,]* And not be known to be the king of Judah.

And hearkened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God,] The Targum thinks that Josiah regarded not what Necho said, because he thought he spake only from his idol, for he could not imagine that the God of Israel had spoken to him. But these words import the contrary, and therefore Josiah should at least have inquired of God whether it was his mind that he should not oppose Necho.

And came to fight in the valley of Megiddo.] A place in the tribe of Manasseh (Josh. xvii. 11). So that Josiah may seem to have come against him, because he passed through his country without his leave: but I rather think, as I said before, he was in the interests of the king of Assyria. I observed upon 2 Kings xxiii. 29, that Herodotus tells the same story, but mistakes the name of Megiddo, and calls it Magdolin; which was a great city in Egypt, better known to him than the cities in Syria or Phœnicia. He also adds, that after this battle the king of Egypt took the great city in Syria called Cadytus: which Herm. Coringius thinks was the name of Jerusalem among the old Egyptians (Adversaria Chronolog. cap. 15). I think Jacobus Capellus hath well observed (in his Hist. Sacra et Exotica), that the Egyptians being a vain people, concealed from Herodotus, when he came to consult the affairs of their country, many things that were true, and imposed upon his belief many things that were false. For example, they did not tell him a word of the victory which Nebuchadnezzar got over Pharaoh-nechoh at Euphrates; but gloried in this victory over the Syrians: ad A. Mundi 3425.

Ver. 23.] His disguise did not secure him; for still he appeared, I suppose, as a great commander at whom the enemy would sooner aim than at common men.

Ver. 24. *His servants therefore took him out of that chariot, and put him in the second]* As all great captains have led horses, that if one fail they may mount another (which was the custom in wars in ancient

of his fathers: And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah.

25 ¶ And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah; and all the singing men and the singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel: and, behold, they are written in the lamentations.

time, as Bochart shows in his Hieroz. par. i. cap. 2, 9); so when they fought in chariots they had an empty one following them, into which they might go if the other proved unserviceable or inconvenient.

All Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah.] After the example of the prophet Jeremiah. For as bad as they showed themselves afterward to be, they had some sense of the great worth of this prince.

Ver. 25. *Spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day.]* Whosoever they bewailed any calamity, they mentioned that as the greatest that had befallen them.

And made them an ordinance in Israel:] That they should never forget this fatal stroke, after which they never saw good days. This statute was made by the supreme authority, and was approved by the prophet Jeremiah, who joined in this lamentation; which warrants Christian kings and princes to appoint days for the yearly commemoration of great calamities, or great deliverances.

They are written in the lamentations.] Josephus, in his tenth book of the Antiquities of the Jews, ch. 6,

26 Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and his goodness, according to *that which was written in the law of the Lord,*

27 And his deeds, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah.

imagines the book of the Lamentations of Jeremiah, which now remains in the Bible, contains the mournful ditties sung at Josiah's funeral, and in aftertimes; which opinion St. Jerome follows; at least in those words Lam. iv. 20. R. Solomon thinks Josiah was bewailed; but it is manifest all this is a mistake; for that book was written after the destruction of Jerusalem, which is lamented in it, and the words now mentioned plainly relate to Zedekiah, not to Josiah; who was not taken but killed. Therefore the lamentations here mentioned are lost, which were written immediately after Josiah was slain.

Ver. 26. *The rest of the acts of Josiah, and his goodness, &c.]* That is, his piety, or (as we translate it in the margin) his *kindnesses*, that is, his great love to his people, of which there are great instances in the foregoing part of this history.

According to that which was written in the law of the Lord,] Which he made his rule in all that he did.

Ver. 27.] It seems the Israelites, who were left in the land of Samaria, continued to keep records of what was done in the land of Judah itself.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

1 Jehoahaz succeeding is deposed by Pharaoh, and carried into Egypt. 5 Jehoiakim reigning ill is carried bound into Babylon. 9 Jehoiachin succeeding reigneth ill, and is brought into Babylon. 11 Zedekiah succeeding reigneth ill, and despiseth the prophets, and rebelleth against Nebuchadnezzar. 14 Jerusalem, for the sins of the priests and people, is wholly destroyed. 22 The proclamation of Cyrus.

1 THEN the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and made him king in his father's stead in Jerusalem.

2 Jehoahaz was twenty and three years old when he began to reign; and he reigned three months in Jerusalem.

3 And the king of Egypt put him down at Jerusalem, and condemned the land in a hundred talents of silver, and a talent of gold.

4 And the king of Egypt made Eliakim his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem, and

turned his name to Jehoiakim. And Necho took Jehoahaz his brother, and carried him to Egypt.

5 ¶ Jehoakim was twenty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem: and he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD his God.

6 Against him came up Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and bound him in fetters, to carry him to Babylon.

7 Nebuchadnezzar also carried of the vessels

CHAP. XXXVI.

Ver. 1.] Not by right of succession, but by a faction of the people.

Ver. 2.] See 2 Kings xxiii. 30, 31.

Ver. 3.] He heard, it is possible, that he meditated revenge for the death of his father, and therefore deposed him; and also set a great fine on the people who joined with him (see 2 Kings xxiii. 33).

Ver. 4. *And the king of Egypt made Eliakim his brother king—and turned his name to Jehoiakim.]* As a mark he was made king by him, and owed his dignity to his favour. So Pharaoh changed the name of Joseph; and Nebuchadnezzar, the names of Daniel and his three companions.

Necho took Jehoahaz.] See 2 Kings xxiii. 31.

Ver. 5.] See 2 Kings xxiii. 36, 37.

Ver. 6. *Against him came up Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.]* The first words "against him"

are emphatical; for when he came up before, he did not come up properly against Jerusalem, but against Pharaoh-necho. And therefore it is said, not that he came up against that city, but merely that he "came up into the land" (Jer. xxxv. 11), when he made Jehoiakim his servant three years. So that his coming up had no other effect but to make him tributary to Nebuchadnezzar.

And bound him in fetters, to carry him to Babylon.] See 2 Kings xxiv. 1, &c. The Targum explains it, He put brazen chains upon his hands and fetters upon his legs. But he did not carry him to Babylon, for Nebuchadnezzar altered his mind, and permitted him to reign at Jerusalem as his tributary; though he carried away, as it follows, some of the vessels of the temple, and also certain choice persons, as we read in the first of Daniel.

Ver. 7.] He carried away a great many in the next king's reign (2 Kings xxiv. 13, 14), but it seems he

of the house of the LORD to Babylon, and put them in his temple at Babylon.

8 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and his abominations which he did, and that which was found in him, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead.

9 ¶ Jehoiachin was eight years old when he began to reign; and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem: and he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD.

10 And when the year was expired, king Nebuchadnezzar sent and brought him to Babylon, with the goodly vessels of the house of the LORD, and made Zedekiah his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem.

11 ¶ Zedekiah was one and twenty years old

began to do it in this. And they were so hardened, as to believe those false prophets, who assured them these vessels should shortly be brought again from Babylon, and give no credit to Jeremiah, who told them they prophesied a lie; for these vessels should be so far from being brought from Babylon, that all the remaining vessels should be carried after them, and there be till the day when God visited them (see Jer. xxvii. 16, 17, 21, 22).

Ver. 8.] There was a book, it is likely, that had this title; but what was said there to be "found of him," is not here mentioned. The Targum saith, "the iniquity that was found in him." But what was that iniquity? To this they answer in the Talmud, that he had the name of an idol in his forehead: or, as others say, there were found in his body certain marks and impressions in honour of idols. So St. Jerome, He had made those marks in his body, which God had forbidden in Lev. xix. 28 (see our learned Dr. Spencer, lib. ii. De Leg. Rit. Hebr. cap. 14, sect. 2). But there are those that think it is meant of the innocent blood that he shed (2 Kings xxiv. 4). But that was the sin of Manasseh; therefore the plainest meaning is, that he was found guilty of disloyal intentions against the king of Babylon, which he concealed a great while, but at last they were discovered (2 Kings xxiv. 1).

Ver. 9. *Jehoiachin was eight years old when he began to reign;*] In 2 Kings xxiv. 8, it is said, that he was "eighteen years old" when he began to reign. See my annotations on that place: unto which may be added, that Abarbanel thinks there is no difference between these two places; but that the word for *eight* is governed by another that is wanting, signifying *ten*. - But the common solution is, that when his father had reigned one year, he made his son joint sovereign with him, that the people might be settled in their affection to him before he left the throne, which was ten years after. So long he reigned with his father, and eight years alone, which made eighteen in all (see Buxtorf, in his *Vindiciæ Hebr. Veritatis*, par. ii. cap. 2, p. 408). But there are those who take the meaning to be, that he was eight years old, when he (that is, his father) began to reign: or, as our primate Usher thinks, it was the eighth year, not of his age, but of the captivity of Babylon, to which some principal persons were obnoxious (*Chronologia Sacra*, pag. ult.). But some great men think here is an error of the copyist, for he was *eighteen* years old.

He reigned three months and ten days] It seems Nebuchadnezzar repented of his making him king; being afraid, as Kimchi thinks, that by the evil counsel of his courtiers, he would be persuaded to rebel,

when he began to reign; and reigned eleven years in Jerusalem.

12 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD his God, and humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet, speaking from the mouth of the LORD.

13 And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God: but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the LORD God of Israel.

14 ¶ Moreover, all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much, after all the abominations of the heathen, and polluted the house of the LORD which he had hallowed in Jerusalem.

15 And the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and

after the example of Jehoiakim. Jacobus Capellus thinks the people set him up to be their king; and therefore he resolved to dethrone him, sending his servants against him, and then coming himself and taking Jerusalem (see 2 Kings xxiv. 10, 11).

Ver. 10.] See 2 Kings xxiv. 11, 12. For God had threatened none of Jehoiakim's seed should sit upon the throne of David. They might be set upon his throne, as the same Capellus observes, but not remain or continue possessed of it. "Sedere enim dicuntur, non transitoria, sed quæ aliquamdiu pedem figunt," ad A. M. 3399.

Ver. 11.] See 2 Kings xxiv. 18.

Ver. 12.] "From the mouth of the Word of the Lord," saith the Targum: which shows, that by the *Word* here he meant a divine person. It is a wonderful thing, that having seen so many of the people carried away captive, together with their king Jehoiakim, they should not at all relent, but go on in those ways which had led others to destruction. But so incorrigible were this people, that Ezekiel tells us, they who were carried away captive (among whom he was one) persisted in their rebellion, and were not at all amended. His whole book is full of complaints of their impentence. And in the thirteenth chapter he tells us, they still entertained false prophets (unto whom they hearkened rather than to Ezekiel), who saw visions of peace for Jerusalem, when there was no peace; as he there speaks, ver. 16, that is, made the people believe Jerusalem should not be taken; and so hardened their hearts in their obstinate wickedness.

Ver. 13. *Who had made him swear by God:*] That he would be true and faithful to him.

But he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart] His wickedness was so great, that God gave him up to commit this further crime of perjury, to his utter ruin (2 Kings xxiv. 20).

Ver. 14.] There was such a universal corruption, and that to such an abominable height, that there was no hope of their growing better, they being perfectly ripe for utter destruction.

Ver. 15. *Rising up betimes, and sending;*] To rise *betimes* signifies in scripture to do a thing with care, diligence, and affection: for good husbands, especially fathers of families (from whom this expression is borrowed), were wont to get up early to look after their business, and to quicken and encourage their servants to their duty. Such was the compassion and care of God for his people, that he gave them seasonable, timely, and early admonitions to their duty, and notice of their danger, before it was too late.

Because he had compassion on his people, and on

sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place:

16 But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy.

17 Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age; he gave them all into his hand.

18 And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of

the Lord, and the treasures of the king and of his princes, all these he brought to Babylon.

19 And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof.

20 And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon, where they were servants to him and his sons, until the reign of the kingdom of Persia:

21 To fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.

his dwelling place:] To this compassion they owed a succession of prophets in every king's reign, as I have before noted, who most earnestly called upon them to reform. Yet, if they did in a good king's reign grow something better, they immediately revolted as soon as he was dead, and a bad one came in his place. Such a strange propensity they had to idolatry: which is the more wonderful when we consider, that this nation, which was so prone to idolatry, when they had so many prophets among them to admonish them against it, were not at all inclined to it, when they had no more any prophets to instruct them, nor any miracles wrought among them; that is, after their return from the captivity of Babylon, when prophecy in a little time ceased; and yet they were steadfast in the service of God, according to the law of Moses. The best account that I am able to give of this is, that before the captivity sufficient care was not taken for the building of synagogues for the teaching of the law, if there were any at all; for we find no mention of them in these books: whereas they abounded in every place after the captivity; insomuch, that the Jews say, there were several hundreds in Jerusalem alone, wherein the law was read and taught, which was a most powerful means to keep them constant to the religion they professed: for, as Josephus reports, by this means the people came to be so acquainted with their laws, that if any person asked any of them concerning them, *ἴσως ἂν ἕκαστος πάντα, ἢ τοιοῦτα τοῦ ἑαυτοῦ*, "he would more readily tell every thing, than his own name."

Ver. 16. *But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words.]* As the corruption was universal, so they were incorrigible; not only rejecting, but despising, and setting at nought the means of their cure.

Until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy.] Till the implacable wrath of God came upon them; there being no hope they would repent, and be healed, but they must die and perish.

Ver. 17. *He brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary.]* Unto which, it is likely, they fled for safety, after the manner of all nations, who took their holy places to be inviolable: but they found no protection there; the Chaldees being a rough nation and having no regard to them.

He gave them all into his hand.] To kill them, or sell them for slaves, as he thought good.

Ver. 18. *All the vessels of the house of God,] Which are numbered in the next book, Ezra i. 9—11. The former treasures, by a special providence of God, were preserved, and restored in the reign of Cyrus to the house of the Lord; but the other, it is likely, were looked upon as spoil, and spent by the king and his great men.*

Ver. 19.] See 2 Kings xxv. 9, 10. But it is a very absurd supposition of some, who think that all the sacred books were now also burnt, and restored again by Ezra after the captivity out of his memory. For who can believe, that among all the priests, and prophets too, that were carried captive, none of them should take care to carry a bible with them? Jeremiah also remaining in the land, we may be confident was not without it. It is plain also, that Daniel had his prophecy, and the books of Moses, in Babylon (Dan. ix. 2, 3). And Josephus says that Cyrus was shown the prophecy of Isaiah, wherein his name was expressly mentioned; which shows, they had copies of these books in their captivity. But this extravagant fable was brought upon the stage by the apocryphal Esdras (ch. xiv.), and was not known till the beginning of the third century, when that author, half Jew, and half Christian, lived.

Ver. 20.] Which gave them liberty to return to their country. Such was the law of war in ancient times; all the people of a city or country that were conquered became slaves to the conqueror; and appertained to the public or private persons who had taken them, according to the laws settled in every nation for the dividend of the booty. Thus we find at the sacking of Troy, all that remained alive were made slaves, even queen Hecuba, and her daughters. The Greek and Roman histories are full of such examples.

Ver. 21.] Because the Jews, among other precepts, had violated that of letting their land rest from ploughing and sowing every seventh year, God gave their land a long sabbath, or rest, for no less than ten times seven years: which Jeremiah threatened, ch. xxv. 9, 12; xxix. 10. If it be true, that they had neglected this law for the space of four hundred and thirty years; but had ploughed their ground, &c. in the seventh, as well as in all other years; then the judgment of God upon them was very remarkable, in making their ground rest, and be free from tillage, just as long as it should have been if they had observed his law: for in the space of four hundred and thirty years, there ought to have been sixty and five years of rest and intermission (See Gullelmus Vorstius, upon David Ganz's Tzemuch David, p. 212).

To fulfil threescore and ten years.] These years ended in the first or second year of Cyrus; but when they began is variously disputed. Hermannus Witsius hath already argued strongly, that it was in the fourth year of Jehoiakim: for then Jeremiah said, "The whole land shall be a desolation, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years," ch. xxv. 11, which is farther explained, ver. 17, 18. Which is the opinion also of Hermannus Conringius, in his Adversaria Chronologica, cap. 14, and of Johannes Vorstius, in his Exercitatio Secunda de Captivitate Babylonica; and thus our Usher, ad A. Mun-

22 ¶ Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,

di 3394. Though other great men date these seventy years from the captivity of Zedekiah (see Scaliger, De Emend. Temporum, lib. vi. p. 575.

Ver. 22, 23.] These two verses, which conclude this book, begin the next, where I will explain them; and only take notice here, that thus the Targum trans-

23 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me, and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The LORD his God be with him, and let him go up.

lates this proclamation: "Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of this earth hath the Word of the Lord God of heaven delivered unto me; and he commanded me to build him a sanctuary in Jerusalem," &c. Which evidently shows, this paraphrast believed the Word dwelt in the sanctuary.

THE

BOOK OF EZRA.

It is generally thought by all sorts of writers, that Ezra himself wrote this book which bears his name. And there is the less doubt of it, if he wrote the foregoing book: for he begins this book as that ended; which is an argument they had the same author; it being an ancient way of writing, as Grotius observes out of Polybius, who concludes one book, and begins the next with the same words. But the learned Huetius is of opinion, that Ezra did not write the first six chapters of this book, but some other person; for it is evident they were written in the time of Darius, when the author speaks of himself as then at Jerusalem (ch. v. 3, 4, 9). Whereas Ezra went up from Babylon in the reign of Artaxerxes (ch. vii. 1), and then, it is manifest, wrote the four remaining chapters, as appears from ch. vii. 27, 28; ix. 5; x. 1. Therefore, when the Talmudists and other Hebrew doctors say Ezra wrote this book, they are to be understood, he thinks, to speak of the latter part of it.

CHAPTER I.

1 The proclamation of Cyrus for the building of the temple. 5 The people provide for the return. 7 Cyrus restoreth the vessels of the temple to Sheshbazzar.

1 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made

a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,

2 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of

CHAP. I.

Ver. 1. In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia,] This is that famous Cyrus, who, a hundred and forty years before the temple was destroyed, and two hundred years before he was born, was mentioned by name in the prophecy of Isaiah, as designed by God for the restoring his people (Isa. xlv. ult. xlv. 1—4). Which prophecy, it is probable, Daniel showed to Cyrus, which made him set forth the following edict: which was not put forth in the first year of his empire, for then the Jews were not his subjects, but the first year after his conquest of Babylon, where the Jews then lived in captivity (see Scaliger, in his Isagoge, lib. iii. p. 260, and De Emend. Temporum, lib. vi. p. 576).

That the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled,] Who foretold, that after seventy years were accomplished, the king of Baby-

lon and the Chaldeans should be destroyed, and the people of Judah restored to their own land (see ch. xxv. 12; xxix. 10).

The Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation—and put it also in writing,] God, who had so long ago designed him for this work, suggested these thoughts to him, and excited him to persecute them; which he did, not only by causing his will and pleasure to be proclaimed, but to be put in writing, that none might mistake his meaning.

Ver. 2. The Lord God of heaven] It is an observation of Mr. Mede, that as, before the captivity, when they spake of God they called him "the Lord of hosts;" so the constant style of the holy books after the captivity, is the "God of heaven." As here and ch. vi. 10; vii. 21. But it is a question, whether Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes, penned these writings themselves, wherein they proclaimed the God of the

the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah:

3 *Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel (he is the God) which is in Jerusalem.*

4 And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.

5 ¶ Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the

Jews to be "the Lord God of heaven:" or whether they were drawn up by some of the Jews that attended upon them. It seems likely to me, that God, who raised up the spirit of Cyrus to be a peculiar instrument of the freeing his people from slavery, did enlighten his mind to understand that there was but one only God whom the Jews worshipped, and who spake in those holy books which were shown him. And Artaxerxes might call the law of Moses the "law of the God of heaven," knowing the Jews worshipped no other God, whose law this was.

Hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth;] That is, all those large dominions which the Assyrians and Babylonians had enjoyed.

And he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.] So he understood from Isaiah xlv. 13, where God saith of Cyrus, "he shall build my city," of which the temple was the principal part: and more plainly, ch. xliv. 28, "he shall say to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid." Josephus hath thus paraphrased upon these words, Ἐπί μὲ ὁ Θεὸς τῆς οἰκουμένης ἀπέδειξε βασιλία, &c. "Because the greatest God hath constituted me the king of the world, I believe him to be him whom the people of Israel adore. For he foretold me king by his prophets, and that I should build his temple at Jerusalem, in the land of Judea."

Ver. 3.] Not of the Jews only, but of Israel also, who were under his government, the Assyrians and Medes being his subjects. And so Josephus (as I observed before) says, that Zerubbabel sent the edict of Cyrus into Media, to the rest of the ten tribes: to whom he not only makes a promulgation of liberty to go to their own country, but desires them to go, and prays God to be with them and prosper them in building God's house, whom he acknowledges to be the true and only God. This was a marvellous encouragement to them.

Ver. 4. *Whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth,]* This seems to relate to such as were desirous to go up with their brethren, but were forced to stay behind for want of necessaries to support them in so long a journey.

Let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, &c.] He therefore requires his officers to furnish them with such things as they needed.

Beside the freewill offering for the house of God] Which he supposed the richer sort of Jews would readily make to assist their poor brethren; though they themselves being well settled in Babylon, did not think fit to stir till they saw how these would succeed.

Ver. 5. *Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin,—with all them whose spirit God had raised,]* There were some of other tribes

Levites, with all *them* whose spirit God had raised to go up to build the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem.

6 And all they that *were* about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, beside all *that* was willingly offered.

7 ¶ Also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the Lord, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put them in the house of his gods;

8 Even those did Cyrus king of Persia bring forth by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and numbered them unto Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah.

besides Judah and Benjamin that went up (1 Chron. ix. 3), though these were the principal, who all needed a special motion from God to quicken and encourage them to this enterprise; the difficulties being so great which they were to encounter in a long journey, and their country lying waste when they came thither; this made those who had got possessions in Babylon to choose to stay there.

To build the house of the Lord] This was the design, which people of great piety cheerfully undertook, that the public worship of the true God might be restored, whom they now worshipped only in private.

Ver. 6. *All they that were about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, &c.]* Such was the authority of the king, and such was the influence of God upon their hearts, that all their neighbours encouraged them to this work, and enabled them to undertake this journey to Jerusalem.

Beside all that was willingly offered.] Their brethren freely offered them their assistance, though they did not think fit to go along with them.

Ver. 7.] Where by a singular providence they had been preserved till this time, being looked upon as sacred things, which Nebuchadnezzar would not turn to his own private use, but dedicated to his gods. Some think the ark was among the sacred things which Cyrus caused to be restored; but it should first be proved that it was carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon, which now here appears to be true. The argument they bring for it is, that in the second temple sacrifices were offered as in the first, and all solemn days observed, especially the great day of expiation, when the law ordained the blood should be sprinkled before the mercy-seat, which could not be done when there was none; and there was none, if there was no ark. But, as the Jews universally acknowledge, this was one of the five things wanting in the second temple; so, unless the divine glory had been there also, the ark would have signified little. Therefore, it is more likely, that by the absence of these, God would signify, he was withdrawing his presence from that house of stone, to dwell in the temple of Christ's body: who offered himself to God, and thereby put an end to those figurative sacrifices.

Ver. 8. *Mithredath]* This was a name frequent among the Persians, derived from their god Mithra: as Cyrus himself had his name (Hesychius saith) from the sun, which in their language was called Μίτρος.

And numbered them unto Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah.] Which was another name for Zerubbabel, mentioned ch. iii. 2, 8, v. 14, 16. For it was common in the time of the captivity for the great men of Judah to have two names: one of their own country, which was domestic; another of the Chaldeans, which was

9 And this is the number of them: thirty chargers of gold, a thousand chargers of silver, nine and twenty knives,

10 Thirty basons of gold, silver basons of a second sort four hundred and ten, and other vessels a thousand.

used at court (Dan. i. 7). Nehemiah had two names: and this of Sheshbazzar seems to have been a good omen of their flourishing condition; being compounded of two words, signifying *fine linen and gold*. On the contrary, Zerubbabel was a name importing the misery of the people of Israel at that time; for it is as much as an *exile or stranger* in Babylon, where he was born. Thus pious men, even in the midst of the honours they had at court (for Joseph saith, Zerubbabel was one of the guard of the king's body), were admonished not to forget their brethren, but sympathize with them in their miseries. Ver. 9.] See Dr. Lightfoot, of the Temple, p. 233, 234.

Ver. 11. *All the vessels of gold and of silver were five thousand and four hundred.*] Here seems to be some difficulty: for all the vessels that are specially named, make no more in number than two thousand four hundred and ninety-nine. To which many think this a sufficient answer, that it is said in 2 Chron.

11 All the vessels of gold and of silver were five thousand and four hundred. All these did Sheshbazzar bring up with them of the captivity that were brought up from Babylon unto Jerusalem.

xxxvi. 18, Nebuchadnezzar carried away all the vessels, both great and small. Now, in the account that is here given, the larger vessels only, which were of greater bigness and price, are mentioned: but the gross sum comprehends all, both great and small, and amounts to the number of five thousand and four hundred. But Tremellius solves this, by translating the last words of the former verse otherwise than we do; not of other vessels a thousand, but other vessels by thousands, viz. almost three thousand, wanting one hundred: which our Mr. Mede judges a true translation, in his Daniel's Weeks, book iii. p. 700.

All these did Sheshbazzar bring up with them of the captivity that were brought up from Babylon unto Jerusalem.] Which restoration of the Jews unto their own land seems to be a greater miracle than the first conquest of it: for Joshua did that by force of arms; but these exiles recovered their country without any force at all; and were settled in it, notwithstanding many great impediments to hinder it.

CHAPTER II.

1 The number that return, of the people, 36 of the priests, 40 of the Levites, 43 of the Nethinims, 55 of Solomon's servants, 62 of the priests which could not show their pedigree. 64 The whole number of them, with their substance. 65 Their oblations.

1 Now these are the children of the province that went up out of the captivity, of those which had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away into Babylon, and came again unto Jerusalem and Judah, every one unto his city;

2 Which came with Zerubbabel: Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan,

Mizpar, Bigvai, Rehum, Baanah. The number of the men of the people of Israel:

3 The children of Parosh, two thousand an hundred seventy and two.

4 The children of Shephatiah, three hundred seventy and two.

5 The children of Arah, seven hundred seventy and five.

CHAP. II.

Ver. 1. *Now these are the children of the province*] Some by the province understand *Babylon*; in which these people were most of them born, and had all lived a long time. But I think it more likely to be meant of *Judea*, which was made a province when it was conquered, and Gedaliah constituted the governor of it; and in this book is called the "province of Judea," ch. v. 8.

Whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away] Their parents and ancestors had been carried away by him, and they in them.

And came again unto Jerusalem and Judah, every one unto his city;] See Jer. xxxii. 15: Neh. xi. 3. Their land and their cities had been laid so desolate, and had been so long neglected, and were infested also by such bad neighbours, that it was a great piece of generosity in these men to return thither: and their names are recorded to the eternal honour of them, and of their posterity; they being the first planters of this country, after it had been laid waste.

Ver. 2. *Which came with Zerubbabel: Jeshua, Nehemiah, &c.*] These were their heads, who undertook to conduct them: among whom Zerubbabel was the prince, or leader in chief; as Jeshua was high-priest, who is mentioned next to him. Nehemiah,

who follows after him, is not the same, whose hook comes after this: for he did not go now, but afterwards; or, if he did, he returned to Babylon again (see our famous Reynolds, in his Censure of the Apocryphal Books, prælect. cxi. cxviii.) Nor is it likely, that this Mordecai was the same with him that was Esther's cousin, but some other person: there being another of that name mentioned in the book of the Chronicles (see the same Reynolds, prælect. cxlvii.)

The number of the men of the people of Israel;] They who were called the "children of the province" before, are now called the "people of Israel:" for from him they were derived, though most of them were of the tribe of Judah.

Ver. 3.] He begins first to reckon up the families that went up; of which this was one of the largest, descended from Parosh, who was their ancestor.

Ver. 4.] This was another family, descended from this man. The same is to be said of the rest.

Ver. 5.] So many gave in their names in Babylon, that they intended to return into Judea: but it appears by Neh. vii. 10, that there came no more thither than six hundred fifty and two: therefore it is supposed, that the rest altered their minds, or died by the way. The same must be said of several other differences between this account and that in Nehemiah.

6 The children of Pahath-moab, of the children of Jeshua and Joab, two thousand eight hundred and twelve.

7 The children of Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four.

8 The children of Zattu, nine hundred forty and five.

9 The children of Zaccai, seven hundred and threescore.

10 The children of Bani, six hundred forty and two.

11 The children of Bebai, six hundred twenty and three.

12 The children of Azgad, a thousand two hundred twenty and two.

13 The children of Adonikam, six hundred sixty and six.

14 The children of Bigvai, two thousand fifty and six.

15 The children of Adin, four hundred fifty and four.

16 The children of Ater of Hezekiah, ninety and eight.

17 The children of Bezai, three hundred twenty and three.

18 The children of Jorah, a hundred and twelve.

19 The children of Hashum, two hundred twenty and three.

20 The children of Gibbar, ninety and five.

21 The children of Beth-lehem, a hundred twenty and three.

22 The men of Netophah, fifty and six.

23 The men of Anathoth, a hundred twenty and eight.

24 The children of Azmaveth, forty and two.

25 The children of Kirjath-arim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, seven hundred and forty and three.

26 The children of Ramah and Gaba, six hundred twenty and one.

27 The men of Michmas, a hundred twenty and two.

28 The men of Beth-el and Ai, two hundred twenty and three.

29 The children of Nebo, fifty and two.

30 The children of Magbish, a hundred fifty and six.

31 The children of the other Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four.

32 The children of Harim, three hundred and twenty.

33 The children of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, seven hundred twenty and five.

34 The children of Jericho, three hundred forty and five.

35 The children of Senaah, three thousand and six hundred and thirty.

36 ¶ The priests: the children of Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua, nine hundred seventy and three.

37 The children of Immer, a thousand fifty and two.

38 The children of Pashur, a thousand two hundred forty and seven.

39 The children of Harim, a thousand and seventeen.

40 ¶ The Levites: the children of Jeshua and Kadmiel, of the children of Hodaviah, seventy and four.

41 ¶ The singers: the children of Asaph, a hundred twenty and eight.

42 ¶ The children of the porters: the children

Ver. 6.] Here seems to be two families joined together, one from Pahath-moab, the other from Jeshua-joab (as the other may be translated), which both together make the greatest body of those that went up: and six more added themselves; for in Neh. vii. 11, they are said to have been two thousand eight hundred and eighteen.

Ver. 20.] Or, as it is in Neh. vii. 25, the children of Gibeon; these being the citizens of that city. For this is not the name of a man, but of a place; and so are several that follow: which hath made some think, that the foregoing are not the names of men, but of cities, or countries, the people of which are called the *children* of such places; which is frequent in the scripture language, where we read of the children of Zion, the children of Egypt, the children of the East, &c.

Ver. 21.] These were such as belonged to that city; unto which they went up (ver. 1).

Ver. 22.] This was a town near to Beth-lehem.

Ver. 23.] A famous place in the tribe of Benjamin, where the prophet Jeremiah was born. But there are those who think it not improbable, that these were cities in the country of Babylon; which the Jews had built, and called by the names of those cities in their own country, from whence they were banished; of which they were desirous to preserve a remembrance. Thus the Spaniards at this day have cities in America, called Corduba, Granada, Carthage, &c. that they may not suffer the memory of their ancient country to perish, when they were removed to a far distant land. But I see no ground for this.

Ver. 24.] Or, of Beth-azmaveth, as it is called Neh. vii. 28.

Ver. 26.] These seem to have been cities in the tribe of Benjamin: and so, it is likely, were the foregoing, and some of those that follow.

Ver. 31.] There is another Elam mentioned ver. 7, which argues the former to be the name of a town; from which the very same number of persons went up that there did from this.

Ver. 33.] These were three towns in the tribe of Benjamin, which makes it probable Harim was so likewise.

Ver. 35.] It is uncertain whether this be the name of a person, or of a place; but the greatest number of persons went from hence that did from any of the forementioned.

Ver. 36. *The priests:*] Having numbered the people that went from Judah and Benjamin, he proceeds now to the tribe of Levi; and first mentions the priests.

The children of Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua.] He is mentioned in 1 Chron. xxiv. 7, as a principal person among the priests (see Dr. Lightfoot, p. 916).

Ver. 37.] He is mentioned also in 1 Chron. xxiv. 14, as head of one of the twenty-four courses of priests.

Ver. 38.] He is mentioned also 1 Chron. ix. 12.

Ver. 39.] See 1 Chron. xxiv. 8, where he is mentioned as head of another course of the priests.

Ver. 40.] See Neh. vii. 43.

of Shallum, the children of Ater, the children of Talmon, the children of Akkub, the children of Hatita, the children of Shobai, *in* all a hundred thirty and nine.

43 ¶ The Nethinims: the children of Ziha, the children of Hasupha, the children of Tabbaoth,

44 The children of Keros, the children of Siba, the children of Padon,

45 The children of Lebanah, the children of Hagabah, the children of Akkub,

46 The children of Hagab, the children of Shalmai, the children of Hanan,

47 The children of Giddel, the children of Gahar, the children of Reaiah,

48 The children of Rezin, the children of Nekoda, the children of Gazzam,

49 The children of Uzza, the children of Paseah, the children of Besai,

50 The children of Asnah, the children of Mehunim, the children of Nephusim,

51 The children of Bakbuk, the children of Hakupha, the children of Harhur,

52 The children of Bazluth, the children of Mehida, the children of Harsha,

53 The children of Barkos, the children of Sibera, the children of Thamah,

54 The children of Neziah, the children of Hatipha.

55 ¶ The children of Solomon's servants: the children of Sotai, the children of Sophereth, the children of Peruda,

56 The children of Jaalah, the children of Darkon, the children of Giddel,

57 The children of Shephatiah, the children of Hatul, the children of Pochereth of Zebaim, the children of Ami.

58 All the Nethinims, and the children of Solomon's servants, *were* three hundred ninety and two.

59 And these *were* they which went up from Tel-melah, Tel-harsa, Cherub, Addan, *and* Immer; but they could not show their father's house, and their seed, whether they *were* of Israel:

60 The children of Delaiah, the children of Tobiah, the children of Nekoda, six hundred fifty and two.

61 ¶ And of the children of the priests: the children of Habaiah, the children of Koz, the children of Barzillai; which took a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called after their name;

62 These sought their register *among* those

Ver. 43. *The Nethinims:*] These are generally taken to be of the race of the Gibeonites; who being given to the service of the temple were called Nethinims, which imports as much as *given*. But this is a mistake, the Nethinims being those whom David gave to help the Levites, as I have observed before.

The children of Ziha, the children of Hasupha, the children of Tabbaoth,] It is not said how many came from each family: but it appears there were several families of them, and their whole number is mentioned in ver. 58.

Ver. 45.] The number of these families, and those that follow, is not set down particularly; but they are all comprehended in that sum mentioned ver. 58.

Ver. 55. *The children of Solomon's servants:*] These were a distinct people among the Jews; but it is uncertain who they were. Some take them to have been originally descended from slaves, whom Solomon took in war, and who afterward became proselytes. But there was no war in his days; therefore others think they were such of other nations as came to serve Solomon in servile work during the building of the temple: who being proselyted, he deputed them to the perpetual conservation and reparation of it; as Joshua had done the Gibeonites, to be hewers of wood and drawers of water there. Or, they were some of the relics of the Canaanites, who delivered up themselves to Solomon, 1 Kings ix. 20, 21. Whosoever they were, it appears from ver. 55, of this chapter, that they had the same employment with the Nethinims about the temple, or something like it; for they are numbered together with them.

The children of Sotai, — Sophereth, — Peruda,] These and they that follow in the next two verses, are the families of the forenamed persons.

Ver. 58.] This makes it probable, that the Nethinims and the children of Solomon's servants (as I said before), were employed in the same or the like employment; being both mentioned together; to whose honour it must be observed, that, though they were not of the children of Israel, and were despised by

them (there being decrees made by the Sanhedrin, as the Jews tell us, that they should not marry with the Gibeonites, who they fancy are here meant), yet they were more forward to return to Jerusalem, and build the house of the Lord (where they were to serve in lower ministries), than the Levites themselves. For there were greater numbers of them returned than of the Levites and singers, as appears by comparing this verse with ver. 40, 41.

Ver. 59.] These are names of some cities in Chaldea, or Mesopotamia, from whence many went along with them to Judea: and, as some think, they were Jews or proselytes who were carried captive by Shalmaneser into Assyria. Now these could not show the families from whence they were derived, and so could not obtain any certain possession in Judea; as the rest did, who knew to what family and city they belonged.

Ver. 60.] These were persons who could not make out their pedigree; and yet were desirous to live among the people of God, and see his worship restored.

Ver. 61.] This person whosoever he was, thought it so great an honour to be descended from such a noble family as that of Barzillai, that he chose to be called by that name, which he preferred before his own in the family of the priests: by which vain ambition he lost his title to the priesthood, because he could not make out his pedigree from the priests, but from Barzillai.

Ver. 62. *These sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but they were not found:*] The words may be more plainly translated out of the Hebrew, in this manner, "These being numbered among the priests (or, reckoned in the priestly genealogy) sought the register, the record of it in writing, but could not find it." The Jews were so careful to keep the priesthood pure, that they preserved an exact account of the parents, the kindred, and the quality of every priest; because there were some women the priests might not marry, whose children were accounted impure; as Mr. Selden hath shown at

that were reckoned by genealogy, but they were not found; therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood.

63 And the Tirshatha said unto them, that they should not eat of the most holy things, till there stood up a priest with Urim and with Thummin.

64 ¶ The whole congregation together was forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore.

large, lib. ii. De Success. ad Pontific. cap. 2, p. 213. cap. 3, p. 215. But when the city and temple were burnt, and the people carried away in a tumultuous, confused manner into Babylon, many tables of genealogy perished, and could not be recovered.

[Therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood.] Not permitted to perform the office of priests; because it did not appear that they were legally descended from priests.

Ver. 63. And the Tirshatha] Some think (particularly Jacobus Capellus), that by the Tirshatha is here meant Zerubbabel: it being a general name, they suppose, for all chief governors. So Nehemiah is called, ch. viii. 9, x. 1, whom others therefore will have to be here meant; who was a kind of judge (as the Persian word signifies), and gave the sentence which here follows, when he came to Judea: which was a good while after this first company arrived there. Others interpret it, the king's commissioner: for Zerubbabel was no more (see J. Reynolds, in his Censure of the Apocryphal Books, prælect. xviii).

Said unto them, that they should not eat of the most holy things,] That is, they should not partake of the sacrifices offered for sin, nor of the right shoulder of peace-offerings, nor of the shew-bread; which were almost holy, and the portion of the priests alone. This shows that Tirshatha, whosoever he was, had great power and authority: who could lay such a restraint upon those that had been held for priests.

Till there stood up a priest with Urim and with Thummin.] Till the Lord himself should show (when he vouchsafed such a high-priest as was in the first temple), whether they were of the line of Aaron or not. He doth not quite reject and exclude them, but left them their claim; yet would not admit them to enjoy that which was the sole right of the priests: which he could not determine whether it belonged to them; but the oracle being ceased, waited till God, who knew all things, should declare it. Thus careful they were to distinguish families, that strangers might not come to inherit among God's people; and especially that the priesthood might not be invaded by any who were unqualified for it (see Buxtorf. in his Historia Urim et Thummin, p. 323, 327).

It is evident from this place, that the *urim* and *thummin* were either lost or burnt with the temple; and whether they were after this restored, that is, whether any priest with this authority was raised up after the captivity was ended, we are nowhere informed. If there was, it was only (as our Dr. Jackson well speaks, book 1. on the Creed, ch. 11) to give this people a farewell of God's extraordinary speaking to them, either by priests or by prophets, till Christ came. Josephus confesses, that revelation by *urim* and *thummin* did cease two hundred years before his time: but more probably this, as other kinds of prophecy, and many extraordinary tokens of God's power and presence (sometimes most frequent in this nation), did cease with that generation which returned from captivity, or immediately after the finish-

65 Beside their servants and their maids, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred thirty and seven; and there were among them two hundred singing men and singing women.

66 Their horses were seven hundred thirty and six; their males, two hundred forty and five;

67 Their camels, four hundred thirty and five; their asses, six thousand seven hundred and twenty.

ing of the second temple: as if, during all that time (to use the words of that great man before mentioned), God had appointed a *fast*, or *vigil*, as an introduction to the fulness of time; wherein (as Joel prophesied, ver. 28), God would *pour out his Spirit upon all flesh*; upon the gentile, as well as the Jew (Mal. i. 11). For this cause God imposed this long fast upon the Jews, that he might humble them, and teach them, that he was not their God alone, but of the gentiles also. The Jews generally acknowledge there was no *urim* and *thummin* under the second temple: and even they that say there was (because it was necessary the high-priest should have his garments complete), yet say, there was no answer from God given by it; which is as much as to say, there was none at all (see Buxtorf. Hist. Urim et Thummin, cap. 5).

Ver. 64.] This was but a small number in comparison with that vast multitude which came out of Egypt, yet more than double to that number which was carried away captive by Nebuchadnezzar. But here occurs a small difficulty (like that in the end of the foregoing chapter); for if we put together the several sums before mentioned, they amount to no more than twenty-nine thousand eight hundred and eighteen; so there wants above twelve thousand to make up this number of forty thousand three hundred and threescore. But where shall we find them? say the Jews, in Seder Olam Rabba, cap. 29. To which they there answer, that they were of the rest of the tribes of Israel, who came up with those of Judah and Benjamin; or they might be Levites, or other Israelites, who could not make out their descent. Which is a very solid answer, for there is no doubt but many of their brethren of the ten tribes incorporated themselves with the two tribes in captivity, and took the advantage of returning with them; which may be the meaning of those words in the first chapter, ver. 5, "Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, with all them whose spirit God had raised to go up:" that is, saith Diodate, all those of other tribes, according to 1 Chron. ix. 3.

Ver. 65. Beside their servants and their maids, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred thirty and seven:] Though all that returned were not Jews, but some of the ten tribes joined with them; yet they did not amount, slaves and all, to fifty thousand. Now what is this number to what they were in Jehoshaphat's time, when Judah had in it two hundred thousand fighting men?

[There were among them two hundred singing men and singing women.] Whether these were now become servants is not certain; but it seems to be manifest from 1 Chron. xxv. 5, 6, that women, as well as men, sung in the house of the Lord.

Ver. 66.] Their poverty appears, as by the small number of servants that attended them, so by the little parcel of cattle which they had to carry them.

Ver. 67.] Most of the people therefore travelled on foot, for these would but suffice to carry their baggage (as we speak), or little more.

68 ¶ And some of the chief of the fathers, when they came to the house of the LORD which is at Jerusalem, offered freely for the house of God to set it up in his place:

69 They gave after their ability unto the treasure of the work, threescore and one thousand

drams of gold, and five thousand pound of silver, and one hundred priests' garments.

70 So the priests, and the Levites, and some of the people, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinims, dwelt in their cities, and all Israel in their cities.

Ver. 68. *Some of the chief of the fathers when they came to the house of the Lord which is at Jerusalem,*] That is, to the place in which the temple stood, unto which it seems their pious affections carried them, as soon as they came to Jerusalem.

Offered freely for the house of God] Made a new offering besides that which they brought out of Babylon from their brethren there, mentioned ch. i. 4, 6. By this it appears, that the Jews were not made such poor slaves in Babylon as wrought for their lords and masters, but had liberty to trade and get riches for themselves: some of them being advanced to considerable offices in the king's court: otherwise they could not have been able to offer such sums as are mentioned in the next verse. And the like contribution, though not so large, was made for the support of the second company that went up from Babylon, as Josephus tells us, lib. xi. cap. 4, where he saith, the Jews in Babylon gave their brethren who were going to their own country, a hundred pound of gold, and five thousand of silver. But most of these rich men continued still in Babylon, being well settled there, and in a thriving condition: insomuch that R. Eliezer was wont to say (as he is quoted by a converted Jew,) "The bran only returned to Judea, the fine flour still remained in Babylon" (see Jer. xxix. 4, 5, 28.) But this is a conceit advanced to elude the prophecies which belong to their return from Babylon, and apply them to their present captivity from the Romans.

Ver. 69. *They gave after their ability unto the treasure of the work*] Which was presently erected, according to the ancient pattern in David's time (1 Chron. xxvi. 20).

One hundred priests' garments.] Garments, as well as gold and silver, were wont to be laid up in treasures, as appears by our Saviour's words, "Lay up for yourselves treasures, where neither moth nor rust do corrupt," Matt. vi. 20. Moths do not corrupt silver and gold, but only garments (see Job xxvii. 16).

Ver. 70. *So the priests, and the Levites, &c. dwell in their cities.*] They are here set down in that order wherein they are reckoned from ver. 36, and the good order is observed that was among them, every one going to the city where his ancestors dwelt; and so did all Israel, as well as Judah and Benjamin (ch. vi. 16, 17). Thus the foundation of this poor commonwealth was laid in a marvellous concord, there being no strife nor contention among them that came up, though of different orders and qualities: but they had one heart and soul, like the first Christians, without which unity no people can be preserved. And that it may be cherished, they must avoid those things that destroy it, which are (as Joh. Wolfius here observes) principally φθασία and κοινπραμοσία, "self-love," and "meddling in other men's matters."

All Israel in their cities.] When the ten tribes were carried captives by Shalmaneser into Assyria, they were not carried away entirely, but some of every tribe left, who, with Judah and Benjamin, were afterwards carried to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, and now restored by Cyrus. By this our primate Usher explains what we read afterward (ch. vi. 17, 18), that they offered twelve he-goats, according to the number of the children of Israel (ad A. Mundi 3468.); and, indeed, there were some relics of the ten tribes till their last destruction (Acts xxvi. 7).

CHAPTER III.

1 The altar is set up. 4 Offerings frequented. 7 Workmen prepared. 8 The foundations of the temple are laid in great joy and mourning.

1 AND when the seventh month was come, and the children of Israel were in the cities, the people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem.

2 Then stood up Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel the

son of Shealtiel, and his brethren, and builded the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt-offerings thereon, as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God.

3 And they set the altar upon his bases; for fear was upon them because of the people of

CHAP. III.

Ver. 1.] We are nowhere told in what month they began their journey from Babylon. But from ch. vii. 9, we understand it was a journey of four months from thence to Jerusalem; so that we may safely conclude they came out in the spring-time in the first or second month, and having spent a short time in settling themselves in their several cities, the seventh approached, or drew nigh (so it must be understood, and should be rendered), in which was the first feast that fell out after they came into Judea; which they assembled themselves unanimously to celebrate at Jerusalem.

Ver. 2. *Then stood up Jeshua*] He was the high-priest, called Joshua in Hag. i. 1.

And Zerubbabel] He is called there the governor of Judah, being appointed by the king of Persia to that

office. And he is there put before Joshua, as here he is put after: the viceroy and the high-priest being pares dignitate aut suppres, as Bochartus speaks (see below ver. 8, ch. iv. 3, v. 2).

And builded the altar—to offer burnt-offerings] Which were the most ancient offerings of all others.

As it is written in the law of Moses] Where, in the very beginning of the book of Leviticus, there is an order for the burnt sacrifices before any other.

Ver. 3. *They set the altar*] Before they began to lay the foundation of the temple; for they would not have sacrifices wanting while it was building.

Upon his bases;] That is, in the place, some think, where it anciently stood. Which was done Maimonides saith, by the authority of the prophets, who were then among them. Here the reader must remember what I have observed upon 1 Chron. ix. 11.

those countries; and they offered burnt-offerings thereon unto the LORD, *even* burnt-offerings morning and evening.

4 They kept also the feast of tabernacles, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt-offerings by number, according to the custom, as the duty of every day required;

5 And afterward offered the continual burnt-offering, both of the new moons, and of all the set feasts of the LORD that were consecrated, and of every one that willingly offered a free-will-offering unto the LORD.

6 From the first day of the seventh month began they to offer burnt-offerings unto the LORD. But the foundation of the temple of the LORD was not yet laid.

7 They gave money also unto the masons, and to the carpenters; and meat, and drink, and oil,

21, 23, that till the temple could be built, they erected a tabernacle wherein the service of God was performed, as it was before Solomon's temple was built. But I noted there, ver. 18, that it did not stand on mount Moriah, but on mount Zion; and therefore the altar was also there, and not in the place where it anciently stood, till the temple was finished.

For fear was upon them because of the people of those countries:] The particle *ki*, when we translate for, signifies although; and so it had been better rendered here, Although they were in great fear of their evil neighbours, yet notwithstanding they would not desist from restoring the worship of God. But if we take it as we translate it, the meaning is plain that they were the more zealous to restore the worship of God, that they might upon all occasions flee to him for succour against their enemies, of whom they were in dread.

They offered burnt-offerings—morning and evening.] Which is called in the law of Moses the “continual burnt-offering,” Exod. xxix. 38—42; Numb. xxviii. 3, 6.

Ver. 4. They kept also the feast of tabernacles, as it is written,] See Exod. xxiii. 16. The seventh month was so remarkable for many solemnities appointed to be held in it, that I cannot think they kept only the feast of tabernacles. For on the very first day of the month there was to be a holy convocation (Numb. xxix. 1, &c.), on which they began to offer sacrifice, as it is said here, ver. 6: and on the tenth day was another holy convocation, which was the most solemn in all the year, being the great day of atonement (Numb. xxix. 7). With these, I suppose, they began; and especially on the tenth day begged pardon of God for their sins, which had cast them out of their land; and then proceeded on the fifteenth day to thank God for their restoration by keeping the feast of tabernacles.

And offered the daily burnt-offerings by number, according to the custom,] On every day of the feast, which lasted seven days, there were special sacrifices appointed by the law, and in great numbers; as may be seen Numb. xxix. 13, 17, &c. which put this poor people to great expenses: but their piety now was such, that they valued nothing so much as the service of God.

Ver. 5, 6.] The meaning of these two verses is, that holy rites of sacrificing were restored, and so were kept and continued ever after in their several seasons, on the new moons, and other festival solemnities. And they began with the morning and evening burnt-offering, which was never to be omitted, but in every

unto them of Zidon, and to them of Tyre, to bring cedar trees from Lebanon to the sea of Joppa, according to the grant that they had of Cyrus king of Persia.

8 ¶ Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, began Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the remnant of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Jerusalem; and appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to set forward the work of the house of the LORD.

9 Then stood Jeshua with his sons and his brethren, Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, together, to set forward the workmen in the house of God; the sons of Henadad, with their sons and their brethren the Levites.

solemnity was to have the precedence, and be offered in the first place (see Numb. xxviii. 3, 4, &c.).

Ver. 7. They gave money also unto the masons, and to the carpenters;] To prepare materials for the building.

And meat, and drink, and oil, unto them of Zidon, and to them of Tyre,] Who wanted these things more than money, as appears by the history of Solomon's building (1 Kings v. 10).

To bring cedar trees from Lebanon] As they had done in the days of Solomon (1 Kings v. 9).

According to the grant that they had of Cyrus] Who commanded, I suppose, those of Tyre and Zidon to assist them.

Ver. 8. In the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem,] That is, to the place where the house of God formerly stood.

In the second month,] All the time before this, in the latter end of the last year, was spent, it is probable, in removing the rubbish, and preparing the ground for laying the foundation, as much as the winter would permit: this was not a season to begin the work, but after the passover, I presume, they entered upon it.

Began Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak,] Here Zerubbabel is put before Jeshua, as ver. 2, Jeshua was put before him: whereby we learn they were of equal dignity, in the account of the Jews. For Zerubbabel was not a king, but a governor of the province of Judea, under the king of Persia, as Nehemiah was (ch. v. 14, 15), under whom there were princes and rulers, that is, the heads of families (ch. ix. 2), and below them there were “captains of thousands,” &c. and other subaltern “officers” (ch. x. 8, 11); and after all, in the fourth place, “the great congregation;” which Bertram makes account was the government of the Jews after their return from the captivity (see him, De Repub. Jud. cap. 13, where he undertakes to make out the four orders from Neh. v. 7, &c.).

And appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward,] For since the time of David, they were thought fit at twenty years of age to attend the service of God in his house.

Ver. 9. Then stood Jeshua] Not Jeshua the high-priest before mentioned, but another Jeshua, who was a Levite, mentioned ch. ii. 40.

Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, together,] Who is called there Hodaviah.

To set forward the workmen] They being made overseers of the work.

The sons of Henadad, with their sons and their br

10 And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the LORD, after the ordinance of David king of Israel.

11 And they sung together by course, in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; because *he is good*, for his mercy *endureth* for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.

then the Levites.] These were afterward added to the forenamed, as their assistants.

Ver. 10. *And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, they set the priests, &c. with cymbals, to praise the Lord.]* While the sacrifices, I suppose, at the same time were offered, they sung praise to God with such instruments as they had; which were only cymbals, for it is likely they had not yet got harps and lutes. The apocryphal Esdras saith, they laid the foundation in the new moon; but Calvisius thinks it more probable to have been laid the day after, the new moon being a festival.

After the ordinance of David] See 1 Chron. xvi. 7; xxv. 1.

Ver. 11. *They sung together by course]* That is, answered one to another: for from hence was derived the manner of praying and praising God in the Christian service alternately, as Mr. Mede observes, book i. discourse xvi. where he notes how the seraphims cried one to another, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts," &c. Isa. vi. 3.

In praising and giving thanks unto the Lord;] Thus many of the Psalms of David begin, cvii. cxxviii. and cxxxvi. which last psalm, it is probable, was now sung entirely, in every verse of which these words are repeated, "his mercy endureth for ever."

And all the people shouted with a great shout,] That is, every one expressed their thankfulness and joy, in such manner as they were able; the priests and Levites with singing and music, and the people with shouting, which is a natural expression of joy, and as acceptable as the most artificial composesures.

12 But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, *who were* ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy:

13 So that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people: for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.

Ver. 12. *But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house,]* As many of them might have done, it not being above threescore (or, as some compute, sixty-one) years since it was burnt. And some of them lived long after this, which was the first year of Cyrus: for some prolonged their days (as Huetius observes) till the second year of Darius Hystaspes, which was eighteen years after the first of Cyrus.

When the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy;] The younger sort shouted, but many of the ancient people disturbed their acclamations with howlings. For though the temple was intended to be built as large as the former, upon the same foundation; yet there were not such goodly stones to lay for the foundation, as there were for Solomon's (1 Kings vii. 9, 10), nor could they hope to build it so magnificently as he had done, nor was there any appearance of the divine glory, or of a priest with *urim* and *thummim*, and such-like things: which indeed were sad, but ought not to have made them weep so loud, and interrupt the public joy. Thankfulness for small beginnings would better have become them, than complaints that their condition was no better.

Ver. 13.] There was a great confusion among them by these contrary passions, which was very lamentable when God had been so very good to them all. Notwithstanding which, the young people continued to shout as loud as they could, and made the noise of their joy to be heard farther off than the others' weeping was.

CHAPTER IV.

1 *The adversaries, being not accepted in the building of the temple with the Jews, endeavour to hinder it.* 7 *Their letter to Artaxerxes.* 17 *The decree of Artaxerxes.* 23 *The building is hindered.*

1 Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the children of the captivity builded the temple unto the LORD God of Israel;

2 Then they came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, Let us

build with you; for we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esar-haddon king of Assur, which brought us up hither.

3 But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 1. *When the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin]* These were the Samaritans, who were grieved at their return (ver. 10). They being neighbours were soon informed, not only of their return from captivity, but of their building the temple.

Ver. 2. *Let us build with you;]* This people, no doubt, were desirous to partake of the privileges which were granted to the Jews by the king of Persia: and so not only offered their assistance towards the building of the temple, but would have been one people with them. So the following words import.

For we seek your God, as ye do;] They pretend to

be of the same religion with them, which is the greatest bond of union: but in truth they were not; for though they worshipped God, yet they joined other feigned gods with him, and therefore could not be admitted into communion with them at the temple.

Since the days of Esar-haddon king of Assur, which brought us up hither.] The same with him mentioned 2 Kings xix. 39, who brought a second colony, after that brought by Shalmaneser when he first conquered them, to people the country better; and sent a priest also to instruct them, from whom they pretended to have received God's true religion.

Ver. 3. *Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God;]* They knew them very well

of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them, Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the Lord God of Israel, as king Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us.

4 Then the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building,

5 And hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.

6 And in the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, wrote they unto him an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.

what they were; viz. a mixed people not purely of the seed of Israel, and of a medley religion, not worshipping God purely; and therefore they would have nothing to do with them. And, indeed, they soon discovered their hypocrisy by writing against the work, which they would have hindered by making divisions if they had been among them.

But we ourselves together will build—as king Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us.] They resolve to admit no other people to join with them, but to pursue the grant which king Cyrus had made to them alone, and to none other. These were the two reasons why they rejected them, because they were not of the same people, and the king of Persia had granted this license to build the temple only to the Jews.

Ver. 4. Then the people of the land] That is, the forenamed Samaritans.

Weakened the hands of the people of Judah.] Discouraged them in their undertakings by false reports and slanders, and, perhaps, by threatenings.

And troubled them in building.] Laid all the impediments they could in their way, by hindering materials or provisions from coming to them, or by enticing away their workmen, or such-like means.

Ver. 5. And hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose.] They bribed some of the council of the king of Persia to obstruct the work; a frequent mischief in courts, as Grotius notes: or, perhaps, there were some of the officers of the king of Persia in Samaria, Syria, and Judea, whom they corrupted to cross this design.

All the days of Cyrus] Who being engaged in war with the Lydians and Scythians, could not attend to such affairs as this; but it went on slowly: which his son Cambyses regarded not at all, being no friend of the Jews nor of religion.

Even until the reign of Darius] Till Darius the son of Hystaspes, who, killing the magi (who after Cambyses had possessed themselves of the kingdom), was made king; and marrying Atossa the daughter of Cyrus, and loving her very much, confirmed the decree of Cyrus, and followed his steps that he might stand the safer himself. It is a great controversy indeed between learned men, whether this Darius, or Darius Nothus, be here meant: and there are strong arguments on both sides, which it is an immense labour to examine, with the objections against them. It hath been lately done in brief by a judicious writer, who after all is constrained to conclude with a *non liquet*. But yet he thinks the most weighty reasons incline to Darius Hystaspes (see Hermannus Witsius, *Miscellaneous Sacra*, lib. i. cap. 20).

Ver. 6. In the reign of Ahasuerus.] Who this was is very uncertain; there being many who think,

7 ¶ And in the days of Artaxerxes wrote Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the rest of their companions, unto Artaxerxes king of Persia; and the writing of the letter was written in the Syrian tongue, and interpreted in the Syrian tongue.

8 Rehum the chancellor, and Shimshai the scribe, wrote a letter against Jerusalem to Artaxerxes the king in this sort:

9 Then wrote Rehum the chancellor, and Shimshai the scribe, and the rest of their companions; the Dinaites, the Apharsathchites, the Tarpehtes, the Apharsites, the Archevites, the Babylonians, the Susanchites, the Dehavites, and the Elamites,

10 And the rest of the nations whom the great

that after Cyrus this was *nomen gentilitium* (as they call it), the name of all their kings (as Pharaoh was of all the kings of Egypt), who were called Xerxes, or Artaxerxes (from Ahasuerus, as Grotius thinks), besides the name they had before they came to the crown. Some therefore say this was Cambyses (so primate Usher, ad. A. M. 3476), others Darius Hystaspes, others Artaxerxes Mnemon, or Longimanus; whose disputes are very long about this matter, but leave one no more satisfied than before he began to read them.

Wrote they unto him an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.] Importing that they intended to set up for themselves, and not to depend upon the king of Persia.

Ver. 7. In the days of Artaxerxes] Who is before called Ahasuerus; which is supposed to be his Chaldean name, as Artaxerxes was his Persian. But Dr. Alix, who had examined these things, looks upon it as absurd to suppose Ahasuerus to have been the name of all the Persian kings, and takes this Artaxerxes to have been the son of Xerxes, viz. Artaxerxes Longimanus.

Wrote Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel,—unto Artaxerxes] These men first drew up the letter, which they intended to send to the king, being governors, I suppose, under him, on this side of Euphrates; such as the Greeks call tetarehs.

And the writing of the letter was written in the Syrian tongue, and interpreted in the Syrian tongue.] The meaning may be, that they sent a brief address to the king in the Syrian tongue, and expounded their business more largely to some of his counsellors in the same tongue. Or, by the first we may understand the letter or characters, and by the other the words: so that the meaning is, it was written both in Syrian characters, and in Syrian words. For sometimes a letter or other writing is sent in the character of one language, and in words of another; as Chaldee and Syrian words are written in the Hebrew characters, and we oftentimes write Hebrew words in the English characters. But this letter was written, and was to be read in the same language.

Ver. 8. Rehum the chancellor and Shimshai the scribe wrote a letter] These two were principal persons in these countries; who either joined with the other three before mentioned in the same letter, or wrote another letter of the same import.

In this sort:] Containing the same complaint against the Jews.

Ver. 9.] These nine nations came out of Assyria, Persia, Media, Susiana, and other provinces of that vast empire; who with one consent joined in this letter or petition. For, perhaps, the king being loath to do any thing hastily upon the motion of that letter

and noble Asnapper brought over, and set in the cities of Samaria, and the rest *that are* on this side the river, and at such a time.

11 ¶ *This is* the copy of the letter that they sent unto him, *even* unto Artaxerxes the king: Thy servants the men on this side the river, and at such a time.

12 Be it known unto the king, that the Jews which came up from thee to us, are come unto Jerusalem, building the rebellious and the bad city, and have set up the walls *thereof*, and joined the foundations.

13 Be it known now unto the king, that if this city be builded, and the walls set up *again*, *then* will they not pay toll, tribute, and custom, and so thou shalt endamage the revenue of the kings.

14 Now, because we have maintenance from

mentioned ver. 8, sent to have the opinion of all these nations, or the principal persons among them; and of all other on this side the river Euphrates, as it here follows.

Ver. 10. *And the rest of the nations whom the great and noble Asnapper brought over, and set in the cities of Samaria.* Some take Asnapper to be another name for Shalmaneser, or for Esar-haddon, who sent these colonies hither. But it is more reasonable to think he was some great commander, who was intrusted by one or both of those kings to conduct them, and "bring them over" (the river Euphrates), and see them settled in these countries.

At such a time.] Which was expressed, no doubt, in the letter; but here it is only noted in general, that the year and the day were mentioned, when it was subscribed.

Ver. 11.] This was the title of their letter: the letter itself followeth.

Ver. 12.] This was a mere calumny: for they attempted no such thing as to build the walls of Jerusalem. But they speak in ambiguous words (as Huetius observes) concerning the building of this city; which in one sense was true. For they built houses, without which it could not be inhabited; but they did not go about to encompass it with walls, to defend the city against the incursions of their enemies; which was not begun till a great while after. They are fallacious words, therefore, whereby they imposed upon the king's belief, when they say, "they set up the walls thereof:" for they only set up the walls of their houses, not of their city. And there is a demonstration they did no more; for when it is said there was an order from the king, that this city should not be built, and accordingly the work was stopped, it is thus expressed (ver. 24), "then ceased the work of the house of God, which is at Jerusalem." It is not said, The work of building the walls of the city ceased, (for they were about no such thing,) but "the work of the house of God," which was all they did. Thus wicked men compass their ends by lies and fallacies; with which they prepossess men's minds against the truth. As for their calling it a "rebellious and bad city," there was some colour for it; their latter kings having rebelled against the king of Babylon. And besides, the laws and customs of the Jews were such, as would not permit them to conform to the manner of other nations; which made their neighbours have an ill opinion of them, as an unsociable people.

Ver. 13. *If this city be builded,—then will they not pay toll, tribute, and custom.*] They pretend the Jews would be no longer in subjection, if their city was built; but set up for themselves, as a free people.

the king's palace, and it was not meet for us to see the king's dishonour, therefore have we sent and certified the king,

15 That search may be made in the book of the records of thy fathers: so shalt thou find in the book of the records, and know, that this city is a rebellious city, and hurtful unto kings and provinces, and that they have moved sedition within the same of old time: for which cause was this city destroyed.

16 We certify the king, that if this city be builded *again*, and the walls thereof set up, by this means thou shalt have no portion on this side the river.

17 ¶ *Then* sent the king an answer unto Rehman the chancellor, and to Shimshai the scribe, and to the rest of their companions that dwell in

By the first of these words Grotius understands that which every head paid to the king, which we call poll-money; by the second, the excise (as we now speak) that was upon commodities and merchandise; and by the last, the rent which their land paid. But a late learned man thinks, the first word rather signifies that part which every man paid out of his estate, according as it was valued; the second, that which was paid for every head; and the third, that which was paid upon the highways, by every traveller who brought in wares, or carried them out (Herman. Witsius, in his Miscell. par. ii. Exerc. xi. n. 20).

So thou shalt endamage the revenue of the kings.] They pretend to study nothing but the profit of the king; and that neither he nor his successors might lose any of the duties owing to the crown.

Ver. 14. *Because we have maintenance from the king's palace.*] In the Hebrew it is, "we are salted with the salt of the palace;" i. e. "received their salary" from the king, as Junius translates it. For it seems, they received their stipend in *salt* (from whence it was called a *salary*), which the son of Sirach mentions among the things necessary to human life (Ecclus. xxxix. 31). And Homer calls it "a divine thing," because, as Plutarch expounds him, it seasons all food, and gives a relish to it (see Dr. Cudworth, of the Lord's supper, p. 68).

It was not meet for us to see the king's dishonour.] It did not become them who received maintenance from the king to see him wronged any way.

Therefore have we sent and certified the king.] Which they would have him think was the sole cause of their writing, to inform him in the truth.

Ver. 15.] In the chronicles of the kings that had reigned before him; whom they call his *fathers*, because they were his predecessors in that kingdom, wherein he now reigned. This search shows, this letter was written a long time after the edict of Cyrus. They mix some truth with abundance of falsehood: for this city could not be rebellious in old time, being subject to none; till, in latter times, it was conquered by Nebuchadnezzar, against whom they rebelled.

Ver. 16.] This was a most groundless suggestion, that they should either be able to conquer all the neighbouring countries, as far as Euphrates, or draw them all into a rebellion with them against the king.

Ver. 17.] This was a matter of such concern, that the king despatched a speedy answer to be communicated to all the people, mentioned, ver. 9, 10.

Ver. 18.] It was read, in all likelihood, before the king in council.

Samaria, and *unto* the rest beyond the river, Peace, and at such a time.

18 The letter which ye sent unto us hath been plainly read before me.

19 And I commanded, and search hath been made, and it is found that this city of old time hath made insurrection against kings, and *that* rebellion and sedition have been made therein.

20 There have been mighty kings also over Jerusalem, which have ruled over all *countries* beyond the river; and toll, tribute, and custom, was paid unto them.

21 Give ye now commandment to cause these men to cease, and that this city be not builded,

until *another* commandment shall be given from me.

22 Take heed now that ye fail not to do this: why should damage grow to the hurt of the kings?

23 ¶ Now when the copy of king Artaxerxes' letter was read before Rehum, and Shimshai the scribe, and their companions, they went up in haste to Jerusalem, unto the Jews, and made them to cease by force and power.

24 Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem. So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.

[Ver. 19. *Search hath been made.*] In the public records (see ch. v. 17; vi. 1, 2; Esther ii. 23; vi. 1).

And it is found that this city of old time hath made insurrection against kings, &c. [One instance or two of it, in latter times, served to fasten this odious character upon them; as if they had been always guilty of these crimes.]

Ver. 20. *There have been mighty kings also over Jerusalem, which have ruled over all countries beyond the river;*] Such, indeed, were David and Solomon; who, as their records showed, ruled over all countries on this side Euphrates.

And toll, tribute, and custom, was paid unto them.] As now they were to the king of Persia: which seemed to justify what this people suggested in their letter, ver. 16, only they wanted such mighty kings as they then had, and were never likely to have such again.

Ver. 21.] He gave no order about the temple, but only about the city; which he was made to believe they were fortifying. He kept his ears open, like a good king, to further information; which if he should have different from theirs, he might give other orders. For this was not a law of the Medes and Persians that could not be revoked; but only an edict, depending wholly upon the will and pleasure of the king, which he might have reason to alter hereafter.

Ver. 22.] By their negligence, if they permitted them to proceed to fortify Jerusalem. It is very observable, that in neither of their letters, nor in the king's answer, is there one word of the command which Cyrus gave; nor any thing said of the building of the temple: which was the great thing in which they were employed; and the building of which could be no damage to the king. But though we do not know by what trick the decree of Cyrus was now smothered, yet their silence about it proves (as the forenamed Dr. Alix suggests to me) that this complaint was moved neither in the time of Darius the First, who lived in the court of Cyrus, and married his daughter, nor of Xerxes his son, as Josephus thinks (taking Xerxes for Artaxerxes), but in the beginning of Artaxerxes Longimanus; who began to reign seventy-one years after the first of Cyrus, in which the edict was published.

Ver. 23.] *They went up in haste to Jerusalem unto the Jews.*] So they of the captivity are now called, though there were many Israelites among them; because they chiefly consisted of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. But it must be noted, that all Israel (as this author speaks, ch. ii. ult.), are included under the name of Jews. For liberty was granted to them all by the edict of Cyrus (which cannot be noted too often), in virtue of which they might return when they pleased. But the holy writers mention only

those who returned in a body: after which the prophets admonish those who remained in captivity to return to their own land; as we see in the book of Zechariah.

And made them to cease by force.] They threatened, I suppose, to force them to desist, if they did not presently obey the king's order: which was only that the city should not be built: but the temple being a part of it, they would have it understood that it was comprehended in this order.

Ver. 24. *Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem.*] It did not quite cease; for when the Jews understood that this edict did not prohibit the building of the temple, but only of the city, they went on with their work again without asking any leave; since they knew Artaxerxes did not forbid it. But it went on so slowly, that in a manner it ceased, till the beginning of the reign of Darius, as it here follows.

So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius.] They that take Darius Nothus to be here meant, are pressed with very great difficulties. For, from the first year of Cyrus, who gave order for the building of the temple, till the sixth year of Darius Nothus, in which they suppose it was finished, there were at least a hundred and thirteen years, as Scaliger and Calvisius make account: but as others think, a hundred and seventeen; and, according to Coceius, a hundred forty and two. Now all this time Zerubbabel was in the government of Judea, and Jeshua in the high-priesthood: but so long an authority in church or state was never heard of in any age; and they must have lived some time before and after, and consequently they must be of a vast age: and therefore so long a space was not between the beginning and the conclusion of this work. Besides, Haggai supposes (ch. ii. 4), that some remembered the glory of the first house, and compared it with the glory of the second: which, if this was in the sixth year of Darius Nothus, they must be at least a hundred and fourscore years old; which is not likely. Several solutions are given to this, which do not satisfy those who believe Darius Hystaspes is here meant: whose second year was the eighteenth after the first of Cyrus, as Huetius reckons: and this is the most ancient opinion. But it is built only upon the authority of Josephus, who was followed by many after the second century: but before, they took this Darius to be Darius Ochus, as Dr. Alix assures me, who thinks the long life of Zerubbabel and Jeshua is no objection against it; but is to be looked upon as an extraordinary effect of the divine goodness, for the re-establishment of the commonwealth, and of the worship of God: as the life of Jehoiada was prolonged for the same reason (2 Chron. xxiv. 15).

CHAPTER V.

1 Zerubbabel and Jeshua, incited by Haggai and Zechariah, set forward the building of the temple. 3 Tatnai and Shethar-boznai could not hinder the Jews. 6 Their letter to Darius against the Jews.

1 THEN the prophets, Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, even unto them.

2 Then rose up Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem: and with them were the prophets of God helping them.

3 ¶ And at the same time came to them Tatnai, governor on this side the river, and Shethar-boznai, and their companions, and said thus unto them, Who hath commanded you to build this house, and to make up this wall?

4 Then said we unto them after this manner, What are the names of the men that make this building?

5 But the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, that they could not cause them to cease, till the matter came to Darius: and then

they returned answer by letter concerning this matter.

6 ¶ The copy of the letter that Tatnai, governor on this side the river, and Shethar-boznai, and his companions the Apharsachites, which were on this side the river, sent unto Darius the king:

7 They sent a letter unto him, wherein was written thus: Unto Darius the king, all peace.

8 Be it known unto the king, that we went into the province of Judea, to the house of the great God, which is builded with great stones, and timber is laid in the walls, and this work goeth fast on, and prospereth in their hands.

9 Then asked we those elders, and said unto them thus, Who commanded you to build this house, and to make up these walls?

10 We asked their names also, to certify thee, that we might write the names of the men that were the chief of them.

CHAP. V.

Ver. 1. *Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo,*] The grandchild of Iddo; for his father's name was Berachiah.

Propheesied unto the Jews—even unto them.] Or rather against them, as the Hebrew words may be interpreted: for they reproved them because they did not build the temple. They both prophesied in the second year of Darius, as appears by the beginning of their prophecies: one in the sixth month, the other in the eighth. This second year of Darius, as Dr. Alix observes to me, was a sabbatic year, from which there were seven weeks, or forty-nine days, as well for the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, which was in the twentieth of Artaxerxes, as for settling a right policy in church and state, which was finished by Nehemiah, the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes, which was also a sabbatic year. And from this second of Darius, whom God gave order by these precepts to set upon this work, he thinks, is the true beginning of the sixty-two weeks (spoken of, Dan. ix.), till the appearing of the Messiah.

Ver. 2. *Then rose up Zerubbabel—Jeshua—and began to build the house of God*] It had been begun a good while ago, but went on very slowly, till these great men, excited by the prophets, set the work forward.

With them were the prophets of God helping them.] Calling upon them to labour strenuously in the work: for God was with them, to protect, defend, and prosper them (Hag. i. 13, 14; ii. 4).

Ver. 3.] These were men in authority under the king of Persia, who managed the public affairs in these countries; but seem to have been of a better spirit than Rehum, and the rest mentioned in the foregoing chapter; who, it is likely, were either dead, or put out of their places by this new king. They fairly question them by what authority they built the temple, and the wall about it: for they do not mean the wall of the city, which was not building.

Ver. 4.] Many take these to be still the words of Tatnai, and his companions. But it is more natural

to take them for the answer of the Jews: who not only told them by what authority they built the temple, but also gave them the names of those who were the great undertakers of the work; after which it is likely they inquired, ver. 10. But then the word "what," is not the note of an interrogation, but it is to be translated, "We said unto them after this manner, What were the names," &c. From which place Huetius argues, that he who wrote this chapter was now present when this question was asked, and answer made to it; and therefore Ezra was not the writer: for this was in the second year of Darius, and he did not come to Jerusalem till the seventh year of Artaxerxes, called Longimanus (ch. vii. 1, 8.)

Ver. 5.] By the favour and good providence of God, the king's ministers in those parts became their friends, so far, as not to prohibit them to go on with their work: but referred the matter to the consideration of Darius himself; to whom they make a very fair and honest report of the case. The matter being laid before Darius, they received answer from him by letter what should be done in it.

Ver. 6.] The Apharsachites were one of the nations mentioned before in the former letter to Artaxerxes (ch. iv. 9), of which, perhaps, these two great men were.

Ver. 7.] They seem to write with greater affection than the former did, wishing the king all prosperity and happiness, which the other did not, but only called themselves his servants (ch. iv. 11).

Ver. 8. *To the house of the great God,*] So the Jews spake to distinguish their God from all others, who were the gods only of small countries, every one of which had their particular gods.

Which is builded with great stones.] The Talmudists, Jarchi, and Kimchi, and others, translate it *marble stones*, and the LXX. *choice stones*.

This work goeth fast on, and prospereth] It was advanced so far, and such diligence was used, that if a stop was not put to it, it would be speedily finished.

Ver. 9, 10.] They made a very diligent inquiry, that they might give the king a perfect account of the matter, and he might the better judge of it.

11 And thus they returned us answer, saying, We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and build the house that was builded these many years ago, which a great king of Israel builded and set up.

12 But after that our fathers had provoked the God of heaven unto wrath, he gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this house, and carried the people away into Babylon.

13 But in the first year of Cyrus the king of Babylon, *the same* king Cyrus made a decree to build this house of God.

14 And the vessels also of gold and silver of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took out of the temple, that *was* in Jerusalem, and brought them into the temple of Babylon, those did Cyrus the king take out of the temple of

Babylon, and they were delivered unto *one* whose name *was* Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor;

15 And said unto him, Take these vessels, go, carry them into the temple that *is* in Jerusalem, and let the house of God be builded in his place.

16 Then came the same Sheshbazzar, *and* laid the foundation of the house of God which *is* in Jerusalem: and since that time, even until now, hath it been in building, and *yet* it is not finished.

17 Now therefore, if *it seem* good to the king, let there be search made in the king's treasure house, which *is* there at Babylon, whether it be *so*, that a decree was made of Cyrus the king to build this house of God at Jerusalem, and let the king send his pleasure to us concerning this matter.

Ver. 11.] They own their religion which was of very ancient standing; their God having been worshipped many ages ago in this house which was built by Solomon.

Ver. 12.] They give them a short account how it came to be destroyed for their sins, and how they were punished on that account.

Ver. 13—16.] These last words show it had gone on very slowly and negligently ever since the first of Cyrus, they being in a poor condition, and hindered in the work by the Samaritans; after which the people grew sluggish, being set upon building their own houses, which they carried on with greater earnestness than the house of God, as Haggai reproves them. However in these last verses, the Jews gave Tatnai a faithful account of the whole matter: and he very worthily represented it to the king, as they informed him, without any addition or diminution of his own. For he did not accuse them of building the walls of

Jerusalem; which shows, he and his companions were not their enemies; but impartially wrote what they affirmed to be true.

Ver. 17. *Let there be search made in the king's treasure house, which is there at Babylon.*] Where the records of the kingdom were kept very carefully, as the treasures used to be.

Whether it be so, that a decree was made of Cyrus the king to build this house] It is likely the elders desired the records might be searched and examined, whether they said true or not; and accordingly, the governors reported their desires to the king, as a speedy way to be satisfied about this matter. For these do not seem to be like the Samaritans in the foregoing chapter, who endeavoured to obstruct the work, but were only desirous to be informed of the truth of what the Jews pretended, that so the building of the temple might either be permitted or prohibited, according as the king found the grant of Cyrus to be.

CHAPTER VI.

1 Darius, finding the decree of Cyrus, maketh a new decree for the advancement of the building. 13 By the help of the enemies, and the directions of the prophets, the temple is finished. 16 The feast of the dedication is kept, 19 and the passover.

1 THEN Darius the king made a decree, and search was made in the house of the rolls, where the treasures were laid up in Babylon.

2 And there was found at Achmetha, in the palace that *is* in the province of the Medes, a roll, and therein *was* a record thus written:

3 In the first year of Cyrus the king, *the same*

Cyrus the king made a decree *concerning* the house of God at Jerusalem, Let the house be builded, the place where they offered sacrifices, and let the foundations thereof be strongly laid; the height thereof threescore cubits, *and* the breadth thereof threescore cubits;

4 *With* three rows of great stones, and a row

CHAP. VI.

Ver. 1.] In the house where the records of the kingdom were kept: but by what follows, it appears that in Babylon they found nothing.

Ver. 2.] They searched therefore at Achmetha, which was afterward called Ecbatana, where the kings of Persia sometimes kept their courts: and there was found a volume concerning the affairs of Judea, wherein was the following record. This argued a great goodness in Darius, that he did not presently decree against them, because nothing that they alleged was found in Babylon; but caused a search to be made in another place, where he knew records were preserved.

Ver. 3. *In the first year of Cyrus the king*] This, perhaps, was the inscription of the following memorial.

The height thereof threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof threescore cubits;] Or rather, "the length thereof," as these last words may be translated. They had liberty to make it of these dimensions if they pleased, but no bigger: and these exceeded the proportions of Solomon's temple, if we suppose it to have been thirty cubits in height, except the porch, which was a hundred and twenty. But I have shown elsewhere, that it is probable all the temple of Solomon was in length a hundred and twenty cubits, and this house was but half so high. This Josephus saith, who saw this second temple

of new timber: and let the expenses be given out of the king's house:

5 And also let the golden and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took forth out of the temple which is at Jerusalem, and brought unto Babylon, be restored, and brought again unto the temple which is at Jerusalem, every one to his place, and place them in the house of God.

6 Now therefore, Tatnai, governor beyond the river, Shethar-boznai, and your companions the Apharsachites, which are beyond the river, be ye far from thence:

7 Let the work of this house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews build this house of God in his place.

(lib. xv. Archæolog. cap. 14). Ἐβδί δ' αὐτῷ πρὸς τὸ μέγεθος εἰς ἕξωσιν ἑξήκοντα πύργους, &c., "It wanted (speaking of this temple) to make it great, sixty cubits in height; for so much higher was the first temple which Solomon built."

Ver. 4.] He ordered it to be built at his own charge, for so he saith God commanded him (ch. i. 2), "God hath charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem." Yet we do not find that the Jews made use of his bounty, as Pellicanus observes, because they would not provoke too much the envy of the Samaritans, who were angry at his kindness to them. And therefore they carried on the work at their own cost, till Darius now commanded they should have what they desired out of his revenue, to finish what they had begun.

Ver. 5.] Thus far the decree of Cyrus is recited, which justified the truth of all the allegations of the Jews in the foregoing chapter. Now follows the decree of Darius thereupon.

Ver. 6. Now therefore, Tatnai, governor beyond the river, Shethar-boznai,] It is most likely that he set down in his letter to these men the forementioned decree of Cyrus, as it was found in the records, and then gave the following command.

Be ye far from thence:] Come not near Jerusalem to give them any hinderance or disturbance.

Ver. 7. Let the work of this house of God alone;] Obstruct not the work, but rather further it.

Let the governor of the Jews—build this house of God in his place.] In the place where it stood before. Zerubbabel is constantly called the governor of the Jews, never their king (Hag. i. 1, 14; ii. 2, 21), and so some of his successors (Mal. i. 9). For in Babylon, as Josephus relates, he was *οὐρανοῦραξ*, "a keeper of the king's body," and *τῶν αἰχμαλώτων Ἰουδαίων ἡγεμῶν*, "the captain of the captive Jews" who in one word was called *αἰχμαλωτάρχης*. Therefore he was appointed by Cyrus, and afterward by Darius, to govern the province of Judea in the king's name, and at his charge to see the temple built at Jerusalem. But learned men give no credit to what Josephus says of his great office in Babylon.

Ver. 8. I make a decree what ye shall do to the elders of these Jews] Whose names they had given in to him (ch. v. 10).

For the building of this house] As he had ordered they should not be hindered, so he made a farther order that they should give them assistance in what they were about.

Forthwith expenses be given unto these men, that they be not hindered.] That the work might not stop for want of money to go forward, which he ordered to be paid them without delay.

Ver. 9. For the burnt-offerings of the God of heaven,] So he had learned to call the God of Israel

8 Moreover I make a decree what ye shall do to the elders of these Jews for the building of this house of God: that of the king's goods, even of the tribute beyond the river, forthwith expenses be given unto these men, that they be not hindered.

9 And that which they have need of, both young bullocks, and rams, and lambs, for the burnt-offerings of the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the appointment of the priests which are at Jerusalem, let it be given them day by day without fail;

10 That they may offer sacrifices of sweet savours unto the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king, and of his sons.

11 Also I have made a decree, that whosoever shall alter this word, let timber be pulled down

after the example of Cyrus, who acknowledges God had made him so great as he had Darius.

Wheat, salt, wine, and oil,] For meat-offerings to attend upon the burnt-offerings.

According to the appointment of the priests] This was a great honour done to God's ministers, who might have whatsoever they desired for his service.

Let it be given them day by day without fail:] That the morning and evening burnt-sacrifices might never fail to be offered every day.

Ver. 10. That they may offer sacrifices of sweet savours unto the God of heaven,] From this place principally Mr. Mede proves at large, that sacrifices were a rite of supplication unto God; such ones namely, whereby the supplicant came not with a naked petition, but presented something unto his God, whereby to find favour in his sight, and obtain his petition: whence we find Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, where they pitched their tents, to have built an altar also (which was a place for sacrifice), and there "called upon the name of the Lord." And by this place it appears, that the sacrifices and oblations presented by gentiles were not refused by the Jews, when they desired their prayers to God for them. The Hebrew doctors indeed say, that all such sacrifices were eucharistical, not bistorical, that is, sacrifices of thanksgiving or acknowledgment to God (being burnt-offerings), not sacrifices of expiation, or sin-offerings. So Maimonides, in his treatise of sacrifices, "All the eucharistical sacrifices of the gentiles were burnt-offerings." There is a memorable passage in Josephus (lib. ii. De Bello Judaico, cap. 31), concerning Eleazar the priest, who, being admonished to admit the sacrifices and oblations of the gentiles, acknowledged that their ancestors adorned the temple with gifts offered by the gentiles, always accepting *τῶν ἐξωθεν ἐπιπέτων δωρεῶν καὶ θυσίας*, "the gifts and sacrifices of external nations."

The king, and—his sons.] Here it must be noted that Darius the First had no sons, but Darius the Second had, viz. Artaxerxes Mnemon, and Cyrus the younger, who were great men, and reigned in some manner with him. Artaxerxes Mnemon (as Dr. Alix makes account) was thirty-five years old in the second year of Darius; and Cyrus (who was slain in a battle against his brother) was a little younger.

Ver. 11. Whosoever shall alter this word, let timber be pulled down from his house, and being set up, let him be hanged thereon;] To make the decree more valid and better observed, he added this penalty; that if any acted contrary to it, a beam should be taken out of his own house, and, being set up, he should be hanged thereon. But Lud. De Dieu observes, that there is no construction in these words, which we

from his house, and being set up, let him be hanged thereon; and let his house be made a dunghill for this.

12 And the God that hath caused his name to dwell there, destroy all kings and people, that shall put to their hand to alter *and* to destroy this house of God which is at Jerusalem. I Darius have made a decree; let it be done with speed.

13 ¶ Then Tatnai, governor on this side the river, Shethar-boznai, and their companions, according to that which Darius the king had sent, so they did speedily.

14 And the elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet, and Zechariah the son of Iddo: and they builded, and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.

render, "being set up;" therefore he would have them translated after the LXX, "and standing, let him be beat upon it;" whipped, as we say, at a post, as the manner was among the Persians and other nations. Only among the Jews they that were beaten did not stand, but lay down (Deut. xxv. 2). But if a greater punishment be here meant, then he makes the first words refer to the wood, and the latter to the man, in this manner, "and from above let it fall upon him." That is, the stake, being lifted up, shall be struck into his body, and come out at his fundament; which was a cruel punishment among the eastern people, and still continued there.

Let his house be made a dunghill for this.] The pulling down of a beam from his house, supposes the pulling down of the house, which he orders should not be built again, but the place where it stood be made a dunghill. Thus the Romans pulled down the houses of very wicked men for their greater disgrace; of Sp. Cassius, for instance, and of Ovidius Pollio.

Ver. 12.] He was touched with such a sense of the greatness of the God of the Jews, that he prays, He who had all power in heaven and earth, would not only punish all those kings over whom he had no power (not being his subjects), who went about to obstruct this work, but destroy both them and their people. He concludes as he began, that forthwith this decree should be executed (ver. 8).

Ver. 13.] They were as punctual in executing his decrees as he desired, and that without any delay.

Ver. 14. *They prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo.*] Who directed and encouraged them in their work; representing to them, it is likely, the wonderful goodness of God, who had inclined the heart of the king of Persia to be so highly favourable to them.

According to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius,] If this Darius was he called Hystaspes, then it was Artaxerxes Longimanus his successor that is here meant; who, though he found the temple built, yet sent Ezra to beautify it, and to see things done there according to their law (ch. vii. 12, 21, 27). But some think him to be Artaxerxes Mnemon, who reigned with his father many years, and lived till he was ninety-four years old (Plut.).

Ver. 15.] Now they did in four years more than they had done in many years before. For, partly by their own poverty, and partly by the corruption of the courtiers of Persia, who hindered the necessary supplies; and partly by the envy of the Samaritans, who retarded them by their false accusations, and by

15 And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king.

16 ¶ And the children of Israel, the priests and the Levites, and the rest of the children of the captivity, kept the dedication of this house of God with joy,

17 And offered at the dedication of this house of God an hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs; and for a sin-offering for all Israel, twelve he-goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel.

18 And they set the priests in their divisions, and the Levites in their courses, for the service of God, which is at Jerusalem; as it is written in the book of Moses.

19 And the children of the captivity kept the passover upon the fourteenth day of the first month.

their interest in the governors of Syria; and partly by the sluggishness of the Jews, and their inclination to mind their own private interest more than the public good, the work went on so slowly, that not only the prophets reprehended them for it, but God punished them severely, by scarcity of provision, as we read in the prophet Haggai: but now, by the favour of this king, and by the zeal of God's prophets, it went on apace, and was speedily finished.

Ver. 16.] By the "children of Israel" are to be understood not only the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin (who were the chief) but all those of other tribes, many of which, from the time of Cyrus to the second of Darius, were come to their own country, though we have not a particular account of their names. This appears from the next verse. All these, together with the priests and Levites, agreed to dedicate this house with festival joy. Thus the temple at first was dedicated (1 Kings viii. 2; 2 Chron. vii. 4, &c.). That is, after it was built, being designed only for sacred uses, now they showed, by an example, how it should be used, which is the proper and simple sense of the word *dedicate*, as Selden explains it (lib. iii. De Synedr. cap. 13, sect. 5). But the Hebrew doctors observe, that by these sacrifices now offered, there was no new sanctity given to the place, but the old only restored.

Ver. 17. *And offered at the dedication of this house of God, an hundred bullocks, &c.*] A hecatomb was the noblest sacrifice among the heathen, of which we find often mention in their books; and with that the Jews began the dedication of the temple: to which they made many additional offerings, some of which were peace-offerings, on which they feasted, as the hundred bullocks, I suppose, were whole burnt-offerings.

According to the number of the tribes of Israel.] For it appears by many places before recited, that though the ten tribes were carried captive by Shalmaneser, yet many of them remained in their country, and were carried away by Nebuchadnezzar, together with Judah and Benjamin, with whom they returned out of Babylon, as many others of the ten tribes did, who were carried away at the taking of Samaria (see ch. ii. of this book, ver. 70; 2 Chron. xxxi. 5, 10, 11; xxxiv. 7, 9; xxxv. 3, 17; Ezra viii. 35; Acts xxvi. 7).

Ver. 18.] Where directions are given for their service. Numb. iii. 6; viii. 9, 10.

Ver. 19.] As was enjoined Exod. xii. 6. The Jews had the free exercise of their religion in Babylon (as I shall observe more largely afterward), where they circumcised their children, and also made proselytes;

20 For the priests and the Levites were purified together, all of them *were* pure, and killed the passover for all the children of the captivity, and for their brethren the priests, and for themselves.

21 And the children of Israel, which were come again out of captivity, and all such as had separated themselves unto them from the filthiness of

the heathen of the land, to seek the LORD God of Israel, did eat,

22 And kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy; for the LORD had made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.

but the "children of the captivity" signified those who were come back from it, and ate the passover, which they could not have done if they had not been circumcised.

Ver. 20.] They had time to purify themselves between the day wherein the temple was perfected, and the day wherein this feast was to be kept, there being about a month between.

Ver. 21.] That is, all proselytes, who had entirely made themselves subject to the law of Moses; for others might not eat of it, but they might (Exod. xii. 48, 49). Now, as Pellicanus observes, there were many proselytes who quite forsook their heathenish religion, and were brought to the knowledge and worship of the true God, by the favour of Cyrus and Darius, kings of Persia. They had kept the passover before this, being in the place which God chose, and having an altar where they might sacrifice; but it was not a quiet and settled time, and they had much occasion to be among the heathen; and so, it is likely, could not easily purify themselves to eat of it, as they did now.

Ver. 22.] God filled their hearts with joy, by turning the heart of the king, who now reigned over all the kingdoms which were formerly under the power of the Assyrians, who had grievously oppressed them, as the Persians who came in their stead now highly favoured them; who having conquered Babylon, were called the kings of Assyria. For we find in these books, the king of Persia, after that conquest, is called by the name of the king of Babylon (see Neh. xiii. 6), as the same king of Persia is here called the king of Assyria: for the kings formerly called by these names were possessed of vast dominions over many large provinces; which the Persian kings enjoying, they retained the ancient names of the former kings. For, as Joh. Vorstius observes, in his Dissert. De Quatuor Monarchiis, sect. 9, the kingdom of Babylon was not extinguished by little and little, but all at once: Cyrus possessed himself of it entirely, *simul et semel*; and, adding a vast dominion to the small one he had before, was called the king of those dominions which he conquered.

CHAPTER VII.

1 Ezra goeth up to Jerusalem. 11 The gracious commission of Artaxerxes to Ezra. 27 Ezra blesseth God for his favour.

1 Now after these things, in the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Ezra the son of Seraiah, the son of Azariah, the son of Hilkiah,

2 The son of Shallum, the son of Zadok, the son of Ahitub,

3 The son of Amariah, the son of Azariah, the son of Meraioth,

4 The son of Zerariah, the son of Uzzi, the son of Bukki,

5 The son of Abishua, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the chief priest:

6 This Ezra went up from Babylon; and he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which

CHAP. VII.

Ver. 1. *In the reign of Artaxerxes*] The same Artaxerxes, I suppose, mentioned in the foregoing chapter, ver. 14. But R. Solomon and Aben Ezra fancy he was Darius before named.

Ezra the son of Seraiah, the son of Azariah, the son of Hilkiah,] He was descended from Seraiah, but not immediately begotten by him; for Seraiah perished when Jerusalem was taken by the Chaldeans (2 Kings xxv. 18, 21): at which time Ezra, it is likely, was not in being; but he was his grandson, or great-grandson, and his descent is mentioned from him, because he was an eminent person, who flourished before the destruction of the temple, whereas his father or grand-father lived obscurely in their captivity (see 1 Chron. vi. 15).

Ver. 2, 3.] In this genealogy there are six generations omitted, between Azariah and Meraioth (as before there were some between Seraiah and Ezra), which are to be supplied out of 1 Chron. vi. 7, &c. which Kimchi, as I there observed, thinks was done for brevity's sake. For Ezra being author of that book, which was written first, and then of this, might think it needless to repeat all that he had there said at large.

Ver. 5.] See 1 Chron. vi. 4, 5.

Ver. 6. *This Ezra went up from Babylon;*] Not only by the king's leave and his commission, but with great authority, as appears from the end of this verse, and from ver. 25.

He was a ready scribe] He calls himself a scribe (as Buxtorf notes in his *Tiberias*;) not from writing and describing, but from declaring and explicating, those things that are contained in the scripture. For as *sepher* signifies a book, so *sopher* signifies one skilful and learned in that book, an interpreter and teacher out of it. And there being no book comparable to the book of the law, therefore *sopher* became a name of great dignity, and signified one that taught God's law, and expounded it to his people. Thus, in the New Testament, Γραμματεῖς, "the scribes," were those that instructed the people. For when our Saviour is said to have taught them as one having authority, and *not as the scribes*, it plainly shows that they were teachers, though not with such authority. See Jer. viii. 8, where the word *scribe* is thus used. And he calls himself a *ready scribe*, because he was expert in the law, and understood it thoroughly, both in all things belonging to the priesthood, and to the civil power; in which he was so well versed, that he could

the LORD God of Israel had given: and the king granted him all his request, according to the hand of the LORD his God upon him.

7 And there went up *some* of the children of Israel, and of the priests, and the Levites, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinims, unto Jerusalem, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king.

8 And he came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which *was* in the seventh year of the king.

9 For upon the first *day* of the first month began he to go up from Babylon, and on the first *day* of the fifth month came he to Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his God upon him.

10 For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek

give a ready account of any part of it. And it is thought by some, he gathered together the most perfect copies of the law, and put out an accurate edition of it with all the prophetic books, and such poems as had any sacred authority among them, adding the history of following times. But Josephus saith nothing of it, and therefore it is looked upon by others as a Jewish chimera, who attribute many other things to him without ground.

The king granted him all his request.] Some think to rebuild Jerusalem, of which there is no mention any where; therefore he only granted him power, as he desired, to do such things as are mentioned below (ver. 14, 15, &c.).

According to the hand of the Lord his God upon him.] For God was so favourable to him, as to incline the king to give a gracious answer to his petition. And, indeed, these kings of Persia were so exceedingly kind to the Jews, that, in a grateful remembrance of the favour they showed them, in permitting them to build the temple again, and assisting them in it, they caused a figure of the city and palace of Shushan (where the kings of Persia resided) to be made in brass, in the east gate of the temple, which looked towards Persia; as we read in the Talmud, in the treatise called Middoth.

Ver. 7. *There went up some of the children of Israel.*] Of the ten tribes, or such Jews as remained still in Babylon, after leave given them by Cyrus to return into their own country.

And of the priests, and the Levites—unto Jerusalem.] This was the second company that went up to Jerusalem, consisting of such-like persons as went up first with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and others (ch. ii. 2, 70). For hearing the temple was rebuilt, and the worship of God restored, we may very well think many went along with Ezra, who had not such a strong motive to go in the first of Cyrus.

Ver. 9. *For upon the first day of the first month began he to go up from Babylon.*] On the first day of the first month they went from Babylon to the river Ahava, where they spent three days in taking a view of the people that accompanied him (ch. viii. 15). After eight days more, part of which they had spent in fasting and prayer, they went forward (ch. viii. 21, 22, 31).

According to the good hand of his God upon him.] He had great reason to acknowledge the favour of God to them in conducting them safe to Jerusalem; for it was a long way thither, and a difficult journey, and they had many impediments (going with wives and children, flocks and herds), and were not without enemies to waylay them, whom he boasted he did not fear, but relied on the divine protection, as he told the king, ch. viii. 22.

the law of the LORD, and to do *it*, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.

11 ¶ Now this is the copy of the letter that the king Artaxerxes gave unto Ezra the priest, the scribe, *even* a scribe of the words of the commandments of the LORD, and of his statutes to Israel.

12 Artaxerxes, king of kings, unto Ezra the priest, a scribe of the law of the God of heaven, *perfect peace* and at such a time.

13 I make a decree, that all they of the people of Israel, and of his priests and Levites, in my realm, which are minded of their own freewill to go up to Jerusalem, go with thee.

14 Forasmuch as thou art sent of the king, and of his seven counsellors, to inquire concern-

Ver. 10.] He was intent upon this business, on which he had set his heart, as we speak, bending his thoughts and studies this way. For so the Hebrew word *cun* (which we translate *prepare*) signifies, to establish, confirm, and make things fixed and immoveable. And first, he set himself to "seek the law of the Lord," that is, to inquire into it, and search after the will of God therein contained, that he might understand it himself: and then, like a good man, he set his heart to do what God commanded, and put in practice what he knew to be his duty, whereby he was the better qualified to *teach* others what he knew and did himself, which was the next thing to which he diligently attended. This was the right method of doing good, in which Nehemiah tells us he proceeded (ch. viii. beginning). Some think statutes and judgments are the same thing, comprehending all the precepts of Moses; but others take them to have a distinct meaning: the first signifying the ceremonial law about the divine worship; and the second, the moral precepts concerning common honesty and civil life.

Ver. 11.] Here Ezra declares that he was no ordinary doctor of the law, but of eminent rank among them, who had studied the law thoroughly, and was able in every case to determine what was to be done: or (as some understand the latter part of this verse), he was perfectly skilled in the words or language wherein the law was written (which in the captivity many perhaps had forgotten), and in the sense of every law. But this, I think, is not to be supposed, that they had forgotten their own language.

Ver. 12. *Artaxerxes, king of kings.*] For he had several kings who were subject to him.

Unto Ezra the priest, a scribe of the law] So Ezra, I suppose, was wont to be styled by the Jews, who never spake of him, but as a man of greater dignity and honour than others.

Perfect peace, and at such a time.] On such a year and day, as was mentioned in the date of the letter.

Ver. 13.] None might leave his country without the king's permission, which he here gives to all the Jewish nation who were so disposed.

Ver. 14. *Forasmuch as thou art sent of the king, and of his seven counsellors.*] By whose advice this decree being made, it gave it the greater authority; for these were the principal men of the kingdom, as appears from the first of Esther, ver. 14.

To inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, according to the law of thy God] By this composition he gave him authority to make inquisition in Judea, whether every thing there was done conformably to the law of Moses; that is, he granted to the Jewish nation an *αὐτονομία*, "a liberty to live by their own laws," and to judge all causes according to them;

ing Judah and Jerusalem, according to the law of thy God which is in thine hand;

15 And to carry the silver and gold, which the king and his counsellors have freely offered unto the God of Israel, whose habitation is in Jerusalem,

16 And all the silver and gold that thou canst find in all the province of Babylon, with the free-will offering of the people, and of the priests, offering willingly for the house of their God which is in Jerusalem:

17 That thou mayest buy speedily with this money bullocks, rams, lambs, with their meat-offerings and their drink-offerings, and offer them upon the altar of the house of your God which is in Jerusalem.

18 And whatsoever shall seem good to thee, and to thy brethren, to do with the rest of the silver and the gold, that do after the will of your God.

19 The vessels also that are given thee for the service of the house of thy God, *those* deliver thou before the God of Jerusalem.

and, in the conclusion, granted them also an ἀποδοχία, "a power to sentence men according to their own law" (ver. 25, 26).

Which is in thine hand;] He intrusted Ezra with this great power of being supreme inquisitor and judge, because he was so very well skilled in the law (which is meant by having it *in his hand*), which he had in such readiness, and was so very conversant in it, that he was able presently to determine and judge whether it were observed.

Ver. 15.] This is an argument that they had a high opinion of the God of Israel, and desired his favour, though they did not worship him alone, but imagined other gods had some power, though not so great as he.

Ver. 16.] He gave them leave to carry away all the money they could procure (so the word we translate *find* is used in other places) in his own country of Babylon, as well as what the Jews, who had a mind to stay still there, should offer for the service of the temple at Jerusalem.

Ver. 17.] That they might pray for the prosperity of the king and of his sons, as Darius ordered, ch. vi. 9, 10.

Ver. 18.] He authorizes Ezra to take other priests to his assistance, in disposing of the money that was not laid out in sacrifices; only he would have it employed to some sacred use.

Ver. 19.] He speaks of him as if he thought him a particular God, but afterward speaks of him as the *God of heaven*, as he had done before, ver. 12, which is a sign he took him to be the most high God, who had a special affection for Jerusalem, because he was there worshipped.

Ver. 20. *Whatsoever more shall be needful*] Either for the reparation (if any was wanting), or for the adorning of the house (see ver. 27).

Out of the king's treasure house.] Out of his exchequer, as we now speak.

Ver. 21. *Do make a decree to all the treasurers*] All the receivers, and other officers employed about the king's revenue.

That whatsoever Ezra the priest,—shall require of you, it be done speedily,] This was a wonderful large concession, that he should have whatsoever he desired; and that they should not make him attend upon them, and wait long for it, but furnish him immediately.

20 And whatsoever more shall be needful for the house of thy God, which thou shalt have occasion to bestow, bestow *it* out of the king's treasure house.

21 And I, *even* I Artaxerxes the king, do make a decree to all the treasurers which *are* beyond the river, that whatsoever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, shall require of you, it be done speedily,

22 Unto an hundred talents of silver, and to an hundred measures of wheat, and to an hundred baths of wine, and to an hundred baths of oil, and salt without prescribing *how much*.

23 *Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be diligently done for the house of the God of heaven:* for why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons?

24 Also we certify you, that touching any of the priests and Levites, singers, porters, Nethinims, or ministers of this house of God, it shall not be lawful to impose toll, tribute, or custom, upon them.

25 And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy

Ver. 22.] He limits all the other expenses, except *salt*; without which no sacrifice could be offered: and therefore, since he would not have any sacrifice hindered, he did not prescribe any measure of that; but left them to take as much as they found necessary.

Ver. 23. *Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be diligently done for the house of the God of heaven:*] Here Jacobus Capellus cries out in a kind of rapture, O verba literis aureis regum palatiis inscribenda, atque adeo stylo adamantino fidelium omnium animis insculpenda! "O words to be written upon the palaces of kings in golden letters, and engraven on the minds of all the faithful with a style of adamant!" For they express an exceeding great sense of God, and of his supreme authority; and the regard that is due from the greatest kings and potentates to his most sacred commands (Historia Sacra et Exotica, ad A. M. 3543). The like is not easy to be found any where.

For why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons?] As he was afraid there would be, if the worship and service of God were here neglected through his default. An argument he was possessed with a greater dread of God's just displeasure, than the kings of Judah themselves were generally before the captivity. The mention of the king and of his sons, shows, that this agrees to Artaxerxes Mnemon exactly; but not to Xerxes (who was in Greece in the seventh year of his reign,) nor to Longimanus: but Artaxerxes Mnemon had then Ochus the husband of Esther, who was a great man, and some more. This remark I owe to the most learned Dr. Alix.

Ver. 24.] The king's revenue arose out of these three imposts, as appears by ch. iv. 13, from all which burdens, which were very great, the king freed every one of God's ministers, that they might the more cheerfully attend his service. And this was confirmed by some succeeding princes, as Bertram observes (De Republica Jud. p. 171), which the first Christian kings piously imitated, as J. Wolfius notes, "that they who watched and prayed for the public good, might be free from all other cares."

Ver. 25. *After the wisdom of thy God, that is in thine hand,*] According as the law of God directed, in which he was very expert (ver. 14).

God, that is in thine hand, set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that are beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye them that know them not.

26 And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment.

Set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people] Such as Moses ordered, Deut. xvi. 18. Here seems to be the original of the Sanhedrin, which continued but weakly till the time of the Maccabees.

Teach ye them that know them not.] Men well acquainted with the laws of God, who were able to instruct others that were ignorant. No Jewish king could have given more pious instructions. And the same Jacobus Capellus in the place above named thinks, that in this large power granted to Ezra, there was comprehended sufficient authority to build the walls of Jerusalem. But as the king did not expressly mention it, so the malignity of the Jews' enemies hindered it; and Ezra, being now grown old, was unable to cope with them. But this is not a good reason, for he lived thirteen years after this, able to stand and read the law from six to twelve of the clock.

Ver. 26. *Whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king.]* By the "law of the king" is meant this decree, which was now made in favour of the Jews; giving them authority to execute their own laws again. As for the imperial laws Ezra had nothing to do with them, nor were the Jews to be governed by them, but by their own laws; unless any matters could not be determined by the divine laws: in that case they were to be judged by the king's law. So Joh. Vorstius understands these words disjunctively (in his Dissert. De Synedriis Hebr. sect. 36), that they should act according to the direction of the divine law; or, if any thing fell out that could not be defined by that, then according to the prescription of the laws of the king.

Let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death.] The Romans never allowed the Jews the power of life and death, which the Persians did. So it is commonly thought; but the contrary is plain from the Acts of the Apostles, which show they enjoyed that power, by their stoning St. Stephen.

Or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment.] That the word which we translate "banishment," signifies in the Chaldee (as we note in the margin of our bibles) *rooting out*; and there-

27 ¶ Blessed be the LORD God of our fathers, which hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem:

28 And hath extended mercy unto me before the king, and his counsellors, and before all the king's mighty princes. And I was strengthened as the hand of the LORD my God was upon me, and I gathered together out of Israel chief men to go up with me.

fore is by some interpreted disinheriting, or excommunicating from their society; so that he should be an *outlaw*, as we speak, the highest degree of which was called *shammathah*. And thus our Mr. Thordike observes, that this *rooting out* is the same with that which in ch. x. 8, is called being *divided or separated* from the congregation of the captivity; being, indeed, a kind of temporal outlawry, unto which is joined confiscation of goods. And thus the greater excommunication among Christians is every where a temporal punishment; viz. in respect of some temporal punishment attending it in Christian states: which in Christianity is accidental, by an act of those states: but in Judaism was essential, so long as those temporal advantages, which were essential conditions of the law, were not forfeited. And this without doubt is the same punishment that is called "putting out of the synagogue" (see Rites of the Church in a Christian state, p. 28, and Review, p. 58, with Grotius, De Imper. Sum. Potest. cap. 9). I only add, that from such sentence it was in vain for them to appeal to any of the king's courts: for by this decree all matters were to be tried and finally judged by their own law.

Ver. 27.] To be so liberal in his gifts and privileges as is before expressed (ver. 15, 16, &c.).

Ver. 28. *And hath extended mercy unto me]* These words plainly show Ezra wrote this part of this book, if not the whole.

Before the king and his counsellors, and before all the king's mighty princes.] By whose advice and consent the large immunities before mentioned were granted to the Jewish nation.

I gathered together out of Israel chief men to go up with me.] Whose names follow in the next chapter. The marvellous kindness of the king in this grant to Ezra gave a great authority to him; and moved several of the greatest persons among the Jews still in Babylon, to resolve to accompany him to Jerusalem.

These last two verses are evidently the words of Ezra, acknowledging the divine goodness to him in giving him such favour with the king; whose words before are in the Syriac or Chaldee language; but these are in the Hebrew.

CHAPTER VIII.

1 *The companions of Ezra, who returned from Babylon.* 15 *He sendeth to Iddo for ministers for the temple.* 21 *He keepeth a fast.* 24 *He committeth the treasures to the custody of the priests.* 31 *From Ahava they come to Jerusalem.* 33 *The treasure is weighed in the temple.* 36 *The commission is delivered.*

1 THESE are now the chief of their fathers, and this is the genealogy of them that went up with me from Babylon, in the reign of Artaxerxes the king.

CHAP. VIII.

Ver. 1.] Whose names he sets down to preserve their memory to future generations.

2 Of the sons of Phinehas; Gershom; of the sons of Ithamar; Daniel: of the sons of David; Hattush.

3 Of the sons of Shechaniah, of the sons of

Ver. 2. *Of the sons of Phinehas; Gershom: of the sons of Ithamar; Daniel:]* By the sons, he means the families of these two persons; two of which ha

Pharosh; Zechariah; and with him were reckoned by genealogy of the males an hundred and fifty.

4 Of the sons of Pahath-moab: Elihoenai the son of Zerahiah, and with him two hundred males.

5 Of the sons of Shechaniah; the son of Jahaziel, and with him three hundred males.

6 Of the sons also of Adin; Ebed the son of Jonathan, and with him fifty males.

7 And of the sons of Elam: Jeshaiah the son of Athaliah, and with him seventy males.

8 And of the sons of Shephatiah; Zebadiah the son of Michael, and with him fourscore males.

9 Of the sons of Joab; Obadiah the son of Jehiel, and with him two hundred and eighteen males.

10 And of the sons of Shelomith; the son of Josiphiah, and with him an hundred and threescore males.

11 And of the sons of Hebai; Zechariah the son of Bebai, and with him twenty and eight males.

12 And of the sons of Azgad; Johanan the

particularly names, Gershom and Daniel: not Daniel the prophet, but some eminent person of Ithamar's family.

Of the sons of David; Hattush.] His family was so noble, because Christ was to spring from thence, that special notice was taken of it.

Ver. 3. Of the sons of Shechaniah, of the sons of Pharosh; Zechariah.] This Shechaniah is said to be the son of Pharosh, to distinguish him from another Shechaniah mentioned ver. 5.

And with him] That is, with Zechariah.

Were reckoned by genealogy of the males an hundred and fifty.] It is not said how many there were of the other families: and we are not to think that none but males went up out of this family, and the rest that follow; for mention is made of their little ones, ver. 21, who had women, no doubt, to look after them.

Ver. 5. Of the sons of Shechaniah; the son of Jahaziel, and with him three hundred males.] This was a person of great note, of whose family there went up almost twice as many as did of any other family.

Ver. 6, 7.] Concerning these, and the families that follow to ver. 15, there is little to be noted; but that out of them many went up with Zerubbabel in the reign of Cyrus (which appears by the account given in the second chapter), as now more went up with Ezra out of the very same families.

Ver. 13. And of the last sons of Adonikam.] They are called "the last sons," with respect to the first of them that went up with Zerubbabel. Or, these were the last that followed Ezra: which some look upon as a blot on Adonikam, that his family was the last that accompanied Ezra.

Ver. 15. I gathered them together to the river that runneth to Ahava.] This seems to be the name of a river, as well as of a town, which stood on the bank of Euphrates, there where this stream emptied itself into it. Some take it for Adiabene, a city so called from Adiava, ver. 31.

There abode we in tents three days.] It is likely, that in the whole journey they lodged, not in cities and towns, but in tents, which they carried along with them; and could pitch where and when it was most commodious for them.

son of Hakkatan, and with him an hundred and ten males.

13 And of the last sons of Adonikam, whose names are these, Eliphelet, Jeiel, and Shemaiah, and with them threescore males.

14 Of the sons also of Bigvai; Uthai, and Zabbud, and with them seventy males.

15 ¶ And I gathered them together to the river that runneth to Ahava; and there abode we in tents three days: and I viewed the people, and the priests, and found there none of the sons of Levi.

16 Then sent I for Eliezer, for Ariel, for Shemaiah, and for Elnathan, and for Jarib, and for Elnathan, and for Nathan, and for Zechariah, and for Meshullam, chief men; also for Joiarib, and for Elnathan, men of understanding.

17 And I sent them with commandment unto Iddo the chief at the place Casiphia, and I told them what they should say unto Iddo, and to his brethren the Nethinims, at the place Casiphia, that they should bring unto us ministers for the house of our God.

18 And by the good hand of our God upon us

I viewed the people.] Took an account of their number, and of what tribe they were.

Found there none of the sons of Levi.] That is, none who were not priests; of whom there were some (ver. 2).

Ver. 16. Chief men.] Men of authority among the company, and the heads perhaps of several families. These eleven persons he sent for to come to him, that he might employ them in a message to a place, where he knew there were a great many Levites; as it follows in the next verse.

Ver. 17. And I sent them with commandment unto Iddo the chief.] Among the Levites, who dwell at the place next mentioned, and there had the free exercise of their religion, as this and many other passages in this book plainly enough prove. And it is very probable, they had their synagogues (as they had afterward in their dispersion), or other places, where they met for religious worship. For we find the people resorting to Eackiel in their captivity, and him preaching to them the word of God, in many places of his book, particularly ch. xxxiii. 30, 31, &c. And Ezra, in all likelihood, was an instructor among them, as Joiarib and Elnathan also were, and Iddo, to whom these were sent. By which means many proselytes were made, who left their own country, and came with them to Jerusalem, when they returned (ch. vi. 21).

At the place Casiphia.] Several are of opinion, and particularly Stephanus Morinus lately, that this place was in the country of the Caspii, a people who gave denomination to the Caspian sea: where some of the Israelites were planted, who were carried captive by Salmanser, and still preserved their language and religion. But I look upon this as unlikely; the Caspian sea and the country about it being too far off for Ezra to send thither these messengers: who rather sent to a place in the province of Babylon, to which they went, and did a great deal of business, and returned in the space of twelve days. The truth is (as Dr. Alix observes), the Levites were not among the ten tribes, but in Chaldaea: and perhaps, some of them were transported into Parthia, where there was a city called Caspi, known to the old geographers.

I told them what they should say unto Iddo, and to his brethren the Nethinims, at the place Casiphia.]

they brought us a man of understanding, of the sons of Mahli, the son of Levi, the son of Israel; and Sherebiah, with his sons and his brethren, eighteen;

19 And Hashabiah, and with him Jeshaiah of the sons of Merari, his brethren and their sons, twenty;

20 Also of the Nethinims, whom David and the princes had appointed for the service of the Levites, two hundred and twenty Nethinims: all of them were expressed by name.

21 ¶ Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance.

22 For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way; because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him.

23 So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was entreated of us.

24 ¶ Then I separated twelve of the chief of the priests, Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brethren with them.

25 And weighed unto them the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, even the offering of the house of our God, which the king, and his coun-

Who, it seems, were better disposed than many of the Levites, to whom they ministered. But R. Solomon and others translate the words quite otherwise; "He told them what they should say to Iddo and his brethren (or, to Achio), who were constituted in the place Casiphia." For it is plain they were not Nethinims, Iddo being called *harosh*, a prince, or chief, that is, among the Levites: by whose authority Ezra expected some Levites, whom he wanted to accompany him to Jerusalem, should be sent to him, as they were. Now this cannot be said of the Nethinims: for none of them were chiefs, or presidents of the Levites, but their ministers or servants, as appears from verse 20, and other places. Therefore the word *Nethinim* must here signify men appointed to live among the Jews of that place; or, who had their residence there.

That they should bring unto us ministers] That is, Levites to attend upon the priests, as the Nethinims did upon the Levites.

Ver. 18. By the good hand of our God upon us] God inclined their hearts to comply with his desire.

They brought us a man of understanding—and Sherebiah, with his sons and brethren, eighteen;] They brought a man of understanding, viz. Sherebiah (so the words, I think, should be translated), with his sons and brethren, eighteen in number.

Ver. 19.] These were eminent persons also, though not equal to Sherebiah, who is noted as a man of great knowledge.

Ver. 20. Also of the Nethinims, whom David and the princes had appointed for the service of the Levites,] Every one knows, that the Gibeonites were appointed by Joshua to be hewers of wood and drawers of water, for the service of God's house; but a great many of them being destroyed by Saul, there were not enough remaining to serve in those ministries. And therefore David (as Bertram thinks, in his book De Repub. Jud. p. 277), appointed some other persons to the same employment; and afterward Solomon appointed more; who are called therefore Solomon's servants: all which, both Gibeonites and those who were added to them by David and Solomon, were known by the name of Nethinims, as much as to say *dedititii*, or *ascriptitii*, men given, as the Hebrew word denotes: for, as the Levites were given to the priests (Numb. viii. 16, 19), so were these given to the Levites. And this is said to have been done by "David and the princes," because David advised with the consistory about it, who are called the princes, 2 Chron. xxx. 2: xxxi. 8 (see Mr. Thorndike, Rites of the Church, p. 231). But I have observed elsewhere, that these Nethinims were distinct from the Gibeonites, and of a higher rank in the service of God (see 1 Chron ix. 2).

All of them were expressed by name.] I suppose

Iddo sent the names of every one of them, though they are not all here mentioned.

Ver. 21.] He, being the leader of this colony, had authority from the king to command whatsoever he pleased for the good of it. And nothing was more necessary than humbly and sorrowfully to acknowledge their offence against God, and beg his gracious pardon; and that he would prosper them in their journey, and direct them in the best way to bring themselves and all they had safe to Jerusalem: which was the end of this fast.

Ver. 22.] He might have obtained from the king any thing that he desired; but he had so openly declared, that he depended solely upon God for safe conduct, that he was ashamed to ask a guard of the king to secure them in their passage, from those enemies that he knew would waylay them (ver. 31); for the king, not being much instructed in the divine matters, might imagine, that all were vain boasts which the Jews had made of the favour of God to them, and of the prophecies concerning their restoration: which made Ezra and others so confident, as only to desire leave to return to their own country; and as for a safe passage, they took no care, but to commit themselves to God, who would defend his own people that trusted in him. To ask therefore protection and defence from the king, would look as if they distrusted the power and favour of their God, concerning whom they had spoken so magnificently. But it was highly necessary they should beseech that of God, which they would not ask of the king; which they did by fasting and prayer.

Ver. 23.] Gave them some assurance that their petitions should be granted. Some think, this fast lasted eight days, beginning after the three days mentioned above, ver. 15. For they began to go out of Babylon on the first day of the month (ch. vii. 9), and they stayed at Ahava three days to take a view of their company; and went from thence on the twelfth (ver. 31). And therefore they must either keep this fast eight days, or else they were seven days in coming from Babylon, and other places, to Ahava; where a general rendezvous, as we speak, was appointed. And this I take to be most probable, that they came out of Babylon on the first day, and expected at Ahava till all their company was got together, which was about the seventh day: and they all rested three days to make a complete muster of the whole number, and fasted one day; and so began to take their journey from Ahava on the twelfth.

Ver. 24.] With whom he might intrust the gifts that had been offered for the temple. These ten men, perhaps, were principal Levites, who were added to the two priests to take this charge upon them (see ver. 29).

sellors, and his lords, and all Israel *there* present, had offered:

26 I even weighed unto their hand six hundred and fifty talents of silver, and silver vessels an hundred talents, and of gold an hundred talents;

27 Also twenty basons of gold, of a thousand drams; and two vessels of fine copper, precious as gold.

28 And I said unto them, *Ye are holy unto the LORD; the vessels are holy also; and the silver and the gold are a freewill offering unto the LORD God of your fathers.*

29 Watch ye, and keep *them*, until ye weigh *them* before the chief of the priests and the Levites, and chief of the fathers of Israel, at Jerusalem, in the chambers of the house of the LORD.

30 So took the priests and the Levites the weight of the silver, and the gold, and the vessels to bring *them* to Jerusalem unto the house of our God.

31 ¶ Then we departed from the river of Ahava on the twelfth *day* of the first month, to go unto Jerusalem: and the hand of our God was upon

us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy, and of such as lay in wait by the way.

32 And we came to Jerusalem, and abode there three days.

33 ¶ Now on the fourth day was the silver and the gold and the vessels weighed in the house of our God by the hand of Meremoth the son of Uriah the priest; and with him was Eleazar, the son of Phinehas; and with them was Jozabab the son of Jeshua, and Noadiah the son of Binnui, Levites;

34 By number and by weight of every one: and all the weight was written at that time.

35 Also the children of those that had been carried away, which were come out of the captivity, offered burnt-offerings unto the God of Israel, twelve bullocks for all Israel, ninety and six rams, seventy and seven lambs, twelve he-goats for a sin-offering: all *this was* a burnt-offering unto the LORD.

36 ¶ And they delivered the king's commissions unto the king's lieutenants, and to the governors on this side the river; and they furthered the people, and the house of God.

Ver. 25.] That they might have no excuse if they were any way embezzled.

Ver. 26.] Or, "a hundred silver vessels, according to their talents;" that is, every one a talent.

Ver. 27.] They were not worth their weight in gold; but they were of great value, being scarce and rare: as that metal called aurichalcum was; which might be the reason why there was no more than two of them.

Ver. 28. *Ye are holy unto the Lord;*] They being men consecrated to God's service, were bound above all others to be faithful in the discharge of their duty, especially being entrusted with holy things; which were therefore to be carefully delivered at Jerusalem, just as they were committed to their trust.

A free-will offering unto the Lord] Which made them still more sacred.

Ver. 29.] Where they were deposited, after they had given an account of them there, to the persons here mentioned; who received them by the same weight that they were delivered unto those that brought them.

Ver. 30.] This shows, that some of these twelve men (mentioned ver. 26), if not ten of them, were Levites, and not all priests.

Ver. 31. *River of Ahava*] Which ran by that city into Euphrates.

To go unto Jerusalem:] To pursue their intended journey.

The hand of our God was upon us,] To protect and strengthen them in so dangerous and long a journey.

He delivered us from the hand of the enemy, &c.] There were not only many enemies who hated them, and were desirous to cut them off, but many robbers who watched for a booty, whom God either diverted some other way, or disheartened from attempting any thing against them; or, perhaps, directed them (as they prayed, ver. 21) into some uncommon ways, in which people were not wont to travel, whereby they escaped their enemies.

Ver. 32.] Before they did any thing. For it was necessary to rest and refresh themselves awhile, after so tedious a journey, in which they spent above a quarter of a year (see ch. vii. 9). Their friends also, it is likely, came to visit them in these three days' time, and welcome them to Jerusalem.

Ver. 33.] The names of Eleazar and Phinehas continued through many generations among the priests, because they were two very eminent persons in Aaron's family. And, as there were some Levites charged with this treasure to bring it to Jerusalem, so there were some of them who saw them discharge themselves of their trust.

Ver. 34.] There was a public record made of it; and the persons forementioned, who brought the money and the vessels, were discharged by a public instrument, signed by them that received it. Or, perhaps, the meaning may be, that there was an inventory taken of the goods belonging to the temple, which the priests were charged withal, as the stewards of a family are wont to be with the goods belonging to it.

Ver. 35. *Also the children of those—which were come out of the captivity,*] That is, this company who came up from Babylon with Ezra.

Offered burnt-offerings] To express their gratitude to God for their restoration.

Twelve bullocks for all Israel,] One for every tribe. *For a sin-offering:*] For all Israel, whether still remaining in Babylon, or returned to Jerusalem.

All this was a burnt-offering] All the rest (except the he-goats) were a burnt-offering; whereby they acknowledged the Lord for their God.

Ver. 36. *They delivered the king's commissions unto the king's lieutenants, &c.*] That they might know the king's pleasure, and what privileges he had granted them, which are recited in the foregoing chapter.

They furthered the people, and the house of God.] Yielded obedience to the king's orders.

CHAPTER IX.

1 *Ezra mourneth for the affinity of the people with strangers.* 5 *He prayeth unto God with confession of sins.*

1 Now when these things were done, the princes came to me, saying, The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, *doing* according to their abominations, *even* of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites.

2 For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons; so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of *those* lands: yea, the hand of princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass.

CHAP. IX.

Ver. 1. *When these things were done,*] When he had shown his commission, and it appeared that he had power to reform all abuses, and see the laws of Moses observed by all the Jews (ch. vii. 14).

Have not separated themselves from the people of the lands,] Some of the great men came to him with a grievous complaint, that unlawful marriages were practised among them with those wicked nations whom God had forbidden them to mingle withal: which was the more to be lamented, because not only the people, but the priests themselves and the Levites, were guilty of this sin.

Doing according to their abominations,] This is commonly an expression, signifying worshipping of idols, which are called *abominations* in scripture; but here signifies only imitation of the heathen in promiscuous marriages with any nation whatsoever, which would soon lead them to commit idolatry. For these words in the Hebrew run thus, "Have not separated themselves from the people of the land, according to their abominations," (the word *doing* is not there); which Mr. Mede rightly interprets, "according to the several kinds of idolaters in the land round about them."

Even of the Canaanites, &c.] By this it appears, that, as marriages with the seven nations of Canaan were expressly forbidden (Deut. vii. 2, 3), so Ezra thought that law extended to all other nations, who were not proselyted to the Jews' religion. And this is the common opinion of the Hebrew doctors, as Mr. Selden shows, lib. v. De Jure Nat. et Gent. cap. 12. For even before the law of Moses, it seems to be thought unlawful, after they had received the covenant of circumcision, for the seed of Abraham to marry with other nations that were uncircumcised (Gen. xxxiv. 14).

Ver. 2.] They are called a *holy seed*, because of the covenant of God with them, which made them a peculiar people, separated from all other nations. The case was the more dangerous, because the great men of the nation were the principal offenders (ch. x. 18, 23), whose example the people followed without fear of punishment. It is likely, those princes who informed Ezra of this enormous practice had endeavoured to reform them, but could not, because they were opposed by as great men as themselves. But we must not cast away all hope, though we cannot presently reform men's lives: the time may come when it may be done.

Ver. 3. *I rent my garment and my mantle,*] Both his inner and upper garment; which was a token not

3 And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonished.

4 Then were assembled unto me every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the transgression of those that had been carried away; and I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice.

5 ¶ At the evening sacrifice I arose up from my heaviness; and having rent my garment and my mantle, I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the LORD my God.

only of very great grief and sorrow, but expressed his sense of the divine displeasure. For the Jews rent their clothes when they apprehended God to be highly offended (see Grotius upon Matt. xxvi. 65). The Talmudists say, the high-priest rent his garments otherwise than other men, not above from the shoulders to the bottom, but below at his feet, and the skirts of his garments, upward.

And plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard,] This was still a higher sign of exceeding great grief; for in ordinary sorrow they only neglected their hair, and let it hang down scattered in a careless manner; but this was used in bitter lamentations, even among the heathens. So Bochart observes out of many authors, particularly Homer, in several places. For example, speaking of Ulysses and his companions bewailing the death of Elpenor, he saith, *Odyss. x.*

Ἐζόμενοι δ' ἰταυθα γόων, τήλοιστο τε χροίτας.

"They sitting down there howled and plucked off their hairs" (see Hieroz. lib. ii. cap. 35). To have the head or the beard was another thing; which the law forbade the Jews in their mourning for the dead, because it was a custom of their idolatrous neighbours, whose manners he would not have them imitate.

And sat down astonished,] With amazement that they should be so ungrateful to God, who had delivered them from captivity, and with an apprehension of their danger, there being so open a breach of the divine law, which had formerly proved their ruin.

Ver. 4. *The words of the God of Israel,*] Which it is likely he read to them, and told them the importance of them.

Because of the transgression of those that had been carried away;] Into Babylon, but now were returned to their own land, little or nothing amended, either by their banishment or their restoration. He speaks not of those who were lately come back with him, but of those who came back with Zerubbabel, and of their children.

I sat astonished until the evening sacrifice,] When the people used to meet together to worship God.

Ver. 5. *At the evening sacrifice I arose up from my heaviness;*] Wherein he had sat ever since he heard of their foul transgression.

Having rent my garment and my mantle,] He mentions that again, because he still continued and appeared in a mournful condition.

I fell upon my knees,] But put himself now into the posture of an humble supplicant to the divine majesty.

6 And said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens.

7 Since the days of our fathers *have we been* in a great trespass unto this day; and for our iniquities have we, our kings, and our priests, been delivered into the hands of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, and to a spoil, and to confusion of face, as it is this day.

8 And now for a little space grace hath been *shewed* from the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage.

9 For we were bondmen; yet our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage, but hath extended mercy unto us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us a reviving, to set up the house of our God, and to repair the desolations thereof, and to give us a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem.

10 And now, O our God, what shall we say

Ver. 6. *O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God:*] The sum of his confession and deprecation is this, which it may be useful to represent at once: that he was confounded when he thought of the greatness of their sins, which were ready to overwhelm them, and of the boldness and insolence of them beyond all measure; and that, though they had seen the divine vengeance upon their forefathers (from whom they derived this impious disposition) in so terrible a manner, that they had not yet worn off the marks of his displeasure (ver. 6, 7). He had begun indeed to show favour unto them (ver. 8); but this so much the more aggravated their wickedness, in that not very many years after he had been so gracious as to deliver a small handful of them, and give them a footing again in their own land, and in the holy place, and thereby had made them joyful, and given them life, as it were, from the dead, by restoring them to their liberty, they returned to their old provocations, and forgot both that they had been bondmen, and that God had been so kind to them in that bondage, as to make those whom they served to pity them, and give them leave to go to their own land, and build the house of their God (ver. 8, 9). What shall any one say for such a wretched people as this (ver. 10), who had no regard to their prophets, nor to Moses himself, who had charged them to have nothing to do with the people of Canaan, whom he intended to destroy, because they had defiled that land, but to separate themselves from them, and seek to root them out, which was the way to plant themselves firmly there for ever (ver. 11, 12). Can we expect less than utter destruction of this small remnant, when, after all the punishments he hath inflicted upon us for our sins, and his ceasing to punish us, and rescuing us in this manner from our captivity, we return to those sins which are so odious to him, because so expressly against his commandments (ver. 13, 14)? If he deal so with us, we must acknowledge the justice of his proceedings. For when we remain a monument of his mercy, who are rescued (as is apparent) from our bondage, we are notwithstanding here before him in our offences so guilty, that we have nothing to plead for ourselves, we are not able to say one word to excuse our detestable ingratitude.

There cannot be a more pathetic supplication than

after this? for we have forsaken thy commandments,

11 Which thou hast commanded by thy servants the prophets, saying, The land, unto which ye go to possess it, is an unclean land with the filthiness of the people of the lands, with their abominations, which have filled it from one end to another with their uncleanness.

12 Now therefore give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters unto your sons, nor seek their peace or their wealth for ever: that ye may be strong, and eat the good of the land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children for ever.

13 And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities *deserve*, and hast given us *such* deliverance as this;

14 Should we again break thy commandments, and join in affinity with the people of these abominations? wouldest not thou be angry with

this, taken altogether; several phrases of which it may be fit to explain.

For our iniquities are increased over our head.] A metaphor taken from deep waters, wherein men are drowned and ready to perish.

Our trespass is grown up unto the heavens.] This signifies, as I have expressed it in my paraphrase, the high presumption and insolence of their wickedness.

Ver. 7.] And therefore were punished unto this day, as the verse concludes. For many of their brethren were still in Babylon, or other countries, and they who returned were in danger to be undone for their continued sins.

Ver. 8. *And to give us a nail in his holy place.*] By *nails* or *pins* tents were fastened to the ground; therefore this signifies (as it is explained in the margin) "a settled abode," after long banishment.

Ver. 9. *To give us a reviving.*] For Ezekiel compares them, when they were in Babylon, to the dry bones of dead men lying in their graves (ch. xxxvii. 1, &c).

And to give us a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem.] From hence some infer, that the wall of Jerusalem, before Nehemiah came, was built as well as the temple. But the Hebrew word *gedar* should be otherwise translated; for it doth not properly signify a wall, but a *hedge* or *fence*, such as were made for the folds of sheep. Whereby Ezra expresses (as Huetius well notes) the singular care of God of them; who, being the "Shepherd of Israel," had gathered together his scattered sheep, and brought them back into their ancient folds; wherein he preserved them safe, even when they had no wall, to defend them, under the powerful protection of the king of Persia.

Ver. 10—12.] These verses need no explication more than I have given in the paraphrase upon them.

Ver. 13.] In the Hebrew the words are, "hast withheld beneath our iniquities:" that is, forborne to punish. For as, when God will no longer forbear, he is said to *arise*, and take vengeance: so here (as Lud. de Dieu observes), on the contrary, he is said to "withhold himself below:" that is, not to arise, but to wait patiently for their amendment.

Ver. 14.] Not one of such a wicked nation left remaining, but all utterly extirpated.

us till thou hast consumed us, so that *there should be no remnant nor escaping!*

15 O LORD God of Israel, thou art righteous:

Ver. 15. *O Lord God of Israel, thou art righteous, &c.*] Either the word *righteous* here signifies *very merciful*, which was the reason they were not destroyed as they deserved; or the next words must be translated, not "for we remain," but "though we remain escaped:" that is, God's justice will not let us escape, though, for the present, he forbear to punish us.

For we cannot stand before thee because of this.] As this cannot be denied, so it cannot be defended or excused: but we must yield up ourselves to bear the punishment unto which thou wilt condemn us.

Thus he concludes this admirable representation

for we remain yet escaped, as *it is* this day; behold, *we are* before thee in our trespasses; for we cannot stand before thee because of this.

of their condition: which is as much as if he had said, Unless we reform, I know not how to beg for mercy, but we must be undone, and that most justly. For he gives them no hope, intending to put them into a great terror and affrightment, and see how that would work upon their hearts. And we find, in the next chapter (ver. 2), it had this effect; that one stood up and spake in the name of all the rest, that they would renew their covenant with God, and put away these abominations (which was effectual repentance), and then they hope God would be merciful unto them.

CHAPTER X.

1 *Shechaniah encourageth Ezra to reform the strange marriages.* 6 *Ezra mourning assembleth the people.* 9 *The people, at the exhortation of Ezra, repent, and promise amendment.* 15 *The care to reform it.* 18 *The names of them which had married strange wives.*

1 Now when Ezra had prayed, and when he had confessed, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, there assembled unto him out of Israel a very great congregation of men, and women, and children: for the people wept very sore.

2 And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, answered and said unto Ezra, We have trespassed against our God, and have taken

strange wives of the people of the land: yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing.

3 Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law.

4 Arise; for *this matter belongeth* unto thee:

CHAP. X.

Ver. 1.] This prayer being made at the time of the evening sacrifice (as we read before, ch. ix. 5), when many assembled to worship God; and being uttered with great passion, and the highest expressions of grief and sorrow, it moved those very much who were present; especially to see such a person as Ezra, a priest of God, and a great ruler under the king of Persia, so dejected, full of fear, confusion, and astonishment: the report of which was presently carried through all Jerusalem, and, perhaps, to neighbouring places: which brought together a great number of people of all sorts, men, women, and children; who all made great lamentation, looking upon themselves as under the high displeasure of the Almighty.

Ver. 2. *Shechaniah — answered and said unto Ezra.*] He seems to have been a good man, not being numbered among those that had trespassed; though several of his family were: even his own father, Jehiel, and several of his uncles, the sons of his grandfather Elam (ch. v. 26).

We have trespassed against our God,] Ezra seemed to have given up all for gone, the more to awaken and affright them out of their sins; and therefore this person stands up to keep them from despair, and to propound a remedy which he hoped would prove effectual. This he spake in the name of the rest; with the principal of which, perhaps, he had consulted.

Ver. 3.] That which was done contrary to the law of God was looked upon as null, and therefore these were accounted no marriages, and their children were no better than those we call bastards, and were not to be a part of the family, but to be put away with their mothers. St. Paul, indeed, allows the Corin-

thians to keep their pagan wives or husbands, because they had them before they were Christians; and there was no law of God or man against their marriages, as there was here a very strict law of God forbidding them. It may seem hard, indeed, that the children should be put away as well as their mothers; but they were unlawfully born, and must follow the condition of their mothers, and being educated in superstition, might corrupt other children: and therefore it was unlawful hereafter to marry with the children of these women, for they were reputed unclean, though their fathers were Israelites. Thus Maimonides reports the sense of the law to be, "A son begot of a gentile by an Israelite, is not to be accounted a son." If a son, indeed, were begot by a gentile of an Israelitish woman, the child was accounted an Israelite, for *partus sequitur ventrem*. But a child was of the same condition with his mother, and no regard was had to the father at all: so that if a child was begot by an Israelite, of a woman that was a slave, the child was a slave; but if, on the contrary, a woman of Israel had a child by one that was a slave, the child was as free as any other Israelite (see Selden, in the place above mentioned, page 616).

But it is likely, when they put away these wives and children, they made some provision for them; for all was to be done according to the counsel of Ezra, and other good men, who feared God, and trembled to think his commandment was broke, and therefore judged they should be put away; but they prescribed the manner of it, how it should be done; which, it is probable, was not without some consideration of them.

Ver. 4. *Arise;*] For he lay prostrate upon the ground (ver. 1).

we also *will be* with thee; be of good courage, and do it.

5 ¶ Then arose Ezra, and made the chief priests, the Levites, and all Israel, to swear that they should do according to this word. And they sware.

6 ¶ Then Ezra rose up from before the house of God, and went into the chamber of Johanan the son of Eliashib: and *when* he came thither, he did eat no bread, nor drink water: for he mourned because of the transgression of them that had been carried away.

7 And they made proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem unto all the children of the captivity, that they should gather themselves together unto Jerusalem;

For this matter belongeth unto thee:] Who had the greatest skill in the law, and a full power from the king of Persia to see every thing done according unto it (ch. vii. 14). Now the renewing of the covenant for the observation of the law was to be done by the authority of the sovereign, as we see by the examples of Asa, Hezekiah, and Josiah: and therefore it is a great mistake (as Mr. Thordike observes) to imagine the people could renew it, or any part of it, without the consent of the sovereign. From whence we may conclude, that Ezra having such a commission as is mentioned ch. vii. was established by the sovereign power, with an authority to execute the law against all transgressors.

We also will be with thee;] He promises his assistance, and the assistance of the principal persons: which might give him confidence of success.

Ver. 5. *Then arose Ezra, and made the chief priests, the Levites, &c.*] All that were then present.

To swear that they should do according to this word.] He admonished them of their duty in the name of God, and then persuaded them to take a solemn oath (as they did) to put away their strange wives and children. For the commission given to Ezra supposing a full leave to the people to live according to the law, enabled him to govern them by it, yea, to swear them to observe it; for he might do whatsoever he found necessary to keep them in obedience.

Ver. 6. *Then Ezra rose up from before the house of God.*] This seems to signify, that he made them swear before he would rise up; that they, seeing his great humiliation before God, in the most doleful condition, might be moved to a more forward compliance.

And went into the chamber of Johanan] That he might there consult with the princes and elders (ver. 8), how to put this counsel in execution. This Eliashib was the high-priest who succeeded Joiakim, who succeeded Jeshua; who living a long time, his son Joiakim enjoyed the priesthood but a few years: and Eliashib lasted not long, but seems to have been dead (as Dr. Alix thinks) a little after the twentieth year of Artaxerxes Mnemon (see Neh. xii. 10).

When he came thither, he did eat no bread.] The word *when* is not in the Hebrew: therefore it had better be translated *till* he came thither he had eaten nothing.

For he mourned] And in time of mourning and sorrow they were wont to fast.

Ver. 7.] This proclamation was issued forth by the counsel of the princes and elders mentioned in the next verse.

Ver. 8. *Whosoever would not come within three*

8 And that whosoever would not come within three days, according to the counsel of the princes and the elders, all his substance should be forfeited, and himself separated from the congregation of those that had been carried away.

9 ¶ Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered themselves together unto Jerusalem within three days. It *was* the ninth month, and the twentieth *day* of the month; and all the people sat in the street of the house of God, trembling because of *this* matter, and for the great rain.

10 And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel.

11 Now therefore make confession unto the

days.] This was a short time; but they were resolved to be speedy in the business, lest they that propounded it should cool, or any thing occur to hinder it.

According to the counsel of the princes and the elders.] It was a great power which the king of Persia intrusted Ezra withal; which he managed very discreetly: for he would not make the following decree by his own sole authority, without the advice of the Sanhedrin; which is generally thought to be meant by the "princes and elders," viz. the high court of Jerusalem; for they that are here called *princes*, are, verse 14, called *judges*.

All his substance should be forfeited.] In the Hebrew, *devoted*. Which signifies that his goods were to be so forfeited, as to become sacred to God; and so incapable to be restored to the former owner, being put into the treasury of God's house.

And himself separated from the congregation of those that had been carried away.] Excluded from their society, and all the benefits of their religion (see chapter vii. 26). This was a punishment inflicted by all nations on those who would not conform themselves to the laws; as Grotius observes, *De Imperio Sum. Potest. circa Sacra*, cap. 9, p. 242: edit. Hagæ and Selden, *De Synedr. lib. i. cap. 7*, p. 146, 147, 150.

Ver. 9. *Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered themselves together*] And all of other tribes complied also with this proclamation, as appears from verse 25, but these are alone mentioned, because they were the chief, and the others were mixed with them.

It was the ninth month.] About a quarter of a year after Ezra and his company came to Jerusalem.

All the people sat in the street of the house of God.] Some take this to be the street which led to the temple; But it was rather the court of the people where they worshipped; which, lying open, and not being yet girt about with a wall (as we may guess from Neh. ii. 8), is called a *street*.

Trembling because of this matter.] The offence they had committed against God, and the consequence thereof.

For the great rain.] Which they took as a token of God's anger against them, because of their sin.

Ver. 10.] When they should have been bewailing their former sins, which cast them out of their land, they added new transgressions when they were restored to it.

Ver. 11. *Make confession unto the Lord—and do his pleasure.*] Confession of sin alone, without obedience to God's will and entire submission to him, is insufficient to reconciliation with him.

LORD God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives.

12 Then all the congregation answered and said with a loud voice, As thou hast said, so must we do.

13 But the people *are* many, and *it is* a time of much rain, and we are not able to stand without, neither *is this* a work of one day or two; for we are many that have transgressed in this thing.

14 Let now our rulers of all the congregation stand, and let all them which have taken strange wives in our cities come at appointed times, and with them the elders of every city, and the judges thereof, until the fierce wrath of our God for this matter be turned from us.

15 ¶ Only Jonathan the son of Asahel, and Jahaziah the son of Tikvah, were employed about

this *matter*: and Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite helped them.

16 And the children of the captivity did so. And Ezra the priest, *with* certain chief of the fathers, after the house of their fathers, and all of them by *their* names, were separated, and sat down in the first day of the tenth month to examine the matter.

17 And they made an end with all the men that had taken strange wives by the first day of the first month.

18 ¶ And among the sons of the priests there were found that had taken strange wives: *namely*, of the sons of Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren; Maaseiah, and Eliezer, and Jarib, and Gedaliah.

19 And they gave their hands that they would put away their wives; and *being* guilty, they offered a ram of the flock for their trespass.

[Separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives.] There being no mention here made of their children, but only of their wives, it hath made some think that they kept their children, and by circumcision dedicated them to God, teaching them to renounce the infidelity of their mothers. For though Shechaniah propounded the putting away the children also (ver. 3), yet it may be thought that Ezra, to whom the matter was referred, mitigated the severity of it; because we do not read any thing of them, but only of the wives, when he came to order what should be done.

Ver. 12.] They saw no other remedy, and therefore submitted to what he required, as the pleasure of God.

Ver. 13.] They give very good reasons why for the present they should be dismissed, and more time taken to make inquisition after all the offenders, and examine them: and to show they really desired the thing should be done, they propound a method, in the next verse, for the management of it.

Ver. 14.] They would have the great council at Jerusalem settled (for that is meant by "let the rulers of all the congregation stand"), and be ready to take cognizance of this matter: set days being appointed for the offenders in every city to be brought before them, by the elders and judges of those cities (that is, some delegates from the senate of that place), who should testify that they had seen the divorcees made from their strange wives; for they were best able to know the circumstances of every person, and all his actions. And this they would have to continue, as long as there remained any thing to be done in this business; that the anger of God might be turned away from them. So De Dieu truly renders, I think, the last words of this verse.

How *elders* and *judges* differ, is a dispute among learned men. Sometimes they signify the same; but when they are mentioned together, it is reasonable to think their powers were distinct. And Campegius Vitringa seems to me to have given a good account of them; that by *elders* are meant the supreme senate in every city, who judged in all civil causes; and by *judges* (as distinct from the other) are meant judges of an inferior bench, by whom all money matters were tried. For though the senate might judge in all causes, yet it is reasonable to think they referred small matters to a lower court. This he gathers out of the scriptures, and shows it is conformable to the traditions of the Talmudists (De Synagoga Veter. lib. ii. cap. 9. p. 58, and see L'Empereur upon Bertram, De Repub. Jud. p. 395).

Ver. 15. Only Jonathan—and Jahaziah—were employed about this matter:] These were two priests, who were chosen to see all things done according to the foregoing resolution: that is, to appoint the time when the men of each city should come to bring in their names, and to acquaint the great council that these were elders and judges of the cities, who had seen their orders executed.

Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite helped them.] They were both of them Levites, as I take it, who were to assist the forenamed priests in so great a work.

Ver. 16.] The children of the captivity did so.] They who came up out of Babylon to their own country are constantly called "the children of the captivity;" to put them in mind of their servitude, and of their freedom from it.

Were separated,] Sequestered themselves from all other business, to attend wholly to the issue of this.

Sat down—to examine the matter.] I cannot imagine what it was that they were set apart to examine, unless it was whether the persons before named did their duty: for it is likely they brought the names of those who were found guilty (which here follow) unto Ezra and these assessors; who examined whether they found more than these, and of what quality and condition they were.

Ver. 17.] Three months therefore were spent in this disquisition, which shows it was very exact.

Ver. 18.] No wonder the people broke the law, when so many of those who were supposed to understand it best (viz. the priests) gave them such a foul example of lust and levity (as Pellicanus speaks), yea, some of the sons of the high-priest; which made the example more pernicious. Which may be the reason, as he conjectures, why Jeshua, the high-priest, was represented in a vision to Zechariah the prophet in *filthy garments*; because his family (sons and brethren) were defiled with this impurity. For as Cicero saith, out of Plato, in a letter to Lentulus, Tales plerumque civis reliqui esse solent, quales principes in civitate fuerint viri; "such the rest of the citizens are wont to be, as the great men in the city are."

Ver. 19. They gave their hands that they would put away their wives:] Solemnly engaged, by making a covenant, or by an oath, that they would do what was enjoined (see Ezek. xvii. 18). But it may be expounded simply, "they put their hand to the business;" that is, did it effectually, and actually put away their strange wives.

20 And of the sons of Immer; Hanani, and Zebadiah.

21 And of the sons of Harim; Maaseiah, and Elijah, and Shemaiah, and Jehiel, and Uz-ziah.

22 And of the sons of Pashur; Elieoenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethaneel, Jozabad, and Elasaah.

23 Also of the Levites; Jozabad, and Shimei, and Kelaiah, (the same is Kelita,) Pethahiah, Judah, and Eliezer.

24 Of the singers also; Eliashib: and of the porters; Shallum, and Telem, and Uri.

25 Moreover of Israel: of the sons of Parosh; Ramiah, and Jeziah, and Malchiah, and Miamin, and Eleazar, and Malchijah, and Benaiah.

26 And of the sons of Elam; Mattaniah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, and Abdi, and Jeremoth, and Eliah.

27 And of the sons of Zattu; Elieoenai, Eliashib, Mattaniah, and Jeremoth, and Zabad, and Aziza.

28 Of the sons also of Bebai; Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai, and Athlai.

29 And of the sons of Bani; Meshullam,

Malluch, and Adaiah, Jashub, and Sheal, and Ramoth.

30 And of the sons of Pahath-moab; Adna, and Chelal, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattaniah, Bezaleel, and Binnui, and Manasseh.

31 And of the sons of Harim; Eliezer, Ishijah, Malchiah, Shemaiah, Shimeon,

32 Benjamin, Malluch, and Shemariah.

33 Of the sons of Hashum; Mattenai, Mattathah, Zabad, Eliphelet, Jeremai, Manasseh, and Shimei.

34 Of the sons of Bani; Maadai, Amram, and Uel,

35 Benaiah, Bedeiah, Chelluh,

36 Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib,

37 Mattaniah, Mattenai, and Jaasau,

38 And Bani, and Binnui, Shimei,

39 And Shelemiah, and Nathan, and Adaiah,

40 Machnadebai, Shashai, Sharai,

41 Azareel, and Shelemiah, Shemariah,

42 Shallum, Amariah, and Joseph.

43 Of the sons of Nebo; Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabad, Zebina, Jadau, and Joel, Benaiah.

44 All these had taken strange wives: and some of them had wives by whom they had children.

Being guilty, they offered a ram of the flock for their trespass.] More than that, they openly confessed their guilt, and made an offering for their offence; and bereby, perhaps, endeavoured to make some amends for their sin, by being the first that condemned themselves and reformed, and offered a trespass-offering, which, some think, all the rest made, after their example.

Ver. 20—22.] All these were priests, who were very deep in this guilt, and being public persons, led others fearlessly into it.

Ver. 23.] There were not so many Levites, as there were priests, in the transgression.

Ver. 24.] These seem to have been more modest; there being but one offender found among the singers, and but three among the porters.

Ver. 25.] The Hebrews call all those Israel, who were not Levites, or dedicated to the service of the temple. Whence the court of Israel was that place wherein the men of Israel worshipped, as they were distinguished from the priests and Levites.

Ver. 26.] This Jehiel was Shechaniah's father, ver. 2. And yet, notwithstanding, though his father and kindred were guilty of this crime, which Ezra bewailed, he did not stick to speak his mind, how it

should be punished. An admirable example of zealous integrity!

Ver. 27.] The two former, Parosh and Elam, with this Zattu, and all that follow to ver. 32, were of the tribe of Judah.

Ver. 32.] Now follows an account of those of the other tribe.

Ver. 43.] Some take Nebo for a place, of which the following families were citizens. But nothing of this is worth inquiring into.

Ver. 44. *All these had taken strange wives:]* There is no great number of them, in comparison with all that returned from captivity: but they seem to have been eminent persons, who would have spread the contagion, if a stop had not been put to it.

Some of them had wives by whom they had children.] There were some of them women that had brought them children, as the Vulgar translates it: which De Dieu shows is the plainest translation of these words. Here was a fair occasion to have spoken of the putting away their children as well as their wives, if that motion had been prosecuted: but nothing being here said of it, it makes me think, the observation is true which I made ver. 11 (see there).

BOOK OF NEHEMIAH.

THAT Nehemiah himself was the author of this book there can be no reasonable doubt; for he saith as much in the beginning of it, and all along relates what he did in his own person, for the rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem, and other things. He lived in the reign of Artaxerxes Mnemon, and came into Judea thirteen years after Ezra; unto whom the king of Persia gave great authority, as he had done to Ezra; God disposing his heart to have some Jews still about him in his court, for whom he had a kindness. After him, we do not find that the kings of Persia made any governor, but left things, it is probable, to the management of Jaddua the high-priest, as Corn. Bertram thinks (see *De Republ. Judaica*, p. 168, 173, 175).

CHAPTER I.

1 *Nehemiah, understanding by Hanani the misery of Jerusalem, mourneth, fasteth, and prayeth. 5 His prayer.*

I THE words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace,

2 That Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.

3 And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are

in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.

4 ¶ And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven,

5 And said, I beseech thee, O LORD God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments;

CHAP. I.

Ver. 1. *The words of Nehemiah*] Or, as Pelliganus translates it, *gesta* (for so the Hebrew word often signifies), the things which Nehemiah did.

The son of Hachaliah.] We are nowhere told who this was, nor of what tribe: Eusebius and others say of the tribe of Judah.

Chisleu.] Which answers to our November, and part of December.

In the twentieth year.] Not of Artaxerxes, but of Nehemiah's life (see ch. ii. 1).

As I was in Shushan the palace.] In the reign of Elymais, where the Persian kings kept their court in winter, and, from its pleasant and beautiful situation was called by heathen writers *Susa*, which signifies a *lily*; or (as Athenæus saith, lib. xii.) a *rose*. Stephanus Byzantinus gives this account of it: It was called Σούσα, ἀπὸ τῶν κρίνων ἃ πολλὰ ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ πεφύκει ἐκείνῃ, "from the lilies that grew in abundance in that country." Our Dr. Hyde hath a peculiar fancy, that the Persians called it *Sus*, which signifies *licorice*: but the Jews, to compliment Ahasuerus, called it in these books by this name, of a better sound, which signifies a *lily* (*Hist. Relig. Vet. Pers.* cap. 35, p. 414).

Ver. 2.] *That Hanani, one of my brethren.*] And I suppose, one of his family.

Came he, and certain men of Judah;] Came from Jerusalem to Shushan, either about business, or finding things very hard with them in Judea. He in-

quired of the condition wherein they were who returned out of Babylon into Judea, and whether Jerusalem were again become a flourishing city; as it was natural for him to do, especially being a man that loved his nation exceedingly.

Ver. 3. *In the province*] So Judea is called, Ezra v. 8 (see there).

Are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.] They answer to both parts of this inquiry, that the people were in great distress and contempt by their insolent neighbours, wherewith they were surrounded, and Jerusalem lay without any walls or gates to defend it from their injuries. He knew very well that it was burnt by Nebuchadnezzar, and the walls beaten down; therefore their meaning is, that the walls and gates lay as the Chaldeans left them after that devastation, and were not repaired, though the temple was built again.

Ver. 4. *I sat down*] Upon the ground, as the manner was, in great sorrow, and, perhaps, in ashes.

And prayed before the God of heaven.] With his face towards Jerusalem.

Ver. 5. *I beseech thee, O Lord God of heaven.*] In this style they all spake of God (as I observed, Ezra i.) after the captivity: signifying, as Conrad Pelliganus observes, his sovereign dominion over all things that are contained within the compass of the heavens; the sun, moon, and stars, angels, and men, and all creatures.

6 Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned.

7 We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses.

8 Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, *If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations:*

The great and terrible God,] He is called *great*, not with respect to those petty gods that the heathen worshipped, who had no power at all, but with respect to all potentates either in heaven or in earth; and he is called *terrible*, because he is most humble to be worshipped and revered by them all.

That keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments:] Next, he celebrates his faithfulness and truth in performing his promises to those that plainly declare they sincerely love him, by keeping his commandments. These he never fails to bless, because they are faithful to him.

Ver. 6.] A deep sense of our own unworthiness, is a good qualification for the mercy we beg of God. This Nehemiah expresses very sensibly, both here and in the next verse.

Ver. 7. *We have dealt very corruptly against thee,]* Some of the Jews expound it, "We have despised and contemned thee."

And have not kept the commandments,] But violated every one of them, to the high offence both of God and man.

Ver. 8.] Which they had seen fulfilled by the Assyrians and Chaldeans.

Ver. 9. *But if ye—keep my commandments, and do them, &c.]* As he hoped some of them now did. This promise made by Moses he hoped God would fulfil, as he had done the threatening. It is a very pious observation of Dr. Jackson (book iii. ch. 17), that Nehemiah framed this prayer to God, and directed his enterprise for the restoration of Jerusalem, by the rule of Moses, mentioned in Deut. xxx. 1—4, and he plainly found the truth of that prediction in

9 *But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there.*

10 Now these *are* thy servants, and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand.

11 O LORD, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name; and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cup-bearer.

the readiness of the king of Persia to grant his petition: which confirmed his belief of what Moses there saith, although a prophet by profession dissuaded his enterprise as likely to prove dangerous to his person (ch. vi. 10, 11).

Ver. 10.] For nothing but the overruling power of God could have moved Cyrus to dismiss this whole nation out of captivity, and let them return to their own land. Or, as some think, he beseeches his compassion to them, because they were his peculiar people, redeemed out of the Egyptian bondage by many miracles.

Ver. 11. *Let now thine ear be attentive—to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name:]* He was not alone in this petition for mercy, but there were many others, who would worship him sincerely. So the words are in the Hebrew, "who will fear," or "delight to fear, thy name."

And prosper,—thy servant this day,] He prayed night and day, as he saith, ver. 6. But this was the prayer he made on that day when he went to wait upon the king.

Grant him mercy in the sight of this man.] He means the king, unto whom he pointed as it were with his finger, when he was going to attend upon him.

For I was the king's cup-bearer.] And perhaps, as he came into his presence, he secretly made this prayer to God in his own breast. Many of the Jews, by the singular favour of God, obtained considerable dignities in their captivity, as Daniel and his companions, Zerubbabel, and others: among whom was this good man, who was advanced to this place of *cup-bearer*, when he was but a youth, as our Rainoldus hath shown, in his *Censura*, Lib. Apocryph. p. 1496.

CHAPTER II.

1 *Artaxerxes understanding the cause of Nehemiah's sadness, sendeth him with letters and commission to Jerusalem.* 9 *Nehemiah, to the grief of the enemies, cometh to Jerusalem.* 12 *He vieweth secretly the ruins of the walls.* 17 *He inciteth the Jews to build in despite of their enemies.*

1 AND it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him: and I took up the wine, and

gave it unto the king. Now I had not been *beforetime* sad in his presence.

2 Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is

CHAP. II.

Ver. 1. *In the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes]* Which was almost four months after he heard of the desolate condition wherein Jerusalem lay; in all which time, I suppose, his turn of waiting did not come: so that he wanted opportunity to speak unto the king. Or, as others will have it, he and his

friends retired all this time, and spent it in fasting and prayers.

That wine was before him:] He was at dinner or supper, and he called for wine; which was ready for him.

I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king.] After the manner that the cup-bearer was wont to do.

Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence.]

thy countenance sad, seeing thou *art* not sick? This is nothing *else* but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid,

3 And said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, *lieth* waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?

4 Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven.

5 And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it.

But always appeared cheerful and well-pleased as young men so advanced use to be. And perhaps entertained the king at table with pleasant discourse.

Ver. 2. *Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick?*] There did not appear in his countenance any sign of indisposition of body.

This is nothing else but sorrow of heart.] Some inward trouble which grieved his spirit.

Then I was very sore afraid.] Lest the king should have a suspicion that he had any treasonable design in his thoughts, and intended to poison him, as it was easy for the cup-bearer to do: or rather, he was afraid he should not prevail in his suit; the court it is likely being full of such as would oppose it.

Ver. 3. *Let the king live for ever.*] They that think he was afraid the king should be jealous of him, take the meaning to be, Let not the king fear I mean him any harm, but pray for his long life. But this was a common form of wishing the king long happiness, as appears from several places in Daniel, and hath no respect to that now mentioned.

Why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste,] Men naturally have a great love to the monuments of their ancestors, and are troubled to see the place where they are laid desolate. He did not speak a word of religion, or the divine worship (as Grotius observes), for though Artaxerxes had a great affection for the Jews, and had their God in veneration (as appears by the edict he sent to Ezra thirteen years before), yet the company about him might not be so well disposed, but had the same affection and concern for their country and relations that he had, though they did not worship the same God.

Ver. 4. *For what dost thou make request?*] This argues the king had a great kindness for him, that he so readily asked what he would have him to do for him, to ease him of his trouble.

So I prayed to the God of heaven.] In his mind he silently besought God to guide his tongue, and to bow the king's heart to grant his request.

Ver. 5. *If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight.*] It was a bold request he was going to make, and therefore, before he mentions it, he submits it to the king's will and pleasure; and acknowledges he had no merit, but depended wholly upon the king's kindness; unto whom, perhaps, he might have performed some acceptable service.

That thou wouldest send me unto Judah.] This might lead Eusebius and others to think Nehemiah was of the tribe of Judah, because his ancestors dwelt in Jerusalem, and were there buried.

That I may build it.] Build the walls of it, and make it a city again: whereas now it was but an open town.

6 And the king said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him,) For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time.

7 Moreover, I said unto the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they may convey me over till I come into Judah;

8 And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which *appertained* to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.

9 ¶ Then I came to the governors beyond the

Ver. 6. *And the king said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him,)*] Which was not usual, as historians say, but is noted here as a thing extraordinary; because it is likely she favoured him, and promoted the grant of his request.

For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return?] This is another argument of the kindness he had for him; that he would not lose his service, nor be long without it.

So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time.] He having told the king how long he desired to be absent from his duty, the king permitted him to go. How long that was, is not certain. But it is not likely it was for twelve years (mentioned ch. v. 14, xiii. 6); but rather he asked leave for a year, or perhaps for half so much: which made him so quick in despatching the building of the wall, which he finished in two-and-fifty days (ch. vi. 15). After which, it is likely, he returned to Shushan, according to his appointment: and the king sent him back as his governor for twelve years; his presence being very serviceable, or perhaps necessary there, for the better ordering of that province, to the king's content.

Ver. 7.] Give him a safe conduct, and furnish him with necessaries in his journey through their several provinces, where they had authority.

Ver. 8. *And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest.*] I suppose he means the forest of Lebanon; from whence he might be furnished with materials for his building. Here the word *pardes* signifies differently from what it doth in other places where it is used; which are but two besides this, Eccles. ii. 5, Cant. iv. 13, where it signifies a most pleasant garden, planted with all sorts of trees. And this forest, it seems, was so sweet and pleasant a place, that it deserved to be called by the same name.

That he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace] The Vulgar Latin, by the *palace*, understands the "tower of the house;" and so Pellicanus, *portas templi*, "the gates of the temple." For though the temple itself was built, yet the several courts seem not to have been walled about, nor the gates to the temple made. For, that it should be meant of the gates of the king's palace, which was near the temple, is altogether unlikely; there being no occasion to build a palace for the king of Persia; and no other king could be intended.

For the house that I shall enter into.] He desired leave to build a convenient house for himself, and for those that should be future governors.

And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.] The hand is sometimes taken (as Drusius observes) in an ill sense, for in-

river, and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me.

10 When Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel.

11 So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days.

12 ¶ And I arose in the night, I and some few men with me; neither told I any man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem; neither was there any beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon.

13 And I went out by night by the gate of the

ficting punishments (Ruth i. 13, Jer. xv. 17), for we strike others with the hand: and sometimes in a good sense, for helping and assisting others; for we extend favours to men with our hand. Thus he explains Ps. lxxxviii. 6, "cut off from thy hand;" that is, fallen from thy grace and favour. Pindar, he observes, thus uses the "hand of God" for his help and aid, Olymp. x. Θεοῦ εἰν παλάμη, "by the hand of God," which the scholiast interprets, Τῆ τοῦ Θεοῦ δυνάμει καὶ βοήθειᾳ, "by the power and help of God" (Miscellanea, cent. i. cap. 85). Thus Nehemiah is to be here understood by the divine favour, which inclined the king to do what he desired; which he calls God's good hand.

Ver. 9.] This the king did over and above what he desired: which procured him the greater respect from the governors, when they saw the care the king took for the safety of his person.

Ver. 10. When Sanballat the Horonite,] He seems to have been a petty prince of Moab; or some great man of that country. For Horonaim was an eminent city there (Isa. xv. 5; xlviii. 3, 5, 34).

And Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite,] He had been a slave of that country; but now advanced to some authority (perhaps to be a governor of a province) in these parts. The mention of these two great men shows, that the nations of Moab and Ammon were restored as well as the Jews, according to the divine oracles; and were well known, that their destruction by the people of God might be the more observable; which was in the time of the Maccabees, who subdued those nations, according to the predictions of several prophets.

It grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel.] With such authority from the king, and in such favour with him; as appeared by the letters he brought with him, and the guard that attended him, and the diligence of the several governors, through whose provinces he passed, to serve him.

Ver. 11.] In which he rested himself, and received the visits of his friends, as Ezra had done, ch. viii. 32.

Ver. 12. I arose in the night,] At the end of those days, it is likely, for he was resolved to make no delay.

Some few men with me;] In whom he most confided.

Neither told I any man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem:] He, being a courtier, had learned to hold his peace, and observe when it was a fit time to speak, and to whom. For he would not trust to every body, knowing there was much falseness in men's hearts; and secrecy was necessary to keep his designs from being betrayed.

Neither was there any beast with me, save the

valley, even before the dragon well, and to the dung port, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire.

14 Then I went on to the gate of the fountain, and to the king's pool: but there was no place for the beast that was under me to pass.

15 Then went I up in the night by the brook, and viewed the wall, and turned back, and entered by the gate of the valley, and so returned.

16 And the rulers knew not whither I went, or what I did; neither had I as yet told it to the Jews, nor to the priests, nor to the nobles, nor to the rulers, nor to the rest that did the work.

17 ¶ Then said I unto them, Ye see the dis-

beast that I rode upon.] They all went on foot, besides himself, that there might be the less noise, and no notice taken of what he did. What beast it was on which he rode, whether horse or mule, is not worth the inquiry: it is likely a mule, on which great men were wont to ride in those countries.

Ver. 13. I went out by night by the gate of the valley,] This valley is mentioned again, ch. iii. 13, but whereabouts it was, is not remembered, but only that it lay before the well called the dragon well.

Even before the dragon well,] So called, either from the silent sliding of the water (as a serpent creeps) from the fountain Siloam; or, from a dragon (as Bochartus thinks) which haunted this place since the city lay desolate; for serpents delight in such places, especially near fountains of water.

To the dung port,] Out of which dung was wont to be carried out of Jerusalem, when it was before inhabited.

And viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down,] Trying (as Conradus Pellicanus reasonably conjectures) whether the foundation was still sound, and would support a new wall laid upon it; or whether it was rotten, and must be laid again.

Ver. 14. Then I went on to the gate of the fountain,] Either of Siloe or of Gihon. The wall was not so broken down, but some part of it still remained, and the place where the gates were known (see ch. iv. 6, 7; vi. 1).

To the king's pool:] Which is generally supposed to be that which Hezekiah made (2 Chron. xxxii. 3, 30).

There was no place for the beast that was under me to pass.] Being full of rubbish, or of water.

Ver. 15. Then went I up in the night by the brook,] The same night he went by the brook Kidron.

And viewed the wall, and turned back,] He seems not to have gone round about the whole city; for there were several other gates which are not here mentioned; but having seen in what condition so many parts of the wall were, by which he judged of the rest, he turned back into the city, and entered at the same gate from whence he went out (ver. 13).

Ver. 16. The rulers knew not whither I went, or what I did,] These rulers (Conradus Pellicanus thinks) were gentiles, for they are distinguished from the Jews in the following words, and from other rulers among them; and therefore were the officers of the kings of Persia, who had hitherto obstructed the work.

Neither had I as yet told it to the Jews,] To any of the people of the Jews, for he had not so much as acquainted the priests, nor the nobles, nor any that had authority among them, with his intentions.

Nor to the rest that did the work,] Whom he intended hereafter to employ in the work: or, he told

truss that we are in, how Jerusalem *lieth waste*, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach.

18 Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for *this good work*.

19 But when Sanballat the Horonite, and To-

none of those that went with him to view the ruins what his design was.

Ver. 17. *Ye see the distress that we are in,*] Not long after he took a fit opportunity to represent to them their low condition; and to let them understand what he intended, and had power to undertake.

That we be no more a reproach.] Exposed to the scorn and insults of the people round about them.

Ver. 18. *Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words*] He acquainted them how favourable God had made the king to him, and all the discourse he had with him, and the commission which he had received from him.

So they strengthened their hands for this good work.] When they heard of the favour of God, and of the king.

Ver. 19. *But when Sanballat,—and Tobiah—and Geshem the Arabian heard it.*] It is probable

that Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard it, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, *What is this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against the king?*

20 Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem.

Geshem was the king's deputy in Arabia, as the two former were in Moab and Ammon. But others take them rather to have been all three great men among the Samaritans.

They laughed us to scorn, and despised us,] As men that made a vain attempt, which they would never be able to accomplish.

Will ye rebel against the king?] This was the most odious calumny they could invent, that they intended to set up for themselves, and be no longer the king's subjects.

Ver. 20. *The God of heaven, he will prosper us.*] We have authority for what we do from a higher power than yours.

Ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem.] Do not you trouble yourselves about this matter; who have no part, either in the labour, or the merit, or the fame of it: for you are not of our religion; and therefore may mind your own business, and not meddle with ours.

CHAPTER III.

The names and order of them that builded the wall.

I THEN Eliashib the high-priest rose up, with his brethren the priests, and they builded the sheep gate; they sanctified it, and set up the doors of it; even unto the tower of Meah they sanctified it, unto the tower of Hananeel.

CHAP. III.

Ver. 1. *Then Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brethren the priests.*] Now he shows by whom, and in what order, the wall was built: which was begun by Eliashib, the grandchild of Jeshua the high-priest (as we read ch. xii. 10): who with his brethren gave a noble example, in being the first that went about the work, and built the gate here mentioned.

They builded the sheep gate;] Which was at the south side of the city, in that part of the valley which looked towards the city of David and the temple. The sheep used to enter in here which were to be sacrificed; and therefore, I suppose, the priests undertook this part of the work as most proper for them. Dr. Lightfoot hath taken a great deal of pains to find in what quarter these gates were; to whom I refer the reader in his Chorog. Century of the Land of Israel, ch. xxvi.

They sanctified it, and set up the doors of it;] When they had completed it, they blessed it by solemn prayers, and perhaps by sacrifices; as the first-fruits of this pious work: for we do not read that any other part, but this which they built, was sanctified. Some think this was done because of the relation that this gate had to sacred uses: but it was rather such a ceremony as was imitated by other

2 And next unto him builded the men of Jericho. And next to them builded Zaccur the son of Imri.

3 But the fish gate did the sons of Hassenaah build, who also laid the beams thereof, and set

nations, when they begun their walls; which they commended to the protection of their gods. Some translate it, "they made it an excellent structure;" others, *they cleansed it* from the rubbish, and the profanation which the Babylonians had brought upon it; restoring it to its ancient splendour. But our translation, I think, is best; for it being the priest's work, it became them to bless and sanctify it.

Even unto the tower of Meah they sanctified it, unto the tower of Hananeel.] They sanctified the rest of the wall, which they built as far as the tower of Meah on one side, and the tower of Hananeel on the other. But Pellicanus thinks, that Meah is not the name of a tower, but signifies a hundred; and makes the sense to be, They not only built the sheep-gate, but a hundred cubits of the wall to a tower so far off from the gate, and also to the tower of Hananeel. This *sheep-gate* some think is the same with the Προβαταριον, mentioned John v. 2. which being the first that was built by the priests of God, and particularly commended to his blessing, had that singular gift bestowed upon the neighbouring pool, that it should miraculously heal those that first entered into it every day; and that from this time it had this virtue. Afterward they dedicated the whole wall, as we read ch. xii. 27.

Ver. 2. *Zaccur*] Whom some take for a principal person in Jericho.

up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof.

4 And next unto them repaired Meremoth the son of Urijah, the son of Koz. And next unto them repaired Meshullam the son of Berechiah, the son of Meshezabeel. And next unto them repaired Zadok the son of Baana.

5 And next unto them the Tekoites repaired; but their nobles put not their necks to the work of their Lord.

6 Moreover, the old gate repaired Jehoiada the son of Paseah, and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah; they laid the beams thereof, and set up the doors thereof, and the locks thereof, and the bars thereof.

7 And next unto them repaired Meletiah the Gibeonite, and Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon and of Mizpah, unto the throne of the governor on this side the river.

8 Next unto him repaired Uzziel the son of Harhaiah, of the goldsmiths. Next unto him also repaired Hananiah the son of *one of* the apothecaries, and they fortified Jerusalem unto the broad wall.

9 And next unto them repaired Rephaiah the son of Hur, the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem.

Ver. 3. *But the fish gate did the sons of Hase-naah build.*] This was a gate which looked towards the sea; from which fish was wont to be brought, and sold here.

Who also laid the beams thereof, &c.] They made a complete piece of work of this gate; to which they gave the last finishing; which was not done universally till after some time (see ch. vi. 1: vii. 1).

Ver. 4.] These repaired the wall till they came to the old gate; for there was no other gate till they came there.

Ver. 5. *Next unto them the Tekoites repaired;*] The people of the city of Tekoa carried on the wall with those three before named.

But their nobles put not their necks to the work of their Lord.] They were either proud, and would not stoop to this work: or they were negligent, and cared not whether it were done or not. By their Lord some understand the leader and head of the whole family, who was active in it; others Nehemiah; and some God himself, whose work this was; unto which, therefore, well-disposed persons, though ever so great, *put their necks*; that is, laboured hard, not refusing to carry burdens, &c.

Ver. 6. *Moreover the old gate repaired Jehoiada—and Meshullam*] Some think it was called "the old gate," because there were some remains of it from the times of the Jebusites, yea, of Melchisedec, by whom it was at first built.

They laid the beams thereof;] They imitated those mentioned ver. 3, as several others did (ver. 13—15).

Ver. 7.] These, and they that follow in the next verse, repaired as far as to the wall of the broad street. And among these was a great man, whose name was *Chisse* (so Pellicanus translates the word we render *the throne*), a petty prince in Syria, under the king of Persia; who, being proselyted, joined in this work.

Ver. 8.] These were two eminent persons; one among the goldsmiths, the other among the perfumers; who did not build the wall, because it was very good in this place; but only fortified it, and made it strong. Near to this was the broad street of

10 And next unto them repaired Jedaiah the son of Harumaph, even over against his house. And next unto him repaired Hattush the son of Hashabnah.

11 Malchijah the son of Harim, and Hashub the son of Pahath-moab, repaired the other piece, and the tower of the furnaces.

12 And next unto him repaired Shallum the son of Halohesh, the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem, he and his daughters.

13 The valley gate repaired Hanun, and the inhabitants of Zanoah; they built it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof, and a thousand cubits on the wall unto the dung gate.

14 But the dung gate repaired Malchijah the son of Rechab, the ruler of part of Beth-hacerem; he built it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof.

15 But the gate of the fountain repaired Shal-lun the son of Col-hozeh, the ruler of part of Mizpah; he built it, and covered it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof, and the wall of the pool of Siloah by the king's garden, and unto the stairs that go down from the city of David.

16 After him repaired Nehemiah the son of

the city, where there was a market-place for the selling of commodities.

Ver. 9.] There were two principal overseers of the work, on the two sides of the city; this, as some think, in that part which was in the tribe of Judah; and the other (ver. 12), in that which was in the tribe of Benjamin (see ch. iv. 19).

Ver. 10.] The first of these repaired "against his house;" because that lay most convenient for him to bestow his cost upon it; and thereby he consulted his own safety, together with the public good.

Ver. 11.] The words we translate "the other piece," are the *second measure*. But what the *first* was we cannot tell, and therefore are ignorant of the *second*: perhaps, half as much as the former had repaired. "The tower of the furnaces" is mentioned again, ch. xii. 38, as near to this place (see there).

Ver. 12. *And next unto him repaired Shallum—the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem,*] There was another part mentioned before, verse 9.

He and his daughters.] Who are generally thought either to be heiresses, or rich widows; who piously contributed to this work.

Ver. 13.] This was called the valley of Jehoshaphat, which lay between the city and the mount of Olives; through which the brook Kidron ran, from the north to the south. The gate which led to this was the east gate; which was repaired, together with more of the wall than any others repaired, by these persons here mentioned.

Ver. 14.] He was a great man who commanded part of a city, which had its name from the vineyards that were there, as Pellicanus probably conjectures.

Ver. 15. *Shallun*] This man also was a great benefactor, being a considerable person, as the former was.

Unto the stairs that go down from the city of David.] Which stood upon the high hill of Zion; from whence they descended by steps to Jerusalem.

Ver. 16. *Nehemiah*] Of the same name but not of the same family with the writer of this book.

Azbuk, the ruler of the half part of Beth-zur, unto *the place* over against the sepulchres of David, and to the pool that was made, and unto the house of the mighty.

17 And after him repaired the Levites, Rehun the son of Bani. Next unto him repaired Hashabiah, the ruler of the half part of Keilah, in his part.

18 After him repaired their brethren, Bavai the son of Henadad, the ruler of the half part of Keilah.

19 And next to him repaired Ezer the son of Jeshua, the ruler of Mizpah, another piece over against the going up to the armory, at the turning *of the wall*.

20 After him Baruch the son of Zabbai earnestly repaired the other piece, from the turning *of the wall* unto the door of the house of Eliashib the high-priest.

21 After him repaired Meremoth the son of Urijah, the son of Koz, another piece, from the door of the house of Eliashib even to the end of the house of Eliashib.

22 And after him repaired the priests, the men of the plain.

23 After him repaired Benjamin and Hashub, over against their house. After him repaired

Azariah the son of Maaseiah the son of Ananiah, by his house.

24 After him repaired Binnui the son of Henadad, another piece, from the house of Azariah unto the turning *of the wall*, even unto the corner.

25 Palal the son of Uzai, over against the turning *of the wall*, and the tower which lieth out from the king's high house, that *was* by the court of the prison. After him Pedaiah the son of Parosh.

26 Moreover, the Nethinims dwelt in Ophel, unto *the place* over against the water gate toward the east, and the tower that lieth out.

27 After them the Tekoites repaired another piece, over against the great tower that lieth out, even unto the wall of Ophel.

28 From above the horse gate repaired the priests, every one over against his house.

29 After them repaired Zadok the son of Immer over against his house. After him repaired also Shemaiah the son of Shechaniah, the keeper of the east gate.

30 After him repaired Hananiah the son of Shelemiah, and Hanun the sixth son of Zalaph, another piece. After him repaired Meshullam the son of Berachiah, over against his chamber.

Unto the place over against the sepulchres of David.] Where David had a sepulchre for himself, and for his successors in the kingdom.

To the pool that was made.] This is supposed to be the place mentioned 2 Kings xx. 20.

Unto the house of the mighty.] There the king's guard were lodged, who were all mighty men of valour. But we can only guess at the sense of these words.

Ver. 17. *In his part.*] In his street (as Pellicanus renders it), or with the men of his part or country where he was ruler.

Ver. 18. *Repaired their brethren.*] Other Levites. *Bavai—the ruler of the half part of Keilah.*] Of the other half of the city.

Ver. 19. *Another piece*] Or rather, "one piece;" because another is mentioned in the next verse.

Over against the going up to the armory] There is such a place mentioned in the forest (Isa. xxii. 8), which Solomon, it is likely, made; but this was in Jerusalem, then well known, and one of the most noted places in the city, because here all warlike provision was laid up.

At the turning of the wall.] At some corner, where the wall turned another way.

Ver. 20. *Earnestly repaired the other piece.*] With great zeal, as if he was ashamed the work went on so slowly; or that they should repair only one piece, and leave the other undone.

From the turning of the wall] From the place before mentioned.

Unto the door of the house of Eliashib] Who had the honour to begin this good work (ver. 1).

Ver. 21.] He carried on the work from the place where the other left off, from the entrance of the house to the end of it; which being the house of a great man, we may suppose very large.

Ver. 22. *After him repaired the priests, the men of the plain.*] Near to Jerusalem, ch. xii. 28.

Ver. 23. *After him*] There was some eminent priest who engaged others with him, as Eliashib had done his brethren (ver. 1).

Benjamin and Hashub—Azariah] These were some of the tribe of Benjamin, settled in Jerusalem, who repaired over against their own doors, as far as their houses extended.

Ver. 24.] This, in all likelihood, was another of the tribe of Benjamin, who carried on the wall from the place where Azariah ended.

Ver. 25.] There are so many *turnings of the wall* mentioned, that none can now give an account of them, nor of the "king's high house" (which some take to have been a house built for that prospect). The "court of the prison" is often mentioned in the book of the prophet Jeremiah.

Ver. 26.] Not only the priests and Levites, but the meanest persons that belonged to the house of God, inferior officers contributed to this work. And the *water-gate*, it is likely, was that at which these lower ministers brought in water for the use of the temple: near to which Ophel was, which seems to have been a great tower (2 Chron. xxvii. 3). "The tower which lay out" I can give no account of; but the next verse tells us where it was.

Ver. 27.] The people of this place are mentioned before, ver. 5, whose nobles, perhaps, who at the first withdrew themselves from this work, lent their help, now that they saw every body engaged in it.

Ver. 28.] It was called the *horse-gate*, as some think, because they went through it to water their horses at the brook Kidron: or, there was a place for the standing of horses.

Ver. 29.] It is uncertain whether he speaks of the east gate of the city, or of the temple: but whichever it was, it seems to have been a principal gate, and therefore committed to the custody of an eminent person.

Ver. 30. *After him repaired Hananiah*] Some copies read *after me*; as if Nehemiah in modesty concealed his own work, and only intimated that he did something himself: but ours is the right reading.

And Hanun the sixth son of Zalaph, another piece.] He had more zeal, it is likely, than his elder brethren, and therefore, is here particularly noted as a worthy

31 After him repaired Malchiah the goldsmith's son, unto the place of the Nethinims, and of the merchants, over against the gate Miphkad, and to the going up of the corner.

man, of less estate, but of more virtue than the rest of his family.

After him repaired Meshullam—over against his chamber.] Which he had, I suppose, in the temple.

Ver. 31.] It seems the Nethinims had a part of the city assigned them for their habitation, which was among the merchants: near to whom there was a house of correction (as some think the work *miphkad* imports), where they visited (as the Hebrews speak), that is, punished men for their faults.

Ver. 32. Between the going up of the corner unto the sheep gate.] There they began (ver. 1), and there they ended: which shows that they left not off till they had compassed the whole city with a wall, and that it was but one (as Pellicanus observes), not two or three, which was sufficient to preserve them from the incursions of their enemies.

32 And between the going up of the corner unto the sheep gate repaired the goldsmiths and the merchants.

Repaired the goldsmiths and the merchants.] Some will have these to have been their names, taken at first from their professions.

No man can think (as the same Pellicanus notes) that the names of them that repaired the walls of Jerusalem were set down so diligently, as here they are, without some rational cause for it. And the reason was, because it was a work of great virtue to love and to do honour to their country; a work of piety to restore the holy city; a religious thing to defend the true worshippers of God, that they might serve him in quietness and safety; and a courageous thing, in the midst of so many enemies, to go on with this work in a pious confidence of the power of God to support them. The names, therefore, of such persons deserved to be preserved and transmitted to future generations, as a most noble example to them.

CHAPTER IV.

1 While the enemies scoff, Nehemiah prayeth and continueth the work. 7 Understanding the wrath and secrets of the enemy, he setteth a watch. 13 He armeth the labourers, 19 and giveth military precepts.

1 BUT it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews.

2 And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned?

3 Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him,

and he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall.

4 Hear, O our God; for we are despised: and turn their reproach upon their own head, and give them for a prey in the land of captivity;

5 And cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee: for they have provoked thee to anger before the builders.

6 So built we the wall; and all the wall was

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 1. Though he boiled inwardly with anger, yet he seemed to contemn that which he feared, and scoffed at the Jews.

Ver. 2. He spake before his brethren, and the army of Samaria.] By "his brethren" are meant the commanders-in-chief in those parts; who mustered, I suppose, all their forces in Samaria, as if they intended to invade the Jews, and hinder the work they were about.

What do these feeble Jews? &c.] But first he exposes them to scorn, as a people that had no power. He heard there were so many hands at work, as if they meant to build the wall, and keep a feast, and dedicate it by sacrifice, all in one day; and so takes an occasion to laugh at their foolish diligence, and the haste they made, as if they could begin and end at once. He represents it as impossible they should repair the wall, unless they could make the broken pieces, which were also mouldered, to become whole stones again.

Ver. 3. Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him,] One of "his brethren," mentioned in the verse before going.

If a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall.] Foxes abounded in that country, especially about Jerusalem, since its devastation (Lam. v. 18). At the wall of which Tobiah jeered, saying, It was so low that those creatures might leap over it; and

so weak, that they might throw it down, or break through it. This opinion, it is likely, made them neglect to interrupt them in their building till it was too late.

Ver. 4. Hear, O our God; for we are despised: and turn their reproach upon their own head.] He beseeches God to take such notice of their scoffs, that, as they now despised his people, so they themselves might be laughed to scorn, and had in derision.

Give them for a prey in the land of captivity;] And carry them far away from the captives into some other land.

Ver. 5. Cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee:] This seems something harsh, that he should pray they might never be forgiven; but he spake by the spirit of prophecy, as David did in Ps. cix. they being of such a malicious and implacable spirit against God and his people, that he foresaw they would never be capable of his mercy, but be utterly destroyed by him. And, indeed, there were several oracles upon which this prayer was grounded, and it was confirmed by the destruction of these nations by the Maccabees and their successors.

For they have provoked thee to anger before the builders.] By scoffing at them, and discouraging them in the work, which was for God's honour, and for the safety of his people. And therefore it highly provoked him that these men should set themselves with such spite against it.

joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work.

7 ¶ But it came to pass, *that* when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, *and* that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth.

8 And conspired all of them together to come *and* to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it.

9 Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them.

10 And Judah said, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and *there is* much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall.

11 And our adversaries said, They shall not know, neither see, till we come in the midst among them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease.

12 And it came to pass, that when the Jews which dwelt by them came, they said unto us ten times, From all places whence ye shall return unto us *they will be upon you*.

13 ¶ Therefore set I in the lower places behind the wall, *and* on the higher places, I even set the

people after their families with their swords, their spears, and their bows.

14 And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, *which is* great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses.

15 And it came to pass, when our enemies heard that it was known unto us, and God had brought their counsel to nought, that we returned all of us to the wall, every one unto his work.

16 And it came to pass from that time forth, *that* the half of my servants wrought in the work, and the other half of them held both the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the habergeons; and the rulers *were* behind all the house of Judah.

17 They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, *every one* with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other *hand* held a weapon.

18 For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and *so* builded. And he that sounded the trumpet *was* by me.

19 ¶ And I said unto the nobles, and to the

Ver. 6. *All the wall was joined together unto the half thereof:*] Till it was raised to the half of its height.

For the people had a mind to work.] Were very much set upon it, and went about it cheerfully, notwithstanding their jeers and contempt.

Ver. 7. *When Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites,*] Some of these people were never mentioned before; and therefore this shows, that Sanballat endeavoured to draw all the neighbouring nations into a confederacy against the Jews.

That the breaches began to be stopped,] It seems the Chaldeans had not entirely thrown down the walls, but contented themselves to make wide breaches and gaps in them.

Then they were very wroth.] So incensed, that it moved them to take the following resolution.

Ver. 8.] The last words in the Hebrew are, "to make an error in it;" that is, to put them by the work, or to make them not know which way to turn themselves.

Ver. 9.] They committed themselves to the protection of the Almighty, whose servants they were, keeping a constant watch, that they might not be surprised, for they knew them to be very vigilant to do mischief.

Ver. 10. *The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed,*] They had wrought so long and so hard, that some of the Jews told him the labourers were quite spent.

There is much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall.] There was still a great deal of rubbish remaining, more than they were able to remove; and therefore they must desist, at least for the present, from building the wall.

Ver. 11.] They pretended also to have intelligence, that the forenamed enemies did not intend to appear with an army before Jerusalem, but to march so secretly, that they should have no notice of their approach till they saw them in the city, and put them to the sword.

Ver. 12. *When the Jews which dwell by them came,*

they said unto us ten times,] But there were some Jews who were neighbours to that people that found out their designs, and came to inform them of it a great many times: for *ten times* signify a great many in scripture (see Gen. xxi. 7).

From all places whence ye shall return unto us they will be upon you.] The words in the Hebrew are no more than these, "from all places whence they return unto us" (there being no words answering to those, "they will be upon you"); if any words be added, they should be "they informed us of our danger."

Ver. 13. *Therefore set I in the lower places behind the wall.*] Where the wall was not yet raised to its just height (ver. 6).

On the higher places,] Where it was completely finished.

With their swords, their spears,] With such weapons as they were furnished withal.

Ver. 14.] When he saw how they were disposed, he rose up and made this speech to them. All was at stake, therefore he exhorts them to be valiant, trusting in God, who was stronger than all their enemies.

Ver. 15.] When they heard their plot was discovered, and they had no hope to surprise us, but we were ready to receive them, they laid aside their designs, and we went on with ours.

Ver. 16.] But, lest their enemies should imagine they were secure, and had quite laid aside their arms, and so might resume their enterprise, he ordered, that while half of his own servants wrought upon ^{the} walls, another half should stand by with weapons, ready to put into their hands, if there were occasion. The rest, I suppose, followed this example; and the rulers stood at their backs to encourage them, and put them forward in their work.

Ver. 17.] That is, they were well appointed for both, to build and to fight. For it is a figurative speech: it not being possible for them to work if both hands had not been at liberty. And the next verse saith, their swords were by their sides.

Ver. 18.] This expounds the foregoing words.

He that sounded the trumpet was by me.] To give the alarm, if need should be, and so call them unto

rulers, and to the rest of the people, The work is great and large, and we are separated upon the wall, one far from another.

20 In what place *therefore* ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us: our God shall fight for us.

21 So we laboured in the work: and half of them held the spears from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared.

him for orders. It appears by this that he was continually with them while they wrought.

Ver. 19.] In several quarters of it, some of which were at a good distance from others.

Ver. 20.] For while they lay scattered, they could not oppose their enemies successfully; but being united with him, and under his direction and conduct, he bids them not doubt of God's protection.

Ver. 21. *Half of them held the spears*] For the use of every man, if there should be occasion.

From the rising of the morning till the stars appeared.] All the day long, from break of day till it was quite night.

Ver. 22.] It is likely, that many of them at night went into the suburbs, or neighbouring villages, and lodged there; but he would have them all lodge in Jerusalem, for the greater security of the city in the night, and that they might be more ready to work in the morning.

Ver. 23. *None of us put off our clothes.*] He, and his kindred, and family, and guard, gave them a noble

22 Likewise at the same time said I unto the people, Let every one with his servant lodge within Jerusalem, that in the night they may be a guard to us, and labour on the day.

23 So neither I, nor my brethren, nor my servants, nor the men of the guard which followed me, none of us put off our clothes, *saving that every one put them off for washing.*

example; for none of them put off their clothes when they went to bed, but lay in them, that they might be more ready to fight if any assault was made on the city.

Saving that everyone put them off for washing.] These last words are variously expounded by interpreters, and the fewest approve of our translation. Rabbi Solomon repeats the word *not*; "They put not off their clothes, no, not for washing." The Hebrew word is *water*, which some here take for "the water of the feet," as the Hebrews speak, and make the sense to be, "no, not when they made water." De Dieu quite contrary, "except only to make water." But it is a more simple sense, "Every man had his sword ready when he made water." So the word *shicho* may be rendered, as we translate it in the margin, "every man went with his weapon for water." But Grotius follows our translation, and takes these words for an exception to what went before; and the plain meaning is, they put off their garments only for those ablutions which the law required, or custom had introduced.

CHAPTER V.

1 *The Jews complain of their debt, mortgage, and causeth them to make a covenant of restitution.* 14 *He forbeareth his own allowance, and keepeth hospitality.*

1 AND there was a great cry of the people and of their wives against their brethren the Jews.

2 For there were that said, We, our sons, and our daughters, are many: therefore we take up corn *for them*, that we may eat, and live.

3 *Some* also there were that said, We have

bondage. 6 *Nehemiah rebuketh the usurers, and* 14 *He forbeareth his own allowance, and keepeth* mortgaged our lands, vineyards, and houses, that we might buy corn, because of the dearth.

4 There were also that said, We have borrowed money for the king's tribute, *and that upon our lands and vineyards.*

5 Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children: and lo, we

CHAP. V.

Ver. 1.] At this time there was a grievous complaint of the poor against their rich brethren: for though they were cured of their idolatry by their captivity, yet they were not cured of their other sins, but loved strange women, as we read before in the book of Ezra; and were so covetous, that they oppressed the poor and needy; and this at a time when their enemies threatened the destruction of them all. But this was the more heinous crime, because the twentieth of Artaxerxes, wherein this was done, began about the end of a sabbatic year (as Dr. Alix observes), which raised the cry of the poor to a greater height against their creditors, who exacted their debts of them contrary to the law (Deut. xv. 3), which was read to them publicly in such a year (Deut. xxxi. 12). For it was of such moment, that it moved Nehemiah to make the Jews take a solemn oath that they would observe this law, and release all the debts that were owing to them in this year (ch. x. of this book, ver. 31).

Ver. 2. *We, our sons, and our daughters are many.*] They had numerous families.

Therefore we take up corn for them, that we may eat, and live.] They had no way to keep them from starving, but by buying corn for them at unreasonable rates; which the rich demanded when they saw them in such necessity, that they must pay what they asked or die.

Ver. 3.] There had been a great scarcity for want of rain; which God denied, because they minded building their own houses more than his, as we read Hag. i. 9—11. Now the effects of such droughts caused among the people great scarcity of provisions, in which the rich had no compassion on their poor brethren, but forced them to sell all they had for bread.

Ver. 4.] They do not complain that they were constrained to borrow money, but that they could not have it without taking it upon usury, as it appears from ver. 7, which was contrary to the law of God (Exod. xxii. 25, &c.); otherwise they could not have paid their tribute to the king of Persia, who laid it upon all his subjects every where (Ezra iv. 13; vii. 24).

Ver. 5. *Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren.*] They represent very pathetically that there was no difference between them and their brethren, but

bring into bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants, and some of our daughters are brought unto bondage *already*, neither is it in our power to *redeem them*; for other men have our lands and vineyards.

6 ¶ And I was very angry when I heard their cry, and these words.

7 Then I consulted with myself, and I rebuked the nobles, and the rulers, and said unto them, Ye exact usury, every one of his brother. And I set a great assembly against them:

8 And I said unto them, We, after our ability, have redeemed our brethren the Jews, which were sold unto the heathen; and will ye even

that they were poor, and the other rich; for they were all Jews of the same stock, from the same original, all alike circumcised: so that by nature, and by the favour of God, they were every way the same, and therefore ought to enjoy the same freedom that they and their children did.

We bring into bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants.] In case of great necessity this was lawful, Exod. xxi. 7. But they were very void of compassion, who forced their brethren to do a thing so much against nature. Some of the tender sex, who were least able to endure hardship, they had been already forced to part withal.

Neither is it in our power to redeem them;] Their condition was very lamentable, for none would lend them money freely; and to pay their usury, they were forced to sell their children, whom they had not power to redeem, because their lands were mortgaged to those oppressors: so that they were in a worse condition than when they were in Babylon, being not in so much danger to be devoured by their cruel neighbours (who sought their destruction), as by their barbarous friends and neighbours.

Ver. 6.] It could not but move his indignation, to hear them complain one of another; but much more when he heard the reason.

Ver. 7. Then I consulted with myself.] It is not safe to do any thing in a fit of anger; but coolly to consider and deliberate what is fit to be done.

I rebuked the nobles and the rulers,] Whom he did not fear to reprove severely, when he found them in fault.

Ye exact usury, every one of his brother.] And that a very heavy one; such as was used among the heathen, called *centesima*, the "hundredth part" (Ver. 11), which was twelve per cent.

I set a great assembly against them.] That he might put them to the greater shame. For this great assembly I take to be the whole body of the people, with their judges, as Bertram observes, De Repub. Jud. p. 171 (see Ezra x. 8, 14).

Ver. 8. We after our ability] Either he speaks of himself in the plural number, as great men are wont to do; or he means, he, with Ezra, and such like lovers of their country, had done what follows.

Have redeemed our brethren the Jews, which were sold unto the heathen;] Had done their utmost to deliver the Jews out of the captivity of Babylon; whereby they were restored both to their own country, and to their liberty. And perhaps they had with their own money procured the freedom of such as were slaves to some of the Babylonians; who would not part with them, when they desired to go to Jerusalem, unless they were paid the price of them, being their own proper goods.

Will ye even sell your brethren?] For that they might expect, since their parents could not redeem them.

sell your brethren? or shall they be sold unto us? Then held they their peace, and found nothing to answer.

9 Also I said, It is not good that ye do: ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God, because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies?

10 I likewise, and my brethren, and my servants, might exact of them money and corn: I pray you, let us leave off this usury.

11 Restore, I pray you, to them, even this day, their lands, their vineyards their olive-yards, and their houses, also the hundredth part of the money, and of the corn, the wine, and the oil, that ye exact of them.

Or shall they be sold unto us? Must I redeem them out of your hands, as I have helped to redeem some out of Babylon!

Then held they their peace.] There was such an express law of God against them (Deut. xxiii. 19), that they had nothing to reply: and therefore were silent because they could neither deny the fact, nor were able to justify it.

Ver. 9. It is not good that ye do.] This encouraged him to proceed in his rephension; and to tell them that they had committed a great sin. For that is the meaning of "it is not good:" a soft form of speech, used when they mean it is very bad; Prov. xvi. 29, and many other places.

Ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God,] Being so lately delivered by him from oppression, and having so many enemies about them, to observe what they did.

Because of the reproach of the heathen] Who might justly upbraid them with inhumanity; and thereupon reproach their religion.

Ver. 10. I likewise, and my brethren, and my servants, might exact of them money and corn:] As a reward of their care and diligence in the public service.

I pray you, let us leave off this usury.] But what then would become of the poor people, who were too much oppressed already? And therefore he beseeches them to leave off this usury; seeing he and his rather waived their own right, than demanded any thing for their labour and toil in the discharge of their offices.

Ver. 11. Restore, — their lands, &c.] Though they had lent money upon the security of those lands, &c. yet, since they were the possessions of the poor, who were reduced to great straits, and could not pay them, he beseeches them to restore them, and that without delay.

Also the hundredth part of the money.] The hundredth part was an usury then practised in those countries, as afterward among the Romans; which was the hundredth part of what was lent every month; so that every year they paid the eighth part of the principal: thus it is commonly said. But Salmastius hath observed, that in the eastern countries there were never any laws to determine what interest should be taken for money lent for a day, or a week, or a month, or a year (for there were all these sorts of usury), but every one was left to demand what he pleased; and according to what was agreed they paid for what was borrowed; therefore we cannot certainly tell whether this was heavy or light usury. But among the Greeks and Romans there was a measure set (as he notes in his book De Fœnore Trapezitico), and Ἐκατοστή, the hundredth part, was among the Greeks the lowest usury; though it was more or less in several ages, as he there shows, and in his book De Modis Usurarum, where he notes the difference between the Greeks and Romans in this matter, cap. vi. p. 230, &c.

Ver. 12.] They readily consented to restore their

12 Then said they, We will restore *them*, and will require nothing of them; so will we do as thou sayest. Then I called the priests, and took an oath of them, that they should do according to this promise.

13 Also I shook my lap, and said, So God shake out every man from his house, and from his labour, that performeth not this promise, even thus be he shaken out, and emptied. And all the congregation said, Amen, and praised the LORD. And the people did according to this promise.

14 ¶ Moreover, from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year even unto the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes the king, *that is*, twelve years, I and my brethren have not eaten the bread of the governor.

15 But the former governors that *had been* before me were chargeable unto the people, and

lands, vineyards, and houses, and demand no interest for the money. They so entirely agreed to what he desired, that it made a kind of jubilee among the people; for, no doubt, there was great joy when this was done. While they were in this good mind he called the priests and made them swear in their presence, who were witness to it, that they would keep their word.

Ver. 13.] He prayed God that they might lose all they had, who did not make good their promise; and predicted their poverty by an external sign, as the manner of the prophets was to do. For, holding up the skirts of his garment, and then scattering them abroad, he represented how God would cast them out of their possessions, and the fruit of their labours, who did not observe this oath. God so wrought upon the people's hearts, that even they who had been guilty of taking usury, consented to this imprecation, and wished the same mischief to themselves, if they did not do as he required. And, which was more, they praised God, who had given them such a governor, and put into them this good mind, to submit unto him.

The people did according to this promise.] Made an immediate restitution of what had been mortgaged to them, and released them of their obligation for money.

Ver. 14. *From the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah;—that is, twelve years.*] All which time he was not in Judea; but he ordered him, who was his deputy, in his absence, to do as he did.

I and my brethren] He and his domestics; or those whom, as I said, he deputed in his room.

Have not eaten the bread of the governor.] Taken the allowances which were made to the governors, appointed by the kings of Persia, to provide them a table. Which it was but reasonable they should have: that they who did the public business should be maintained at the public charge. But he would not do that which was lawful, when he saw it would be burdensome to his countrymen, and therefore lived upon his own estate which he had in Judea, and upon the salary which he had as cup-bearer to the king of Persia; in whose service, it is likely, he had enriched himself before he came to Jerusalem.

Ver. 15. *But the former governors*] Who these were he doth not say, but spares their names, it being sufficient to declare he did not imitate them, whose ever they were. Nor doth he relate how much bread and wine they exacted, but only that they had besides forty shekels of silver every day, I suppose, to make provision of other things for their table. But from these words Scaliger concludes that before Nehemiah

had taken of them bread and wine, beside forty shekels of silver; yea, even their servants bare rule over the people: but so did not I, because of the fear of God.

16 Yea, also, I continued in the work of this wall, neither bought we any land: and all my servants were gathered thither unto the work.

17 Moreover, *there were* at my table an hundred and fifty of the Jews and rulers, beside those that came unto us from among the heathen that *are* about us.

18 Now *that* which was prepared for me daily was one ox and six choice sheep; also fowls were prepared for me, and once in ten days store of all sorts of wine: yet for all this required not I the bread of the governor, because the bondage was heavy upon this people.

19 Think upon me, my God, for good, *according* to all that I have done for this people.

and Ezra there had been other governors placed over them by the kings of Persia. And if we may believe the Jewish Annals, compiled by the author of Seder Olam Zuta, the first governor, Zerubbabel, returning from Jerusalem to Babylon, died there: and was succeeded in his government of Judea by his son Meshullam, and after him by his grandson Chanaiah.

Yea, even their servants bare rule over the people.] They connived at the exactions of their servants, who demanded what they pleased.

But so did not I, because of the fear of God.] It was not vain-glory that made him thus generous, but his love to God, and to his country; for he loved religion better than riches; and took not his own due, that the people might serve God more cheerfully.

Ver. 16. *Yea also I continued in the work of this wall.*] And all this while he took as much pains as any of them, in building the wall of Jerusalem.

Neither bought we any land.] Which they might have done of the poor at an easy price, if they had desired wealth: but they would not make any advantage to themselves of other men's necessities.

All my servants were gathered thither unto the work.] They were constantly employed also in the same work, and received no pay for their labour, though it could not be done without neglect of his private business.

Ver. 17.] This was the greater expense, because they were not inferior people that were entertained at his table, but persons of quality among the Jews and strangers who came about business, and perhaps, brought him intelligence concerning the state of the neighbouring heathen, and of their designs.

Ver. 18. *That which was prepared for me daily was one ox and six choice sheep, &c.*] This shows that he kept a noble house, as we speak; and indeed, it was very becoming a great man to entertain great persons, both of his own country and strangers, with magnificence.

The bondage was heavy upon this people.] They could not without great hardship maintain themselves.

Ver. 19.] He expected his reward only from God, who he hoped would show him the same kindness that he had done for his people. There is no reason to think he speaks too much of himself, and his own worthy acts; for it was no more than was necessary in such a state of things, that posterity might be furnished with an excellent example of extraordinary virtue; and no more than St. Paul was constrained to speak of himself in his Epistle to the Corinthians; of whom he would take nothing, that he might stop the mouths of false apostles, and covetous people (see ch. xiii. 22).

CHAPTER VI.

1 *Sanballat practiseth by craft, by rumours, by hired prophecies, to terrify Nehemiah.* 15 *The work is finished to the terror of the enemies.* 17 *Secret intelligence passeth between the enemies and the nobles of Judah.*

1 Now it came to pass, when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and Geshem the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that I had builded the wall, and that there was no breach left therein, (though at that time I had not set up the doors upon the gates);

2 That Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me, saying, Come, let us meet together in *some one* of the villages in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do me mischief.

3 And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?

4 Yet they sent unto me four times after this sort; and I answered them after the same manner.

5 Then sent Sanballat his servant unto me in like manner the fifth time with an open letter in his hand;

6 Wherein *was* written, It is reported among

the heathen, and Gashmu saith it, that thou and the Jews think to rebel: for which cause thou buildest the wall, that thou mayest be their king, according to these words.

7 And thou hast also appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem, saying, *There is a king in Judah:* and now shall it be reported to the king according to these words. Come now therefore, and let us take counsel together.

8 Then I sent unto him, saying, There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart.

9 For they all made us afraid, saying, Their hands shall be weakened from the work, that it be not done. Now therefore, *O God,* strengthen my hands.

10 Afterward I came unto the house of She-maiah the son of Delaiah the son of Mehetabeel, who *was* shut up; and he said, Let us meet to-

CHAP. VI.

Ver. 1. *When Sanballat, and Tobiah, &c.*] Mentioned ch. iv. 7.

Though at that time I had not set up the doors upon the gates;] Not upon all of them, though some had been set up at the charge of particular persons (ch. iii. 3, 6, 13, &c.)

Ver. 2. *Come, let us meet together*] Either to consult about the common good of their several provinces wherein they governed (of which perhaps they pretended they were to give an account to their master), or to establish a friendship and good correspondence one with another, or some such purpose.

In the plain of Ono.] A place in the tribe of Benjamin, ch. xi. 25; 2 Chron. viii. 12 (see there).

But they thought to do me mischief.] He would not trust them, suspecting they intended to kill him; of which, perhaps, he had received some private intelligence.

Ver. 3.] He showed so much respect to them, as not to return an answer by those whom they sent to him, but despatched a messenger of his own to them. He did not know any business they could have with him of such great concernment, as that which he had in hand; and therefore he would not put a stop to it to confer with them. This was one reason, but not the only one for his refusal.

Ver. 4.] They were restlessly bent upon his destruction, and therefore importuned him often to give them a meeting. For they thought, I suppose, if they did not take this opportunity to overthrow what he had done, before he set up the doors upon the gates, they should never be able to enter the city afterward. He still persisted constantly to give no other answer; whereby they might understand he was resolved to finish the work.

Ver. 5.] There is no mention of Tobiah in all the foregoing negotiation, and now Geshem is left out; and Sanballat alone sent him a message, pretending, it is likely, special respect and kindness unto him, in informing him what was laid to his charge. Certain it is, he was the great contriver and manager of all the mischief intended against him. Before the

message was delivered by word of mouth, but now by letter; yet open that every one might see of what he was accused.

Ver. 6. *It is reported among the heathen.*] The report was spread among the nations thereabout.

Gashmu] The same, I suppose, with Geshem, mentioned ver. 1.

Saith it,] Undertakes to prove it.

That thou mayest be their king, according to these words.] That he might establish his authority, and reign over them according to the common report.

Ver. 7. *Thou hast also appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem.*] This was cunningly suggested, that he might not think there was any prophet on his side: as indeed there was, for he had corrupted She-maiah, as it presently follows.

Come now therefore, and let us take counsel together.] How they should wipe off this suspicion, if it should be put into the king's mind, as he told him it certainly would.

Ver. 8. *Then I sent unto him.*] In an open letter, I suppose, that every body might see it.

There are no such things done] Nothing done to give a jealousy of a rebellion; nor any prophet that encouraged it.

But thou feignest them] He had invented this report to defame Nehemiah, without any ground for it.

Ver. 9.] Their business was to contrive false stories, to put the Jews in fear; being confident they would be discouraged by such reports, as some were. Therefore he beseeches God to strengthen him that he might support others.

Ver. 10. *I came unto the house of Shemaiah*] Who was a prophet (it appears from ver. 12), whom, it is likely, Nehemiah took to be his friend, and therefore went to consult and advise with him at his house.

Who was shut up;] Out of fear he pretended; and by this action would have had Nehemiah to understand what he himself should do for his own security: for it was the manner of the prophets to instruct the people by actions and signs, as well as by words. But others think he "shut himself up," that is, retired, as a holy man, from the affairs of the world, to spend his time in meditation and prayer in some of

gether in the house of God, within the temple, and let us shut the doors of the temple; for they will come to slay thee; yea, in the night will they come to slay thee.

11 And I said, Should such a man as I flee? and who *is there*, that, *being as I am*, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in.

12 And, lo, I perceived that God had not sent him; but that he pronounced this prophecy against me: for Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him.

13 Therefore *was* he hired, that I should be afraid, and do so, and sin, and *that* they might have *matter* for an evil report, that they might reproach me.

the chambers of the temple; whither he advised Nehemiah to retire, and to take sanctuary there from the great dangers to which he was exposed.

Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, &c.] By "the temple" he means the outward court of it, where he had a chamber; whither, as a friend in whom Nehemiah confided, he prayed him to come, that they might meet and consult together how to preserve Jerusalem, and where he might be safe himself from his enemies; who could not easily enter in there, it being a strong place, and besides, privileged by its holiness, unto which even heathens, perhaps, might have such regard as not to violate it; whereas the gates of Jerusalem were not yet in such a condition as to keep them out. By this means he hoped Nehemiah would become contemptible, when the people saw his cowardice; and the Jews would be disheartened, as much as their enemies took courage. And, perhaps, he intended, with some priests, his confederates, to seize on him, and deliver him into the hands of Sanballat; at least, it would give some countenance to the calumny he had raised, of his affecting to be king; because he fled from his work, and durst not stand upon his integrity. Shemaiah also might think hereby to draw him in to offend God, by coming into that court where the priests only might come, and where it is supposed this prophet now was.

Yea, in the night will they come to slay thee.] I take the meaning to be, Even this very night will they fall upon thee; therefore consult thy safety, by fleeing hither.

Ver. 11. *Should such a man as I flee?*] Who am a governor, and ought to give a good example of undaunted courage; and have professed to put great confidence in God; and hitherto been marvellously preserved by him, and assisted in his undertaking.

I will not go in.] There might have been colour for this advice, if Jerusalem had been an open place, without any walls, without armed men in it, or that had no courage to defend it: but they had appeared on the walls to defend it (ch. iv. 13), and being so well appointed, he was resolved still to rely on God, and on their fidelity and valour; and not be so base as to desert them, till they deserted him; which they might well do, if they saw him flee from them for fear.

Ver. 12. *He pronounced this prophecy against me:*] Not to secure him, but to betray him; as he plainly discovered in a little time: which showed there was no such danger, as this false prophet pretended.

For Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him.] Tobiah was not idle all this time, but it is likely invented this plot, to bribe this man to be a false prophet:

14 My God, think thou upon Tobiah and Sanballat according to these their works, and on the prophetess Noadiah, and the rest of the prophets, that would have put me in fear.

15 ¶ So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days.

16 And it came to pass, that when all our enemies heard *thereof*, and all the heathen that *were* about us saw *these things*, they were much cast down in their own eyes: for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God.

17 ¶ Moreover in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters unto Tobiah, and the letters of Tobiah came unto them.

18 For *there were* many in Judah sworn unto

which, perhaps, was discovered to Nehemiah by some undoubted prophets of God, who were on their side.

Ver. 13. *That I should be afraid, and do so, and sin.*] That they might draw him in to offend God, by distrusting his care of him; and dishonour himself by base cowardice.

That they might reproach me.] As a man guilty of what they accused him.

Ver. 14. *My God, think thou upon Tobiah and Sanballat*] Their calumnies, and malicious contrivances, and foul practices, which he hoped God would take a time to punish. The wicked temper of this people is very wonderful, who had already got false prophets among them, both men and women, whom Nehemiah did not think fit as a judge to punish, but left them to the judgment of God. Nor do we read that he informed the king of Persia of the foul dealings of these men (which certainly he would have punished), but prayed God to reward them after their deeds: for he would have all know that he depended wholly upon the power of God to enable him to perfect this work, and not upon the help of human force.

Ver. 15.] Which may seem incredible to those who do not reflect what a great number of people (who were not hired, but voluntarily) engaged in this work, and how full they were of zeal, and that the foundation of the wall was not razed by the Chaldeans; nay, there were some pieces of it standing, only great gaps being made in it. And other histories acquaint us with the like diligence; particularly Arrianus and Curtius relate, that Alexander the Great built the walls of Alexandria (which was seven miles in compass) in the space of twenty days.

Ver. 16. *When all our enemies heard thereof,*] When they heard how all the designs of their enemies were disappointed, and saw Jerusalem was built, and flourished.

They perceived that this work was wrought of our God.] Being finished in so short a time, beyond all expectation, and in the midst of great fears and sad apprehension.

Ver. 17.] To add to all the other wickedness of this nation, there were false brethren among their great men, who held a correspondence with their most pestilent enemies against Nehemiah.

Ver. 18. *For there were many in Judah sworn unto him,*] Against the interest of their country, and of their religion; to such a height of impiety were many arrived.

Because he was the son in law of Shechoniah the son of Arah;] So dangerous were marriages with foreigners, which Ezra therefore had great reasons to make void; for by these alliances they were engaged in wicked designs against their country.

Ver. 19. *They reported his good deeds before me,*] To such an impudence were they arrived, that they

him, because he *was* the son-in-law of Shech-niah the son of Arab: and his son Johanan had taken the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah.

highly commended him as a very worthy man in the presence of Nehemiah, who knew so much of his wickedness.

And uttered my words to him.] Or informed him of all that Nehemiah did. For so we translate in the margin, *matters, not words.*

CHAPTER VII.

1 *Nehemiah committeth the charge of Jerusalem to Hanani and Hananiah.* 5 *A register of the genealogy of them which came at the first out of Babylon, 9 of the people, 39 of the priests, 43 of the Levites, 46 of the Nethinims, 57 of Solomon's servants, 63 and of the priests which could not find their pedigree.* 66 *The whole number of them, with their substance.* 70 *Their oblations.*

1 Now it came to pass, when the wall was built, and I had set up the doors, and the porters and the singers and the Levites were appointed,

2 That I gave my brother Hanani, and Hananiah the ruler of the palace, charge over Jerusalem: for he *was* a faithful man, and feared God above many:

3 And I said unto them, Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun be hot; and while they stand by, let them shut the doors, and bar them: and appoint watches of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, every one in his watch, and every one *to be* over against his house.

7 Now the city *was* large and great: but the

people *were* few therein, and the houses *were* not builded.

5 ¶ And my God put into mine heart to gather together the nobles, and the rulers, and the people, that they might be reckoned by genealogy: and I found a register of the genealogy of them which came up at the first, and found written therein,

6 These *are* the children of the province, that went up out of the captivity, of those that had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away, and came again to Jerusalem and to Judah, every one unto his city;

7 Who came with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehe-

CHAP. VII.

Ver. 1.] The porters were to attend the gates; but what the Levites and the singers had to do there is not easily resolved; perhaps they were to be ready against the time that the wall should be dedicated, which is mentioned ch. xii.

Ver. 2. *That I gave my brother Hanani,]* Who was the man that came from Jerusalem to Shushan, to acquaint him with the deplorable condition of the city, and implore his help (ch. i. 2).

Hananiah the ruler of the palace,] So the house where Nehemiah dwelt is called, because he was governor for the king, and a kind of viceroy, who did all the king's business, and here gave audience to all people, as the king was wont to do in his palace. He made Hanani, I suppose, principal governor over Jerusalem, and Hananiah was his assistant and deputy.

For he was a faithful man, and feared God above many.] He saith nothing of Hanani, who was well known to be zealous for God and for his country, by the journey he took to Shushan (which I before mentioned); but he gives the reason why he joined Hananiah with him, because he knew he might be trusted, being a man of conscience, who acted out of religious principles, which a great many in those days did not. The reason why he took this care for the city, it is likely, was, because he himself was returning to Shushan, to give the king an account of the state of affairs in Judea; and therefore placed such men in Jerusalem as he knew would faithfully secure it in his absence.

Ver. 3. *Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun be hot;]* Till it had been risen a good

while, that they might see clearly round about them, and that all the people might be ready in case of any danger. And at night he charges them to stand by and see the gates shut and barred in their presence. Or, as some expound it, they should not suffer any man to stir till they shut the gates, lest through carelessness they should chance to be left open. So De Dieu renders the words, "While the standers-by shut the gates, hold them fast;" that is, he gave them power to keep all there present, and not let them go away till this was done. The gates being shut, he charges them to set the watch in proper places; every one keeping watch in that part which was next to his own house.

Ver. 4. *The city was large and great:]* And therefore required many watches.

But the people were few therein,] In comparison with the bigness of the city.

The houses were not builded.] That is, not all that had been in former times, but a great deal of ground still lay waste.

Ver. 5. *My God put into mine heart to gather together the nobles,]* Whatsoever good motion came into his mind he ascribed it to God, and not to his own prudent consideration, though that was employed in this business. For without God we can do nothing, who ought therefore to be in all our thoughts.

That they might be reckoned by genealogy,] That, by knowing of what family they were, and where they formerly dwelt, he might recall those of them whose habitations had heretofore been in Jerusalem, to come and settle there again, now that the wall was built, and they might dwell there in safety.

I found a register] The words following.

Ver. 6.] These are the very words which we read

miah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum, Baanah. The number *I say*, of the men of the people of Israel *was this*;

8 The children of Parosh, two thousand an hundred seventy and two.

9 The children of Shephatiah, three hundred seventy and two.

10 The children of Arah, six hundred fifty and two.

11 The children of Pahath-moab, of the children of Jeshua and Joab, two thousand and eight hundred and eighteen.

12 The children of Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four.

13 The children of Zattu, eight hundred forty and five.

14 The children of Zaccai, seven hundred and threescore.

15 The children of Binnui, six hundred forty and eight.

16 The children of Bebai, six hundred twenty and eight.

17 The children of Azgad, two thousand three hundred twenty and two.

18 The children of Adonikam, six hundred threescore and seven.

19 The children of Bigvai, two thousand threescore and seven.

20 The children of Adin, six hundred fifty and five.

21 The children of Ater of Hezekiah, ninety and eight.

22 The children of Hashum, three hundred twenty and eight.

23 The children of Bezai, three hundred twenty and four.

24 The children of Hariph, an hundred and twelve.

25 The children of Gibeon, ninety and five.

26 The men of Beth-Jehem and Netophah, an hundred fourscore and eight.

27 The men of Anathoth, an hundred twenty and eight.

28 The men of Beth-azmaveth, forty and two.

29 The men of Kirjath-jearim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, seven hundred forty and three.

30 The men of Ramah and Gaba, six hundred twenty and one.

31 The men of Michmas, an hundred and twenty and two.

32 The men of Beth-el and Ai, an hundred twenty and three.

33 The men of the other Nebo, fifty and two.

34 The children of the other Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four.

35 The children of Harim, three hundred and twenty.

36 The children of Jericho, three hundred forty and five.

37 The children of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, seven hundred twenty and one.

38 The children of Senaah, three thousand nine hundred and thirty.

39 ¶ The priests: the children of Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua, nine hundred seventy and three.

40 The children of Immer, a thousand fifty and two.

41 The children of Pashur, a thousand two hundred forty and seven.

42 The children of Harim, a thousand and seventeen.

43 ¶ The Levites: the children of Jeshua, of Kadmiel, and of the children of Hodevah, seventy and four.

44 ¶ The singers: the children of Asaph, an hundred forty and eight.

45 ¶ The porters: the children of Shallum, the children of Ater, the children of Talmon, the children of Akkub, the children of Hatita, the children of Shobai, an hundred thirty and eight.

46 ¶ The Nethinims: the children of Ziha, the children of Hashupha, the children of Tabbaoth,

47 The children of Keros, the children of Sia, the children of Padon,

48 The children of Lebana, the children of Hagaba, the children of Shalmai,

49 The children of Hanan, the children of Giddel, the children of Gahar,

50 The children of Resiah, the children of Rezin, the children of Nekoda,

51 The children of Gazzam, the children of Uzza, the children of Phaseah,

52 The children of Besai, the children of Meunim, the children of Nephishesim,

53 The children of Bakkub, the children of Hakupha, the children of Harhur,

54 The children of Bazlith, the children of Mehida, the children of Harsha,

55 The children of Barkos, the children of Sisera, the children of Tamah,

56 The children of Nezhiah, the children of Hatipha.

57 ¶ The children of Solomon's servants: the children of Sotai, the children of Sophereth, the children of Perida,

in the second chapter of Ezra, ver. 1, &c. from whence he seems to have transcribed them, and added something to them.

Ver. 7.] He that is here called Azariah, is called there Seraiah; and there are some other small differences in the name, but all the same, only here Nahamani is added.

Ver. 8.] I shall not transcribe all this genealogy, concerning which I have nothing to observe, but that in some few things it differs from that in Ezra (see my

annotations on Ezra ii. 5). There are also some families named here which are not in Ezra, as in ver. 22, 48—52, which are all omitted in Ezra. For it must be considered, that one of these accounts was taken by Ezra in Babylon, the other by Nehemiah in Judea: and therefore it is no wonder that a greater number are sometimes mentioned in Nehemiah than in Ezra; for in the first account that was taken of them, many were ignorant of their genealogy; but before the last, the book of their genealogy was found: and yet in

58 The children of Jaala, the children of Dardon, the children of Giddel,

59 The children of Shephathiah, the children of Hattil, the children of Pochereth of Zebaim, the children of Amon.

60 All the Nethinims, and the children of Solomon's servants, were three hundred ninety and two.

61 And these were they which went up also from Tel-melah, Tel-haresha, Cherub, Addon, and Immer; but they could not show their father's house, nor their seed, whether they were of Israel.

62 The children of Delaiah, the children of Tobiah, the children of Nekoda, six hundred forty and two.

63 ¶ And of the priests: the children of Habaiah, the children of Koz, the children of Barzillai, which took one of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite to wife, and was called after their name.

64 These sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but it was not found: therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood.

65 And the Tirshatha said unto them, that they should not eat of the most holy things, till there stood up a priest with Urim and Thummim.

66 ¶ The whole congregation together was

forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore;

67 Beside their man-servants and their maid-servants, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred thirty and seven: and they had two hundred forty and five singing men and singing women.

68 Their horses, seven hundred thirty and six: their mules, two hundred forty and five.

69 Their camels, four hundred thirty and five; six thousand seven hundred and twenty asses.

70 ¶ And some of the chief of the fathers gave unto the work. The Tirshatha gave to the treasure a thousand drams of gold, fifty basons, five hundred and thirty priests' garments.

71 And some of the chief of the fathers gave to the treasure of the work twenty thousand drams of gold, and two thousand and two hundred pounds of silver.

72 And that which the rest of the people gave was twenty thousand drams of gold, and two thousand pounds of silver, and threescore and seven priests' garments.

73 So the priests, and the Levites, and the porters, and the singers, and some of the people, and the Nethinims, and all Israel, dwelt in their cities; and when the seventh month came, the children of Israel were in their cities.

the whole number the two accounts agree, though in the particular sums they vary. Compare verse 66, of this chapter with the second of Ezra, verse 64, of which Dr. Lightfoot gives this account in his Chronicle of the Times of the Old Testament, page 146. "The matter is to be conceived and apprehended thus: That Nehemiah found that list and catalogue of those that came up in the first of Cyrus, as it was taken then; and that he called over the names of the families as they lay in order there: he observed the order of that list in calling and listing them; but he took the number of them, as they were now when he numbered them. And some families were now more in number than they were when that was first made, and some were less; and some that were in that list, were not to be found now: for some had more of the same stock come out of Babel since the first numbering; and some that had come up at first, and were then numbered, were now gone back." And so he observed, by comparing that list and the present number, how the plantation in Judea had gone forward or backward, increased or decayed, since the first return.

Ver. 65.] It is the opinion of Jacobus Capellus, that Zerubbabel is here meant by the Tirshatha (Ezra ii. 63). Whosoever he was, he expresses his hope that God might in time restore the *urim* and *thummim* (as he had done the nation), and so give answer about obscure and difficult matters, as he had done in former ages. But till then these priests were not admitted to partake of the most holy things, because

it did not appear by good proof that they were of the family of the priests; and *not to appear, and not to be*, are the same thing in law. But the Talmudists, as the same person observes, interpret these words as if it had been said, "Till the dead rise, or till the Messiah come." For after the first temple was destroyed, "the cities of the Levites, with their suburbs, were wanting, and so were *urim* and *thummim*, and the kings of the house of Judah" (see his *Historia Exot. et Saera*, ad A. M. 3557).

Ver. 70—72.] The offering mentioned in these three verses was made by different persons from those who are said to have been offered in Ezra ii. 68, 69, and therefore no wonder the gold and silver, and other things offered were different.

Ver. 73.] These are the very same words with those in the second chapter of Ezra, and the last verse; and in both places it is said *all Israel* dwelt in their cities. Which, though it be chiefly to be understood of Judah and Benjamin, yet it is evident some of the ten tribes did return with them, according to those prophecies, Jer. l. 4: Zech. viii. 13. And, indeed, there were many of the Israelites that did live in the tribe of Judah before the captivity (2 Chron. x. 17: xi. 16). When all the business before named was over, the people were sent back, by Nehemiah's direction, to their several cities unto which they belonged: where they remained till the seventh month came; which was five days after the wall was finished, on the twenty-fifth day of the sixth month (ch. vi. 15).

CHAPTER VIII.

1 *The religious manner of reading and hearing the law.* 9 *They comfort the people.* 13 *The forwardness of them to hear and be instructed.* 16 *They keep the feast of tabernacles.*

1 AND all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that *was* before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses which the LORD had commanded to Israel.

2 And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month.

3 And he read therein before the street that *was* before the water-gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people *were attentive* unto the book of the law.

4 And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of

wood, which they had made for the purpose; and beside him stood Mattithiah, and Shema, and Anaiah, and Urijah, and Hilkiah, and Maaseiah, on his right hand; and on his left hand, Pedaiah, and Mishael, and Malchiah, and Hashum, and Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam.

5 And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up:

6 And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with *their faces* to the ground.

7 Also Jeshua, and Bani, and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah,

CHAP. VIII.

Ver. 1. *All the people gathered themselves together*] In this month was the first great feast that fell out after the building of the wall; as it was just after their first company returned to Jerusalem from Babylon (Ezra iii. 1).

Into the street that was before the water gate;] Which gate is mentioned before, ch. iii. 26, the street before which being very capacious, they all might meet there; for the court of the temple was not large enough to contain such a multitude.

They spake unto Ezra the scribe] This, no doubt, is the same person mentioned in the foregoing book; who had been at Babylon, it is thought, since his first coming into Judea, and was now returned; beholding with great joy the wall of Jerusalem built, as before he had seen the temple.

To bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel.] They called to mind that place in Deuteronomy, ch. xxxi. 10, 11, &c. where God requires the law to be read publicly every seventh year in the feast of tabernacles, which was appointed to be kept in this month. This, no doubt, Ezra was ready to perform; but such was the forward zeal of the people at this time, that they prevented him by their pious entreaties, that he would observe that law.

Ver. 2. *Ezra the priest*] So he is called, as before the scribe; both of these titles being put together in the foregoing book.

Brought the law before the congregation] For the city being restored and re-inhabited, the next thing that was proper to be done was to instruct them in those laws whereby they were to live.

All that could hear with understanding,] That were not mere children.

Upon the first day of the seventh month.] Which was not the feast wherein the law was to be read; but, as Pellicanus well observes, all this month was in a manner holy, so that they continued employed in these holy exercises till the end of the two and twentieth day, which was the conclusion of the feast of tabernacles.

Ver. 3. *From the morning until midday.*] In the Hebrew the words are, "from the light:" that is from the break of day (as we speak), or the sunrising, until noon. Then, I suppose, they went to take some re-

past, it being a festival, and a day of great rejoicing, "a memorial of blowing with trumpets," Lev. xxiii. 24, on which he thought good to begin the reading of the law, that he might do more than they desired, if they spake to him of reading it on the feast of tabernacles. This is a general account of what he did: the particulars follow.

Ver. 4. *Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood.*] To raise him higher than the people; that he might be the better seen and heard by them all; whence, in the Hebrew, it is called "a tower of wood:" but was not like our pulpits, which contain no more than one person; but large and long, that many persons might stand in it, as appears by what follows. Vitringa hath lately described it largely in his book *De Synagoga Veteri*, p. 184, &c. It is evident by these words, that six persons stood on his right hand, and seven on his left, in the same pulpit, being in all fourteen.

Ver. 5. *For he was above all the people;*] He being in the very middle of the pulpit, and the forenamed persons on each side of him.

When he opened it, all the people stood up;] Out of reverence to the holy word of God (see Judg. iii. 20).

Ver. 6. *And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen.*] He seems to have used the words, wherein David ordered them to bless, 1 Chron. xvi. 36, where all the people answered, *Amen*; as they do here with great affection. But the Jewish doctors pretend, that in the temple, the people never answered *Amen*, but said, "Blessed be the name of his glorious kingdom, for ever and ever." So Vitringa notes in his book *De Synagoga Veteri*, p. 1096, and our Mr. Thorndike observed the same long before, in his religious Assemblies, p. 230.

With lifting up their hands, &c.] Which were all postures in prayer, and in thankful acknowledgments to God.

Ver. 7.] It is thought by some, that these persons expounded to the people what had been read to them; for the same persons did not read, they imagine, and make them understand what was read. But Stephanus Morinus hath observed very well, that it is not likely that Ezra was a mere reader, and Levites the doctors and expositors of the law before Ezra and Nehemiah. It is far more likely that Ezra began to read; and that when he was weary, some of those who stood by him on each side went on where-

Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pellaiah, and the Levites, caused the people to understand the law: and the people stood in their place.

8 So they read in the book, in the law of God, distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.

9 ¶ And Nehemiah, which is the Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto the LORD your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law.

he left off; for it was too much for one man to read from morning to mid-day. And he also instructed these Levites, if there was any difficulty, to make the people understand what was read.

The people stood] Listening both to what was read, and what was delivered as the explication of it.

Ver. 8. So they read in the book] That is, Ezra and his assistants read not all the book of the law, but only Deuteronomy, as they do at this day.

In the law of God distinctly,] With a clear voice and distinct pronunciation.

And gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.] Ezra, and the other persons directed by him, gave the sense, and made them understand what was read. So the last words are commonly expounded. But Isaac Casaubon, in an epistle of his to Sufridus Calignon (Epist. dex.), disputes at large, that all the Jews take the meaning to be, that the people in their captivity having disused the Hebrew tongue, and been accustomed to the Chaldee, Ezra and his companions rendered the Hebrew words exactly into the Chaldee language. And to put all out of doubt, that this is their sense, he observes, that the Jews at this day retain this custom (which they received from Ezra) in their synagogues, to read the same portion of scripture, first in Hebrew, and then in Chaldee; as he himself was witness at Frankfort. And he justifies those who take these words, "caused them to understand the reading," to signify, expounded the scripture. Though the word *micra* be nowhere so used in the Bible, to signify the scripture, neither doth it signify reading. And another learned man thinks the Hebrew words may be most exactly translated, Dabant intelligentiam per ipsam Scripturam; "they gave the sense by the scripture itself." But there is not good warrant to assert this. And the discourse of Casaubon is grounded on a tradition of the Jews, which hath no better foundation than this; that they had forgot their language in Chaldea, and therefore they read the law in that tongue, which they understood better than their own. But if this were true, why did the prophets write in Hebrew after their return from captivity? And this very book shows the contrary, ch. xiii. 23, 24, where the Jews' language appears to have been spoken by the people. Nor is the custom of reading the Targum after the law very ancient, nor generally used in their synagogues.

Ver. 9. Nehemiah, &c. that taught the people,] Who had instructed them in their duty out of the law that had been read to them.

All the people wept, when they heard the words of the law.] They bewailed the ignorance wherein they lived; and the many violations of the law, whereof they had been guilty. Just as Josiah did when he heard the words of the law read out of a book found unexpectedly (2 Chron. xxii).

Ver. 10. Then he said] That is, the Tirshatha gave this command, who was the principal person

10 Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our LORD: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength.

11 So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace; for the day is holy; neither be ye grieved.

12 And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them.

among those forenamed, having the same authority that Zerubbabel had (see ch. vii. 65).

Go your way,] Now that it was noon, it was time for them to refresh themselves.

Eat the fat, and drink the sweet,] Make a feast, and provide as good cheer as you are able, according to the manner on their festival days.

And send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared:] It did not become religious people only to make much of themselves; but he would have them out of their fulness to feast their poor brethren, that they might rejoice with them.

For this day is holy unto our Lord:] Being the first new moon in the year, and the feast of blowing with trumpets (Lev. xxiii. 24). And nothing was more unsuitable to such festivals than mourning and lamentation; for they were appointed to be solemnities for mirth and gladness; and are therefore called "the days of your gladness," in Num. x. 10. And in Ps. xcii. 4, for the sabbath, the Psalmist saith, "Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy works; I will triumph in the works of thy hands;" expressing the subject of his gladness, the remembrance of the creation of the world, upon that day celebrated.

Neither be ye sorry:] Inwardly grieved.

For the joy of the Lord is your strength.] Joy in the Lord for the great things he had done for them in restoring them to their own land, building the temple, and the walls of Jerusalem, was never more becoming than upon a festival day, which afforded other matter of joy. And beside, it would make them cheerfully perform the rest of their duty, and fortify them against troubles and adversities; nay, it was the way to remove them, or to keep them off: for when the service of God was their delight, he promised to keep off those plagues which were threatened in the law against transgressors, and to give them all the blessings they could desire.

Ver. 11.] What Nehemiah had said to as many as could hear him, the Levites said to the rest of the people; going about, and persuading them to lay aside their heaviness, and make it a good day.

Ver. 12. The people went their way to eat, and to drink,—and to make great mirth,] As all nations were wont to do upon their festival days. There being very few among the Greeks, wherein they made lamentations; but they rather exceeded all bounds of decency in their jollity upon sacred solemnities, being wont, besides music and dancing (which were very proper) to entertain one another with jests and scoffs, and unbecoming laughter; as the illustrious Spanhemius shows, in his observations upon Callimachus's hymn, in Lavacrum Palladis, ad Versum 321.

Because they had understood the words that were declared unto them.] This was an extraordinary reason for their mirth, that they were illuminated in divine knowledge, and understood the will of God better than they did before.

13 ¶ And on the second day were gathered together the chief of the fathers of all the people, the priests, and the Levites, unto Ezra the scribe, even to understand the words of the law.

14 And they found written in the law which the Lord had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month:

15 And that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying, Go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as *it is* written.

16 ¶ So the people went forth, and brought *them*, and made themselves booths, every one upon

the roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the street of the water gate, and in the street of the gate of Ephraim.

17 And all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths, and sat under the booths: for since the days of Jeshua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so. And there was very great gladness.

18 Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day *was* a solemn assembly, according unto the manner.

And in their courts, &c.] They durst not make them without the walls of the city, for fear of their enemies.

Ver. 17. All the congregation—made booths, and sat under the booths:] They not only made them, but left their houses, and dwelt in them all the days of the feast.

For since the days of Jeshua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so.] This is scarce credible, as Mr. Mede speaks, that for a thousand years none of the good kings in Israel should observe this festival, at least in this main circumstance “of dwelling in booths.” But so he thinks it was, and that this horrible omission of this feast alone foresignified the Jews would not acknowledge Christ, whom this signified to be Emmanuel, God dwelling in our flesh (see book i. discourse xlv. p. 354). But I think this is not the meaning, that this festival had never been observed since Joshua’s time; for we read in the foregoing book, that it was kept at their return from Babylon. But the meaning is, that the joy had never been so great as it was now since that time: for which there was a special reason, as the Jews observe in Seder Olam Rabba, cap. 30, for they rejoiced in the days of Joshua, that they had got possession of the land of Canaan; and now they rejoiced that they were restored to it, and quietly settled in it, after they had been cast out of it.

Ver. 18.] There was a command that the law should be read on this feast, as I observed above (Deut. xxxi. 10—12), but not that it should be read every day. This was the effect of their great zeal to be instructed in the law of God, which made them desire to hear it on the second day of this month, which was a festival (ver. 13): and perhaps the eighth day, on which a solemn assembly was appointed (Lev. xxiii. 26), they continued the same holy exercise. But that seems contrary to this verse, which speaks only of *seven days*.

Ver. 13.] This was no festival day, but so desirous were they to be acquainted with the law (of the knowledge of which he had given them a taste), that they came again this day to beg farther instruction. Which, it is evident from hence, Ezra gave them, not the priests and the Levites, who came to be instructed by him as well as the people.

Ver. 14.] It is probable that he read to them particularly the duties belonging to this month, wherein they were assembled, in which they found the feast of tabernacles was to be observed; and therefore they came to him for direction how it was to be kept, that they might obey the precept. And first he informed them that they must “dwell in booths:” which Maimonides shows how it is to be understood in his Seder Zeraim, where he explains the tradition of the ancients, who believed, that when God gave a precept he also gave the exposition of it, which he pretends was preserved by their wise men; which is a vain fancy of the Jews, to support the credit of their traditions. But the book Cosri thinks these words [“they found it written”] are to be understood of the common people; for the better sort understood well enough that such festivals were to be observed, and had not forgotten any of the precepts (par. iii. sect. 63).

Ver. 15. Proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying,] Then he tells them that proclamation should be made in all their cities, beginning in Jerusalem, that this feast ought to be observed on such a day (Lev. xxiii. 4, 34).

Go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive branches,] The nearest mount to Jerusalem was the mount of Olives, where it is likely all these trees grew. But the word *shaman*, which we translate *olive branches*, our famous Dr. Castell thinks signifies *citrons*, which is not material, they being such branches as the mount afforded.

Ver. 16. Every one upon the roof of his house,] Which by the law was to be built flat (Deut. xxii. 8).

CHAPTER IX.

1 *A solemn fast, and repentance of the people.* 4 *The Levites make a religious confession of God’s goodness, and their wickedness.*

1 Now in the twenty and fourth day of this month the children of Israel were assembled with

fasting, and with sackclothes, and earth upon them.

CHAP. IX.

Ver. 1.] The feast being over, which ended upon the twenty-second day (all which time mourning

was forbidden, as contrary to the nature of the feast, which was to be kept with joy), they now return to that which they were about before (ch. viii. 9, 12), and spent this whole day in humbling themselves

2 And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers, and stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers.

3 And they stood up in their place, and read in the book of the law of the LORD their God *one* fourth part of the day, and *another* fourth part they confessed, and worshipped the LORD their God.

4 ¶ Then stood up upon the stairs, of the Levites, Jeshua, and Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Eunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Chenani, and cried with a loud voice unto the LORD their God.

5 Then the Levites, Jeshua, and Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabniah, Sherebiah, Hodijah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah, said, Stand up, and bless the LORD your God for ever and ever: and blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise.

6 Thou, *even* thou, art LORD alone; thou hast

made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all *things* that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.

7 Thou art the LORD the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham;

8 And foundest his heart faithful before thee, and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girschites, to give it, *I say*, to his seed, and hast performed thy words; for thou art righteous:

9 And didst see the affliction of our fathers in Egypt, and heardest their cry by the Red sea:

10 And showedst signs and wonders upon Pharaoh, and on all his servants, and on all the

before God for their sins. The reason why they did not immediately after the feast of tabernacles keep this fast, was (as Josephus Scaliger conjectures), because the twenty-third day was another festival, made by the constitution of the elders, by the same authority wherewith afterward they appointed the feast of Purim, mentioned in the book of Esther. It was called "the festival of the law," still observed by the Jews on the twenty-third day of this month, because then they make an end of reading the law, which they begin again every year the next sabbath after. Now this being a day of joy, as other festivals were, on which they were forbidden to mourn, they deferred their mourning till this solemnity also was past, and then they fell to weeping again, as they did when they first heard the law read.

Ver. 2.] Who had been guilty of taking strange women to be their wives; for which Ezra had severely censured them, and constrained them to put them away. But so depraved were some among them that it seems they transgressed again in this matter, as they did in other things, who confessed their own guilt, and the guilt of those that were before them, and, as a token of their true repentance, separated themselves from these strangers. Which they did in such a manner, that they stood at a distance from them, to show that they renounced them. For so the word *stood* is to be taken in this place, not for a posture of prayer, wherein they confessed their sins: for appearing in sackcloth, and with earth on their heads, it is more likely they lay down and bewailed themselves, as the manner was in such cases. And accordingly the Levites called upon them (ver. 5), to stand up: which supposes that they lay on the ground or fell on their knees, and were not standing when they spake unto them.

Ver. 3. *They stood up in their place.*] That is, the Levites stood up in a place built for them, like that whereon Ezra stood (ch. viii. 4), for otherwise they could not have been heard when they read. They read the law and confessed (that is, praised God, ver. 5), interchangeably. For in one fourth part of the day, that is, from the first hour to the third, they did the one, and from thence to the sixth hour (that is, till twelve o'clock) they did the other. Then they began the former again till the ninth hour, and from thence till the evening they spent their time in the other.

Ver. 4. *Then stood up upon the stairs.*] Or, upon the scaffold (as the margin translates it), which raised them above the people, that they might all see and hear.

And cried with a loud voice unto the Lord] They most earnestly besought him to be merciful to them.

Ver. 5.] After the Levites before named had cried to God for mercy (the people, I suppose, begging it on their knees), another company of Levites bade the people stand up, and praise the Lord, and give him thanks as long as they had any being. The Levites, it is likely, praised him in these words, acknowledging that the noblest creatures could not reach his superexcellent perfections, and all the people repeated the same words after them.

Ver. 6. *Thou, even thou, art Lord alone, &c.*] As they confess the Lord to be the only God, so they attribute two things to him: that he is the creator and the conservator of the universe; for having made it, no doubt he takes care of every part thereof.

The host of heaven worshippeth thee.] Sometimes the stars, and sometimes the angels, are called "the host of heaven." The latter seem to be here meant; for the other are mentioned before when he saith, "the heavens with all their host." Concerning "the heaven of heavens," see in Solomon's prayer, 1 Kings viii. 27.

Ver. 7.] Here follows a compendious history of the affairs of the Hebrew nation, in this confession of God's benefits, and their ingratitude. Which Nehemiah and Ezra, it is likely, composed in the form of a prayer, and delivered it to the Levites, whom they ordered to speak it distinctly before the whole congregation from their several scaffolds, which were conveniently placed in several parts of the assembly, that they might be heard.

Ver. 8. *And foundest his heart faithful before thee.*] In many instances, especially in that great trial of his faith and obedience, when he required him to offer up his only son to him (Gen. xxii. and see also Gen. xv. 6; xvii. 5, &c.).

For thou art righteous:] True to his word in faithfully fulfilling his promises (see Gen. xv. 7, 18; xvii. 2, 4, 7, &c.).

Ver. 9.] They pass by all God's providences over Isaac and Jacob, to come to that which God had done for them since they were a nation: that is, since he had made good his covenant with Abraham, to multiply his seed as the stars of heaven; at which time he foretold him of the grievous affliction of his seed in Egypt (Gen. xv. 5, 13), from which he graciously delivered them, they here acknowledge, and completed their deliverance at the Red sea.

Ver. 10. *And showedst signs and wonders upon*

people of his land; for thou knewest that they dealt proudly against them; so didst thou get thee a name, as *it is* this day.

11 And thou didst divide the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on the dry land; and their persecutors thou threwest into the deeps, as a stone into the mighty waters.

12 Moreover, thou leddest them in the day by a cloudy pillar, and in the night by a pillar of fire, to give them light in the way wherein they should go.

13 Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments:

14 And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant:

15 And gavest them bread from heaven for their hunger, and broughtest forth water for them out of the rock for their thirst, and promisedst them that they should go in to possess the land which thou hadst sworn to give them.

Pharaoh,] Which are recorded in the book of Exodus, ch. vii. viii. &c.

For thou knewest that they dealt proudly against them.] Intending to make them their slaves for ever, as, for the present, they treated them with the utmost contempt and cruelty (Exod. v. 17, 18).

So didst thou get thee a name,] See Exod. ix. 16. Ver. 11. *Thou didst divide the sea*] See Exod. xiv. 21, 22.

As a stone into the mighty waters.] So that they sunk down, and rose up no more to persecute them. The Hebrew word signifies the *strong* or *rough* waters. And so Bechartus observes out of many Greek authors, that that sea is called, and said, in short, to be *κατὰ πάντα φοβερὴν*, "in all regards formidable or terrible." In his *Canaan*, lib. i. cap. 13.

Ver. 12.] Concerning which, see Exod. xiii. 21.

Ver. 13.] This seems to relate, in the beginning of the verse, to the ten commandments, spoken by the mouth of God himself: but the latter part comprehends all the law delivered by him to Moses in the mount (ch. xxi.—xxiii.).

Ver. 14. *And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath,*] The scripture mentions the sabbath as a singular gift bestowed upon the Jewish nation (Exod. xvi. 29). It being a sign between him and them, that he was their God, who sanctified, that is, separated them out of all other people to be his peculiar people; that is, the worshippers of the Creator of the world, whom they acknowledged to be the Lord their God, while the heathen worshipped the sun, moon, and stars, and other creatures, as their gods, Exod. xxxi. 13, and Ezek. xx. 12, 20, in which the prophet tells us, that God intended, by this, to show that he had chosen Israel, as I said, to be his peculiar people above all other nations, and that they had no other God.

And commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses] Which are those before mentioned, which were not spoken by God himself, but delivered by him to Moses in the mount, who was his faithful servant, and delivered nothing but what he received from God's own mouth. The observation of which is often pressed upon them as an acknowledgment of him to be their Creator who brought them out of the land of Egypt.

16 But they and our fathers dealt proudly, and hardened their necks, and hearkened not to thy commandments,

17 And refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not.

18 Yea, when they had made them a molten calf, and said, This is thy God that brought thee up out of Egypt, and had wrought great provocations;

19 Yet, thou in thy manifold mercies, forsookest them not in the wilderness: the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way; neither the pillar of fire by night, to show them light, and the way wherein they should go.

20 Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst.

21 Yea, forty years didst thou sustain them

Ver. 15. *And gavest them bread from heaven*] See Exod. xvi. 14, 15; xvii. 6.

And promisedst them that they should go in to possess the land] Which he set before them, and bade them go and possess it, as Moses tells them, Dent. i. 8.

Ver. 16.] A famous instance of this there was when they refused to go up and possess the land, to the borders of which he had brought them (Numb. xiv. 1, 2, &c.); and afterward more insolently rebelled against Moses and Aaron, who had been their conductors through the wilderness (Numb. xvi. 3).

Ver. 17. *Neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them;*] Their ingratitude was the greater, because these wonders were not done among other nations, but were peculiar to them; which our Saviour makes a very high aggravation of the sins of their posterity, Mat. xi. 21).

And in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage:] See Numb. xiv. 4, where they consulted about it, and it seems came to this resolution, that they agreed upon a captain to lead them back to Egypt: or their resolving to do it was the same with the actual appointment of a captain, as it was in the case of Abraham's offering his son.

But thou art a God ready to pardon, &c.] This was the character God gave of himself to Moses (Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7), which he made good to all generations (see Psalm cxlv. 8).

Ver. 18.] This was the highest provocation, considering how lately he had spoken to them from heaven not to make a graven image, and how many cautions he had afterward given them against it.

Ver. 19. *Yet thou in thy manifold mercies forsookest them not*] But gave them an early instance of his clemency.

The pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day,—neither the pillar of fire by night,] Which testified that, notwithstanding their provocation, God was still among them, and continued his gracious presence with them, of which this was a glorious token, as Moses told them, Numb. xiv. 14.

Ver. 20. *Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them,*] The spirit of prophecy, which was upon Moses, God imparted to seventy other persons, that the people might be better governed (Numb. xi. 16, 17).

in the wilderness, *so that* they lacked nothing; their clothes waxed not old, and their feet swelled not.

22 Moreover thou gavest them kingdoms and nations, and didst divide them into corners: so they possessed the land of Sihon, and the land of the king of Heshbon, and the land of Og king of Bashan.

23 Their children also multipliedst thou as the stars of heaven, and broughtest them into the land, concerning which thou hadst promised to their fathers, that they should go in to possess it.

24 So the children went in and possessed the land, and thou subduedst before them the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, and gavest them into their hands, with their kings, and the people of the land, that they might do with them as they would.

25 And they took strong cities, and a fat land, and possessed houses full of all goods, wells digged, vineyards, and olive-yards, and fruit trees in abundance: so they did eat and were filled, and became fat, and delighted themselves in thy great goodness.

26 Nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast thy law behind

their backs, and slew thy prophets which testified against them to turn them to thee, and they wrought great provocations.

27 Therefore thou deliveredst them into the hand of their enemies, who vexed them: and in the time of their trouble, when they cried unto thee, thou heardest *them* from heaven; and according to thy manifold mercies thou gavest them saviours, who saved them out of the hand of their enemies.

28 But after they had rest, they did evil again before thee: therefore ledest thou them in the hand of their enemies, so that they had the dominion over them: yet when they returned, and cried unto thee, thou heardest *them* from heaven; and many times didst thou deliver them according to thy mercies;

29 And testifiedst against them, that thou mightest bring them again unto thy law: yet they dealt proudly, and hearkened not unto thy commandments, but sinned against thy judgments, (which if a man do, he shall live in them;) and withdrew the shoulder, and hardened their neck, and would not hear.

30 Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy spirit in thy

And withheldst not thy manna] But continued it till they came to Canaan: or else they might have been starved (see Josh. v. 12).

And gavest them water] When the whole congregation deserved to perish, according to their own wish, that they had died when their brethren died before the Lord (Numb. xx. 3).

Ver. 21.] See Deut. viii. 4.

Ver. 22. *And didst divide them into corners*:] Some translate the last words, "Thou didst divide them by angles;" that is, he parted those kingdoms among them as by a line. But others understand it of the people dispossessed by the Jews, whom he drove into corners.

So they possessed the land of Sihon, and the land of the king of Heshbon.] Most of the inhabitants of which he destroyed, and the rest fled and hid themselves in corners. But it must be observed that Heshbon being the city of Sihon (Numb. xxi. 26), the first words should be rendered, "the land of Sihon, even the land of the king of Heshbon."

Ver. 23.] See Gen. xv. 5.

Ver. 24.] These words express the easy conquest they made of the whole country.

Ver. 25. *They took strong cities.*] The walls of Jericho falling down flat before them.

A fat land,] A fruitful country flowing with milk and honey.

And possessed houses full of all goods, &c.] They were enriched with the estates of the people whom they destroyed, having houses ready built, and well furnished, together with all sorts of trees planted to their hands.

So they did eat, and were filled,] They wanted nothing, but rather had superfluity of all worldly blessings.

And delighted themselves in thy great goodness.] Their highest pleasure indeed ought to have been in their thoughts how good God was unto them; but the meaning of these words is no more than this, That God had bestowed so many blessings upon them, that they took great pleasure in the enjoyment of them.

Ver. 26. *Nevertheless they were disobedient,*]

The pleasant life they led in the good land God gave them made them wanton, and forgetful of God and of his laws, which they regarded not at all.

And slew thy prophets] We read of many prophets slain by Jezebel, 1 Kings xviii. 4: xix. 10.

They wrought great provocations.] By abominable idolatries.

Ver. 27.] The whole book of Judges verifies this, that God delivered them for their sins unto the Moabites, the Canaanites, and divers other enemies, who grievously domineered over them; but when they cried to God for help, he was so gracious as to send such great men as Barak, Gideon and others, to be their saviours, that is, deliverers from their tyranny.

Ver. 28. *But after they had rest, they did evil again before thee:*] No sooner did they begin to prosper, and the judge that saved them was dead, but they revolted from God, who had been so good to them.

Therefore ledest thou them in the hand of their enemies.] God so abandoned them, that he let the Philistines rule over them forty years (Judg. xiii. 1), unto which, perhaps, this passage relates.

Many times didst thou deliver them according to thy mercies:] For nothing else could move him to it; they being through all generations inconstant and unsteadfast in their obedience.

Ver. 29.] *And testifiedst against them.*] By many remarkable punishments he testified how highly he was displeased with them, that he might reform them.

Yet they dealt proudly,] Which one would have expected should have humbled them; but they grew more bold and obstinate in their sins.

He shall live in them;] That is, be a happy man.

And withdrew the shoulder,] Withdrawing the shoulder is a metaphor (I have observed before) taken from refractory oxen, that draw back, and will not submit to the yoke.

Ver. 30. *Yet many years didst thou forbear them,*] Before he suffered them to be carried captive out of their own land.

And testifiedst against them by thy spirit in thy

prophets; yet would they not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands.

31 Nevertheless, for thy great mercies' sake, thou didst not utterly consume them, nor forsake them; for thou art a gracious and merciful God.

32 Now therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who keepest covenant and mercy, let not all the trouble seem little before thee, that hath come upon us, on our kings, on our princes, and on our priests, and on our prophets, and on our fathers, and on all thy people, since the time of the kings of Assyria unto this day.

33 Howbeit, thou art just in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly:

34 Neither have our kings, our princes, our priests, nor our fathers, kept thy law, nor heark-

prophets:] Whom he raised up (I have observed elsewhere) in every age, in every king's reign, to tell them their duty, and reprove them for their sins.

Therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands.] At last he delivered them into the hands of the Chaldeans, as we read 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16, who are called the "people of the lands," because they had got possession of all the countries thereabouts, which God put under their power, as he had done other countries beyond Euphrates.

Ver. 31. Thou didst not utterly consume them,] But left them a remnant of the poorer sort in the land, and showed favour to the captives in the land of Babylon.

For thou art a—merciful God.] To which alone they owed their preservation from utter destruction.

Ver. 32. Now therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, &c.] Thus he began his address to God, before he came to Shushan (see ch. 1. 5).

Let not all the trouble seem little before thee, that hath come upon us.—since the time of the kings of Assyria unto this day.] For those kings first began to invade their country, and carried away the ten tribes (2 Kings xv. 19: xvii. 3, 5, &c.) After which, calamities came upon Judah, their good king Josiah being slain, Manasseh carried to Babylon before the great captivity.

Ver. 33—35.] In these three verses they acknowledge the justice of God, in all the punishments he had inflicted on them, though heavy, and of long continuance. For from the highest to the lowest they had done all wickedly, and would not be reclaimed.

Ver. 36.] God had, indeed, marvellously restored them to their own country; yet the marks of his displeasure for their sins still remained very visible: for they were but servants unto others, not owners, and proprietors of the lands which God had given to their fathers. Out of which they had been cast for their

ened unto thy commandments and thy testimonies, wherewith thou didst testify against them.

35 For they have not served thee in their kingdom, and in thy great goodness that thou gavest them, and in the large and fat land which thou gavest before them, neither turned they from their wicked works.

36 Behold, we are servants this day; and for the land that thou gavest unto our fathers, to eat the fruit thereof and the good thereof, behold, we are servants in it:

37 And it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins: also they have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle, at their pleasure, and we are in great distress.

38 And because of all this, we make a sure covenant, and write it; and our princes, Levites, and priests, seal unto it.

wickedness, and had not yet perfectly recovered it, but laboured for their lords and masters.

Ver. 37. It yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us] For their land paid a great tribute to the kings of Persia, out of the profit of it (Ezra vi. 8: vii. 24, and in this book, ch. v. 4).

Also they have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle,] For their bodies were liable to be pressed to serve in the king's wars, or in his works; and their cattle subject to them, when they had occasion to send post about the king's business.

We are in great distress.] Though they were permitted to live by their own laws (as we read in the book of Ezra), which was a great privilege, yet they lay under those public burdens, and were compelled to bear them. By which we may learn how vain their proud boasts were in John viii. 33, that they "were never in bondage to any man;" when they had long been slaves in Egypt, and lately in Babylon, and after they came from thence, as they here complain; and even they paid tribute to the Romans when they made those brags to our Saviour.

Ver. 38.] In consideration of which they resolved to renew their covenant with God of better obedience; which they promised under their hands and seals, as the only remedy to procure perfect deliverance. And, to make it more effectual, they seem to declare this in the presence of God, at the conclusion of the foregoing confession and prayer.

It signifies little, indeed, as Pellicanus observes, what such an untoward people promised; for what regard would they have to their own hand-writing who regarded not the ten commandments, written on tables of stone by the finger of God? But it was very useful, that there should be a public instrument to convince them of their impiety, and that they might be publicly confounded when they proved perfidious deserters, by showing them their engagements under their own hands, to future fidelity.

CHAPTER X.

1 *The names of them that sealed the covenant.* 29 *The points of the covenant.*

1 Now those that sealed *were*, Nehemiah the Tirshatha, the son of Hachaliah, and Zidkijah,

2 Seraiah, Azariah, Jeremiah,

3 Pashur, Amariah, Malchijah,

4 Hattush, Shebaniah, Malluch,

5 Harim, Meremoth, Obadiah,

6 Daniel, Ginnethon, Baruch,

7 Meshullam, Abijah, Mijamin,

8 Maaziah, Bilgai, Shemaiah: these *were* the priests.

9 And the Levites: both Jeshua the son of Azaniah, Binnui of the sons of Henadad, Kadmiel;

10 And their brethren, Shebaniah, Hodijah, Kelita, Pellaiah, Hanan,

11 Micha, Rehob, Hashabiah,

12 Zacur, Sherebiah, Shebaniah,

13 Hodijah, Bani, Beninu.

14 The chief of the people; Parosh, Pahathmoab, Elam, Zathu, Bani,

15 Bunni, Azgad, Bebai,

16 Adonijah, Bigvai, Adin,

17 Ater, Hizkijah, Azzur,

18 Hodijah, Hashum, Bezai,

19 Hariph, Anathoth, Nebai,

20 Magpiash, Meshullam, Hezir,

21 Meshezabeel, Zadok, Jaddua,

22 Pelatiah, Hanan, Anajah,

23 Hoshea, Hananiah, Hashub,

24 Hallohesh, Pileha, Shobek,

25 Rehum, Hashabnah, Maaseiah,

26 And Abijah, Hanan, Anan,

27 Malluch, Harim, Baanah.

28 ¶ And the rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the porters, the singers, the Nethinims, and all they that had separated themselves from the people of the lands unto the law of God, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, every one having knowledge, and having understanding;

29 They came to their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse, and into an oath, to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord our Lord, and his judgments, and his statutes;

30 And that we would not give our daughters unto the people of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons:

31 And *if* the people of the land bring ware or any victuals on the sabbath day to sell, *that* we would not buy it of them on the sabbath, or on the holy day: and *that* we would leave the seventh year, and the exaction of every debt.

CHAP. X.

Ver. 1.] Nehemiah was the governor of the country under the king of Persia, and therefore the principal prince among them, who led the way to this; who are not mentioned, unless we suppose Zidkijah to have been a prince; for they that followed were priests.

Ver. 2.—8.] I need not transcribe the rest of the names to the eighth verse, at the end of which it is said "these were the priests," that is, the chief of them, for there are but twenty and one of them in all; and there is no mention of Ezra the priest among them; of which it is hard to give an account, unless we suppose him to be now gone to Babylon: which must be very lately; for he was at Jerusalem in the beginning of the seventh month (ch. viii. 2); though on the twenty-fourth day of it, when they fasted and prayed, we do not find him named throughout the whole ninth chapter; yet at the feast of the dedication he was come to Jerusalem again (ch. xii. 36). Some therefore think he was now hindered by sickness from being present at this sealing.

Ver. 9, 10.] There are fourteen Levites mentioned in these and the following verses, to ver. 14, which, perhaps, were all the Levites that were then present; or rather were the principal Levites, who were not priests: for some of these are mentioned before, as chosen to expound the law to the people, and to make public prayers to God (ch. viii. 7; ix. 4, 5).

Ver. 14. *The chief of the people;*] It had been tedious to make all the people subscribe and seal the writing; therefore the principal persons did it in the name of the rest, whose names, in number forty and three, are here recorded till ver. 28.

Ver. 28.] All that did not subscribe and seal, because they were too many, yet gave their consent to what the forenamed persons did. And not only the men, but their wives, and their children who were arrived at years of discretion, engaged themselves, as follows in the next verse.

Ver. 29.] They declared they were of the same mind with those that had sealed, and owned by word of mouth what they had set their hands unto; and said, it was their act, as much as their nobles' and brethren's, from whom they would not depart. And more than that, they added an oath, whereby they obliged themselves to observe the law; and an imprecation upon themselves, wishing all the curses written in the law might fall upon them, if they did not do as the law required in all things.

Ver. 30.] Besides their general promise, they specify those things that were most difficult; as not marrying with strangers, observing the sabbath, bringing oblations for the use of the temple, &c. The first thing here specified was of great importance; and they solemnly engaged to perform it: for though both Ezra and Nehemiah had found them guilty of breaking this law, yet they were so prone to offend in this thing, that it seems, notwithstanding all they could do, some continued to violate it.

Ver. 31. *If the people of the land;*] That is, their heathen neighbours.

Bring ware or any victuals on the sabbath day to sell;] We do not find any express law forbidding them to buy what was offered to be sold on the sabbath-day; but they obliged themselves not to do it, that the rest might be better observed. For none would come to sell, when there were no chapmen for their commodities.

32 Also we made ordinances for us, to charge ourselves yearly with the third part of a shekel, for the service of the house of our God;

33 For the shew-bread, and for the continual meat-offering, and for the continual burnt-offering, of the sabbaths, of the new moons, for the set feasts, and for the holy things, and for the sin-offerings, to make an atonement for Israel, and for all the work of the house of our God.

34 And we cast the lots among the priests, the Levites, and the people, for the wood-offering, to bring it into the house of our God, after the houses of our fathers, at times appointed, year by year, to burn upon the altar of the Lord our God, as it is written in the law;

35 And to bring the first-fruits of our ground, and the first-fruits of all fruit of all trees, year by year, unto the house of the Lord:

36 Also the first-born of our sons, and of our cattle, as it is written in the law, and the firstlings of our herds, and of our flocks, to bring to

the house of our God, unto the priests that minister in the house of our God:

37 And that we should bring the first-fruits of our dough, and our offerings, and the fruit of all manner of trees, of wine, and of oil, unto the priests, to the chambers of the house of our God; and the tithes of our ground unto the Levites, that the same Levites might have the tithes in all the cities of our tillage.

38 And the priest the son of Aaron shall be with the Levites, when the Levites take tithes: and the Levites shall bring up the tithes of the tithes unto the house of our God, to the chambers, unto the treasure house.

39 For the children of Israel and the children of Levi, shall bring the offering of the corn, of the new wine, and the oil, unto the chambers, where are the vessels of the sanctuary, and the priests that minister, and the porters, and the singers: and we will not forsake the house of our God.

Or on the holy day:] That is, on all days of rest from their labours, such as the passover, the feast of tabernacles, and others.

That we would leave the seventh year,] That is, let their land rest every seventh year, and leave the fruit of it, which grew up of itself, for the poor, as the law required (Lev. xxv. 4, &c.).

The exaction of every debt.] That is, remit in that year the debts which the poor owed them (Deut. xv. 2, &c.).

Ver. 32.] We do not find this enjoined any where by an express law: but reason required it at this time; and therefore they obliged themselves to it by an ordinance of the elders, that the service of God at the temple might be maintained by this small duty which was laid upon every one.

Ver. 33.] There was a treasury formerly in the house of God, out of which all these things were supplied: and when it was exhausted by the many great sums which were sent out of it to foreign princes in the days of Hezekiah, that prince maintained the burnt-offerings at his own charge (2 Chron. xxxi. 3). But both these failing for the present, there was this oblation made to furnish all the things here mentioned, and every thing else that was necessary for the service of God. And, no doubt, many good people dedicated things to the same use; whereby the expenses were well maintained.

Ver. 34.] They determined, by casting of lots, how much wood every one should bring in for his share, to maintain their fire continually upon the altar to burn the sacrifices; and in what order it should be brought (what family that is, should begin first, and what should follow next), and at what times of the year. For there was another solemn feast (besides those I mentioned before,) called "the feast of the wood-offering," which took its original from hence; and, as Scaliger observes, was kept on the twenty-second day of the month Ab. But Mr. Thorndike observes, out of the Mischna (in his Religious Assemblies, p. 269,) that it was held nine days in several months, whereof a great part fell in that month; and is meant by these words, "at times appointed, year by year." The Talmudists also say, that every family, on the day when they brought in the wood, sacrificed a voluntary burnt-offering, called the "korban of wood," as Petrus Cuneus observes, in his book De Republica Hebræorum, lib. ii. cap. 13, where he notes also, that herein Josephus differs from the Tal-

mudists; that he mentions but one day of the feasts, which he calls *ξυλοφορία*: which was such a solemn festival (as Maimonides saith, in his Furniture of the Temple, ch. 6,) that none might mourn on this day, nor fast, nor do any work.

Ver. 35.] According to the command, Exod. xxiii. 19; Lev. xix. 23 (see below, ver. 39.)

Ver. 36.] The law which gave all the firstlings of God is in Exod. xiii. the beginning, and ver. 11, 13, and God gave them all to Aaron the priest, in Numb. xviii. 15, 16.

Ver. 37. *That we should bring the first-fruits of our dough.]* See Lev. xxiii. 17; Numb. xv. 19, 20. It was to be so large, that it is called a gift in Deut. xviii. 4.

The fruit of all manner of trees,] See Numb. xviii. 12, &c.

The tithes of our ground] See Lev. xxvii. 30; Numb. xviii. 21.

Ver. 38.] As the people gave the tithes of their land to the Levites, so the Levites gave a tithes to the priests. And when the people brought them to the Levites, one of the priests was appointed to be present to inspect them, and to see that, without fraud, they tithed the tithes; that is, set out the tenth part of the tithes they had received for the priests, which was brought to the chambers, wherein it was deposited for the priests in God's house.

Ver. 39. *The offering of the corn,]* Deut. xii. 6, 11.

Unto the chambers, where are the vessels of the sanctuary, and the priests that minister, &c.] Where other holy things were kept, and where God's ministers attended, for whose use they were designed, and were to be brought thither at their own charge. These chambers were in the court of the priests; but L'Empereur thinks the court of the people likewise might have such places in it, wherein these things were bestowed, being more than the other could contain. For (as the Jews observe) though the priests had a court proper to themselves, into which none might come but they alone, yet they were not excluded from the court of Israel; and if there was not room enough to receive all the things forementioned, there were receptacles under ground, besides the upper room mentioned Jer. xxxv. 4.

We will not forsake the house of our God.] They promise, according to their covenant and oath, to be no more so negligent in these matters as they had been; and accordingly they did fulfil this promise, as we read ch. xii. 44, 45, unto the end.

CHAPTER XI.

1 *The rulers, voluntary men, and the tenth man chosen by lot, dwell at Jerusalem.* 3 *A catalogue of their names.* 20 *The residue dwell in other cities.*

1 AND the rulers of the people dwelt at Jerusalem: the rest of the people also cast lots, to bring one of ten to dwell in Jerusalem the holy city, and nine parts to dwell in other cities.

2 And the people blessed all the men that willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem.

3 ¶ Now these are the chief of the province that dwelt in Jerusalem, but in the cities of Judah dwelt every one in his possession in their cities, to wit, Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the Nethinims, and the children of Solomon's servants.

4 And at Jerusalem dwelt certain of the children of Judah, and of the children of Benjamin. Of the children of Judah; Athaiah the son of

Uzziah, the son of Zechariah, the son of Amariah, the son of Shephatiah, the son of Mahala-leel, of the children of Perez;

5 And Maaseiah the son of Baruch, the son of Col-hozeh, the son of Hazaiah, the son of Adaiah, the son of Joiarib, the son of Zechariah, the son of Shiloni.

6 All the sons of Perez that dwelt at Jerusalem were four hundred threescore and eight valiant men.

7 And these are the sons of Benjamin; Sallu the son of Meshullam, the son of Joed, the son of Pedaiah, the son of Kolaiah, the son of Maaseiah, the son of Ithiel, the son of Jesaiah.

8 And after him Gabbai, Sallai, nine hundred twenty and eight.

9 And Joel the son of Zichri was their over-

CHAP. XI.

Ver. 1.] Their neighbours were so enraged to see the walls at Jerusalem built again, and were so restless in their designs to keep this city from rising to its former splendour, that it terrified many of the Jews from coming to dwell there, thinking themselves more safe in the country, where their enemies had no pretence to disturb them. The rulers, therefore, of the people came and settled themselves at Jerusalem, that they might invite and encourage others to come and inhabit it; and several persons, as the next verse intimates, did come and offer themselves freely to dwell with them there. But though the rulers were settled here, and some followed their example, and all that formerly belonged to Jerusalem were ordered to return (ch. vii. 4, 5), yet still there was room for more citizens; and the city, considering how large it was, being very empty, they consulted to make it populous, by compelling every tenth man in Judah and Benjamin to quit his present habitation in the country, and come and dwell there; leaving the rest to dwell where they pleased. For which end they cast lots, that among ten men it might be known whom God chose to come thither; and the lot falling by a divine appointment upon such a person, rather than another, no doubt, he removed the more contentedly to this city.

Ver. 2.] Beside those who were chosen by lot, it seems there were some who voluntarily chose to go and live there; whom the people highly commended and praised, beseeching God to bless and prosper them: for indeed they were worthy to be honoured as men that sought the welfare of their country, the glory of God, the restoring of their nation, the defence of their city, and had a zeal for the divine service performed there.

Ver. 3. *These are the chief of the province*] Of those Jews that came from Babylon into the province of Judea. Whose names are mentioned verse 4, &c.

But in the cities of Judah dwelt every one in his possession in their cities, &c.] But those that dwelt in the other cities of Judah, he would not reckon in this catalogue; whom he comprehends under the name of *Israel, the priests, the Levites, the Nethinims, and Solomon's servants.* By *Israel* he means all the peo-

ple of the ten tribes, as well as Judah and Benjamin, who were the chief; but he calls them *Israel*, because those of Judah and Benjamin dwelt at Jerusalem: the rest of Israel were in the other cities of Judah.

Ver. 4. *At Jerusalem dwelt certain of the children of Judah, and—Benjamin.*] For these were the tribes that anciently possessed Jerusalem; which stood partly in the one, partly in the other tribe. Therefore, in some places of scripture, Jerusalem is reckoned as belonging to the children of Judah (see Josh. xv. 63: Judg. i. 8), and sometimes in the same words to the children of Benjamin (Judg. xviii. 20: xxi. 28), and here to both. But what part of the city belonged to the one, and what part to the other, is not agreed among learned men. Pineda hath represented the several opinions about it at large, in his book *De Rebus Solomonis*, lib. v. cap. 5.

Of the children of Judah; Athaiah, &c. of the children of Perez;] These were all that family of Pharez the son of Judah. If the names of these persons mentioned in this chapter be compared with the names of those who came back with Zerubbabel, it will appear, that they were the fourth, fifth, and sixth generation from Zerubbabel: which is a demonstration that Nehemiah did not come to Jerusalem, in the time of Artaxerxes Longimanus, but of Artaxerxes Mnemon. For this observation I am beholden to my worthy friend Dr. Alix.

Ver. 5.] These were all of the same family, as the next verse informs us.

Ver. 6.] Who seem to me to have offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem, and help to defend it by their valour, whose chiefs were Athaiah and Maaseiah.

Ver. 8. *After him Gabbai, Sallai,*] These two and Sallu (before named) were the chief men among them.

Nine hundred twenty and eight.] There were almost as many more of Benjamin as of Judah (who were but four hundred sixty and eight); for though mount Zion was in the tribe of Judah, yet the city of Jerusalem was in the tribe of Benjamin; which made them have a great desire to see it inhabited, and inflamed the minds of the most valiant, who were best able to defend it, to come and live there.

Ver. 9.] The former of these was the governor of

seer: and Judah the son of Senuah *was* second over the city.

10 Of the priests: Jedaiah the son of Joiarib, Jachin.

11 Seraiah the son of Hilkiah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, *was* the ruler of the house of God.

12 And their brethren, that did the work of the house, *were* eight hundred twenty and two: and Adaiah the son of Jeroham, the son of Pelaliah, the son of Amzi, the son of Zechariah, the son of Pashur, the son of Malchiah,

13 And his brethren, chief of the fathers, two hundred forty and two: and Amashai the son of Azareel, the son of Ahasai, the son of Meslullemoth, the son of Immer,

14 And their brethren, mighty men of valour, an hundred twenty and eight: and their overseer *was* Zabdiel, the son of *one of* the great men.

15 Also of the Levites: Shemaiah the son of Hashub, the son of Azrikam, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Bunni:

16 And Shabbethai and Jozabad, of the chief

of the Levites, *had* the oversight of the outward business of the house of God.

17 And Mattaniah the son of Micah, the son of Zabdi, the son of Asaph, *was* the principal to begin the thanksgiving in prayer; and Bakkubiah the second among his brethren, and Abda the son of Shammua, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun.

18 All the Levites in the holy city *were* two hundred fourscore and four.

19 Moreover, the porters, Akkub, Talmon, and their brethren that kept the gates, *were* an hundred seventy and two.

20 ¶ And the residue of Israel, of the priests and the Levites, *were* in all the cities of Judah, every one in his inheritance.

21 But the Nethinims dwelt in Ophel: and Ziha and Gispa *were* over the Nethinims.

22 The overseer also of the Levites at Jerusalem *was* Uzzi the son of Bani, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Micha. Of the sons of Asaph, the singers *were* over the business of the house of God.

23 For *it was* the king's commandment con-

the city; and the other was his deputy; who is called *secondary*, because he was next to him in the discharge of that office. Who is he, as Bertram thinks, that is called in the second book of Maccabees, ch. iii. 4, ἀποστράτης τοῦ ἱεροῦ, “the prefect of the temple;” and by Josephus, Antiq. xiv. 11, ἀποστράτηγός ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμοις, “the under governor in Jerusalem” (see his *Repub. Jud.* p. 163).

Ver. 10.] Now he comes to speak of the tribe of Levi; many of which it was necessary should dwell there to attend the house of God. And first he begins with the priests, who were his chief ministers.

Ver. 11.] This Seraiah was such a chief man among the priests, as he that is mentioned in 2 Chron. xix. 11 (see there). Some take him to be the same with him that is called in the New Testament στρατηγός τοῦ ἱεροῦ, which we translate “the captain of the temple.”

Ver. 12. *Their brethren that did the work of the house*] Who discharged all the offices of the priests in the temple.

Ver. 14. *Mighty men of valour.*] Some of the priests were noted to be men of great courage, who, when there was occasion, fought for their country, especially to defend the house of God.

Their overseer was Zabdiel, the son of one of the great men.] Or, as the margin, “the son of Haggadolim,” was set over these valiant men; being descended (it is supposed by some) from some of the great men among the priests; as the word *haggadolim* imports.

Ver. 15.] After the priests he gives an account of the Levites; among whom this person, and the two other mentioned in the next verses, were the chief.

Ver. 16.] There were a great many things to be done without the temple, as well as within, to prepare for the service of it; particularly to gather the third part of a shekel, which every one was to give to make provision for it (ch. x. 32), which work was committed to these men. Though Bertram (*De Republica Judaica*, p. 160, 363), thinks this may be the meaning, That they were judges and officers in the country, where their presence was necessary, when there were but few to discharge *such outward business in Israel*, as it is called in 1 Chronicles xxvi. 29.

Ver. 17. *Mattaniah—was the principal to begin the thanksgiving in prayer.*] He was the precursor (as we call him in our choirs) who began to sing the hymn at morning and evening sacrifice; which seems to be that in 1 Chron. xvi. 7, 8, &c., in the latter part of which they pray to God, as in the former they give thanks.

And Bakkubiah the second among his brethren, and Abda] The first of these seems to have supplied the place of Mattaniah when he was absent.

Ver. 18.] Who certainly attended there; unless we suppose with Bertram, that they went forth some time about some *outward business*, which they were required to despatch.

Ver. 19.] Who had the custody of the gates of the temple.

Ver. 20.] He had said before that the rest of Israel dwelt in their own cities (verse 3), and now he saith, that so did the rest of the priests and the Levites dwell in the cities anciently appointed for them.

Ver. 21. *Ophel.*] Which was a place upon the wall of Jerusalem, or a tower near it (see ch. iii. 26; 2 Chron. xxvii. 3).

Ziha and Gispa were over the Nethinims.] Two persons of their own body, I suppose, who were appointed to see them do their duty.

Ver. 22. *The overseer also of the Levites at Jerusalem was Uzzi*] He was set over the Levites, to govern them, and see them discharge their offices in an orderly manner. The LXX. translate it Ἐπίσκοπος, and so doth the Vulgar; for he was supervisor of those below him.

Of the sons of Asaph, the singers were over the business of the house of God.] They were ordered to look after the reparation of the temple; for which they had the more leisure, both because they did not come in their courses to Jerusalem, as others did, but were settled there; and were to attend at the temple only at certain hours, after which they might look after other business.

Ver. 23.] Beside the forenamed reasons, they had great encouragement from the king, who ordered them a certain portion for their maintenance every day. Some are of opinion, that this was king David, who first appointed them to attend in a settled

cerning them, that a certain portion should be for the singers, due for every day.

24 And Pethahiah the son of Meshezabeel, of the children of Zerah, the son of Judah, *was* at the king's hand in all matters concerning the people.

25 And for the villages, with their fields, *some* of the children of Judah dwelt at Kirjath-arba, and *in* the villages thereof, and at Dibon, and *in* the villages thereof, and at Jekabzeel, and *in* the villages thereof,

26 And at Jeshua, and at Moladah, and at Beth-pheret,

27 And at Hazar-shual, and at Beer-sheba, and *in* the villages thereof,

28 And at Ziklag, and at Mekonah, and in the villages thereof,

29 And at En-rimmon, and at Zareah, and at Jarmuth,

30 Zanoah, Adullam, and *in* their villages, at Lachish, and the fields thereof, at Azekah, and *in* the villages thereof. And they dwelt from Beer-sheba unto the valley of Hinnom.

31 The children also of Benjamin from Geba *dwelt* at Michmash, and Aija, and Beth-el, and *in* their villages,

32 *And* at Anathoth, Nob, Ananiah,

33 Hazor, Ramah, Gittaim,

34 Hadid, Zeboim, Neballat,

35 Lod, and Ono, the valley of craftsmen.

36 And of the Levites *were* divisions in Judah, *and* in Benjamin.

course; but it is more likely it was the king of Persia, who out of his munificence made them a daily allowance for their better support; they that sang hymns to their gods being persons much valued in all countries: and if David made any provision for them, it being lost, most likely was not yet restored.

Ver. 24. *And Pethahiah the son of Meshezabeel.*] We had the children of Pharez named before, who settled at Jerusalem (ver. 6), and now it appears that some of the posterity of his brother did the same; for here is one man mentioned who was of great authority under the king of Persia, as it here follows.

Was at the king's hand in all matters concerning the people.] The king appointed them to receive all petitions from the people, and by him returned them answers. This seems the plain sense, according to our translation. But some translate it, not "at the king's hand," but "on the king's part," that is, he heard all causes in civil matters between the king and the people; as, about his tribute, or any grievance of which they complained. And Bertram thinks it appears by the very context, that he was appointed by the king (so at *his hand*, or *by his hand*, may be understood) to see all things supplied which the people were bound to furnish for the temple: or rather, as Pellicanus thinks, to see that what the king allowed for public sacrifices to be made for him, and for his family (Ezra vi. 10), was duly paid out of the treasury of the province.

Ver. 25.] He gives no account of the families that

dwelt in the country, as he doth of those that settled in Jerusalem, but only mentions the towns wherein they dwelt, which formerly had been walled cities, but now open villages, wherein houses were built, but not their walls.

Ver. 26.] In this and in the following verses unto ver. 31. he mentions the other towns wherein the children of Judah dwelt, who did not come to inhabit at Jerusalem.

Ver. 30.] It appears by this account that some of these great towns or cities without walls had little villages about them, but others had only fields and no villages in them, the country being as yet but thinly peopled.

Ver. 31.] Geba had formerly been an eminent place in this tribe, and so was Beth-el.

Ver. 35.] We read of Lod and Ono before in the first book of Chronicles (see ch. viii. 12).

Ver. 36.] The rest of the Levites who were not settled at Jerusalem were distributed among the people of Judah and Benjamin, who dwelt in the fore-named towns, whom they taught and instructed in religion and good manners.

We read also 1 Chron. ix. 3, that some of the children of Ephraim and Manasseh dwelt at Jerusalem; but, I suppose, they were so few, that they are not here remembered; or, perhaps, they removed to some other place when Jerusalem continued without walls.

CHAPTER XII.

1 The priests, 8 and the Levites, which came up with Zerubbabel. 10 The succession of high priests. 22 Certain chief Levites. 27 The solemnity of the dedication of the walls. 44 The offices of priests and Levites appointed in the temple.

I Now these *are* the priests and the Levites that went up with Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua: Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra,

2 Amariah, Malluch, Hattush,
3 Shechaniah, Rehum, Meremoth,
4 Iddo, Ginnetho, Abijah,

CHAP. XII.

Ver. 1. *Now these are the priests*] The chief of the priests, as they are called ver. 7, whom he thought fit to mention here, because he intended to describe the dedication and consecration of the city, where the ministry of the priests and Levites was to be employed.

Ezra.] If this was the same Ezra that wrote the foregoing book, or part of it, then he went back to Babylon after his coming up to Jerusalem with Ze-

rubbabel, and came again instructed with a large power in the seventh year of Artaxerxes: but there are many reasons to prove he was not the same.

Ver. 2. *Malluch.*] He that is here called Malluch, is called Melicu, ver. 14, and such differences are in some of the following names, which are repeated ver. 15, 16, &c. It being common among the Jews (as I have noted upon the book of Chronicles) to vary in the pronunciation of names, and sometimes to give two names.

Ver. 3.] The first of these is called Shebaniah, ver.

- 5 Miamin, Maadiah, Bilgah,
 6 Shemaiah, and Joiarib, Jedaiah,
 7 Sallu, Amok, Hilkiah, Jedaiah. These were
 the chief of the priests, and of their brethren, in
 the days of Jeshua.
- 8 Moreover, the Levites: Jeshua, Binnui,
 Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, and Mattaniah,
 which was over the thanksgiving, he and his
 brethren.
- 9 Also Bakkukiah and Unni, their brethren,
 were over against them in the watches.
- 10 ¶ And Jeshua begat Joiakim, Joiakim also
 begat Eliashib, and Eliashib begat Joiada,
 11 And Joiada begat Jonathan, and Jonathan
 begat Jaddua.
- 12 And in the days of Joiakim were priests,
 the chief of the fathers; of Seraiah, Meraiah; of
 Jeremiah, Hananiah;
- 13 Of Ezra, Meshullam; of Amariah, Jeho-
 nanan;
- 14 Of Melicu, Jonathan; of Shebaniah, Jo-
 seph;
- 15 Of Harim, Adna; of Meraioth, Helkai;
- 16 Of Iddo, Zechariah; of Ginnethon, Me-
 shallam;
- 17 Of Abijah, Zichri; of Miniamin, of Moa-
 diah, Piltai;

14, and the other two in ver. 15, are called Harim and Meraioth.

Ver. 4.] The second of these is called Ginnethon, ver. 16, which is a small difference. And Abijah was the head of the course of priests from whom Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, sprung, as Bertram thinks, *De Rep. Jud. cap. 18, p. 311.*

Ver. 5.] The first of these is called Miniamin, and the next Moadiah, ver. 17, which are likewise very small variations.

Ver. 7. *Sallu.*] The first of these is called Sallai, ver. 20.

These were the chief of the priests] Heads of the courses of the priests which David instituted, and were restored after their return from captivity, though as yet not so many as they had been before (see Ezra vi. 18).

And of their brethren in the days of Jeshua.] Who was the high-priest at the return from captivity. The meaning seems to be, that they were not only heads of all those who were under them, but the chief of the heads, who were properly their brethren.

Ver. 8.] They were appointed to see the psalm of thanksgiving sung every morning and evening at the burnt-sacrifice.

Ver. 9.] That is, these ministered in their courses as the others did, and kept their stations over against them in their turns of attendance, which are called "their watches" or wards (see ver. 24).

Ver. 10, 11.] In these two verses is an account of the succession of the high-priests from the return of the captivity till the time that they began to bear the greatest sway in the Jewish nation. For this Jaddua is commonly thought to be that Jaddus the high-priest who went to meet Alexander the Great, in his pontifical habit, as he came from the conquest of Tyre and Gaza, and procured great privileges for the Jewish nation. Now this being granted, the scripture history ends, as Grotius observes, where the very light of times (as he speaks), that is, the affairs of Alexander, begins: from which time all things in history are clear, the affairs of the Jews being re-

18 Of Bilgah, Shammua; of Sheinaiah, Jehonathan;

19 And of Joiarib, Mattenai; of Jedaiah, Uzzi;

20 Of Sallai, Kallai; of Amok, Eber;

21 Of Hilkiah, Hashabiah; of Jedaiah, Ne-thaneel.

22 ¶ The Levites in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, and Johanan, and Jaddua, were recorded chief of the fathers; also the priests, to the reign of Darius the Persian.

23 The sons of Levi, the chief of the fathers, were written in the book of the Chronicles, even until the days of Johanan, the son of Eliashib.

24 And the chief of the Levites: Hashabiah, Sherebiah, and Jeshua the son of Kadmiel, with their brethren over against them, to praise and to give thanks, according to the commandment of David the man of God, ward over against ward.

25 Mattaniah, and Bakkukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Talmon, Akkub, were porters keeping the ward at the thresholds of the gates.

26 These were in the days of Joiakim the son of Jeshua, the son of Jozadak, and in the days of Nehemiah the governor, and of Ezra the priest, the scribe.

recorded by many Greek writers (several of whom are now perished), as appears by St. Jerome upon Daniel.

Ver. 13.] As he had mentioned those who were chief of the priests in the days of Jeshua, so now he thinks fit to mention the sons of every one of them who officiated in the days of Joiakim the son of Jeshua, either as assistants to their fathers, or succeeding them when they were dead. He begins with those three named ver. 1, and so proceeds in order to give an account of the rest, which reaches to ver. 22, and need not be transcribed.

Ver. 22. *The Levites in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, and Johanan* (called Jonathan, ver. 11),—*also the priests, to the reign of Darius the Persian.*] This is thought by many to be that Darius whom Alexander conquered, till whose time there were records kept of the principal families of the Levites, in the days of those four high-priests, as well as of the priests already mentioned.

Ver. 23.] As there had been a register of them in the public records before that time from Jeshua to Johanan. Some think this refers to 1 Chron. ix. 14, &c.

Ver. 24. *And the chief of the Levites:—to praise and to give thanks.*] These were particularly appointed for this office, which was of great importance.

Ward over against ward.] In their turns, one coming on when another went out, to attend in their courses, which are called wards.

Ver. 25.] Of the house of God, where they attended and performed their office; or, as some will have it, at the *treasuries*, as in the margin of our bibles.

Ver. 26.] It is impossible to give a certain account why these are so particularly registered in this book; but we may be sure there was some great reason for it in those days: perhaps, that it might demonstrate their care to employ the best men in all offices for which they were fit; and that they took special care to preserve a faithful record of those who were to serve God as his ministers, as long as they

27 ¶ And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought the Levites out of all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem, to keep the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgivings, and with singing, *with* cymbals, psalteries, and with harps.

28 And the sons of the singers gathered themselves together, both out of the plain country round about Jerusalem, and from the villages of Netophathi;

29 Also from the house of Gilgal, and out of the fields of Geba, and Azmaveth: for the singers had builded them villages round about Jerusalem.

30 And the priests and the Levites purified themselves, and purified the people, and the gates, and the wall.

31 Then I brought up the princes of Judah, upon the wall, and appointed two great *companies of them that gave thanks, whereof one* went on the right hand upon the wall: toward the dung gate:

32 And after them went Hoshajah, and half of the princes of Judah,

33 And Azariah, Ezra, and Meshullam.

34 Judah and Benjamin, and Shemaiah, and Jeremiah,

35 And *certain of the priests' sons* with trum-

pets; *namely*, Zechariah the son of Jonathan, the son of Shemaiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Michaiah, the son of Zaccur, the son of Asaph;

36 And his brethren, Shemaiah, and Azarai, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethaneel, and Judah. Hanani, with the musical instruments of David the man of God, and Ezra the scribe before them.

37 And at the fountain gate, which was over against them, they went up by the stairs of the city of David, at the going up of the wall, above the house of David, even unto the water gate eastward.

38 And the other *company of them that gave thanks* went over against *them*, and I after them, and the half of the people upon the wall, from beyond the tower of the furnaces even unto the broad wall;

39 And from above the gate of Ephraim, and above the old gate, and above the fish gate, and the tower of Hananeel, and the tower of Meah, even unto the sheep gate: and they stood still in the prison gate.

40 So stood the *two companies of them that gave thanks* in the house of God, and I, and the half of the rulers with me:

were a nation: which they have not a long time been, and so all distinctions among them are confounded.

Ver. 27.] As Solomon and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the Lord when it was built (of which see 1 Kings viii. 2 Chron. vii.) so now Nehemiah, having set things in good order, thought it meet to dedicate the city, whose wall was built, and gates set up (ver. 30.) as a place in which God had chosen to dwell, by settling his house here. And therefore they assembled to beseech his blessing and protection upon this city; which being made strong, and well defended, they hoped to serve God in his house there with greater quietness and security.

The Jewish doctors are of opinion, that the oracle being wanting in the temple, this dedication gave no new sanctity, but only restored it to the old; for it was still *the holy city*, as it is called twice in the foregoing chapter of this book, ch. xi. 1, 18. See Selden, lib. iii. De Synedriis, cap. 13, sect. 6, where he observes, that it being said here it was dedicated *with a song* (for so it is in the Hebrew,) there was some particular song of dedication, which had been formerly used, which was now sung upon this occasion. And some think, that ever after this time they made a yearly commemoration of this dedication, as they conceive there was of Solomon's dedication of the temple. For the heathen, who imitated the Jews (whose temple Solomon built two hundred and sixty-three years before Rome was built) were wont so to do. But Selden thinks Hospinianus rightly judges, that the Maccabees kept the first anniversary dedication, ch. 14, sect. 7, and upon another account.

Ver. 28, 29.] These were the places where they had settled their habitations; from whence, upon Nehemiah's summons, they came to be present and assist at this solemnity.

For the singers had builded them villages round about Jerusalem.] That they might be the more ready to attend the service of God, when there should be occasion.

Ver. 30. *The priests and the Levites purified themselves.*] With certain ablutions and expiations, that especially which is mentioned, in Numb. xix. where a "water of separation" is prescribed to purify all uncleanness, ver. 9, &c. which is called "the water of purifying," Numb. viii. 7.

And purified the people, and the gates, and the wall.] By sprinkling, I suppose, the same water upon them, and by prayers, and sacrifices.

Ver. 31. *Appointed two great companies of them that gave thanks.*] So the LXX. translate the Hebrew words *shethe tothoth gedoloth*, δύο μεγάλοις χοροῖς "two great for praise;" that is, "two great choirs," as the Vulgar translates it, which most versions follow. But our great Selden thinks the words should be translated, "two eucharistical sacrifices," prepared for the altars, which were proper to the present business. The Spanish Jews translate the words, "two grand processions," (lib. iii. De Syned. cap. 13, sect. 6, p. 210, and see Dr. Hammond upon Ps. xxiv. annot. p. 139.)

Whereof one went on the right hand upon the wall toward the dung gate.] We add those words "whereof one," because of the other mentioned ver. 38, but in the Hebrew the words are, "going on the right," &c.

Ver. 33. *And Azariah, Ezra.*] Not Ezra the scribe, who was in a more honourable place (ver. 36.)

Ver. 35, 36.] They, in these verses, were priests; and therefore Ezra, who was an eminent priest, led them up at the head of them.

Ver. 37.] See ch. iii. 15.

Ver. 40.] The great man before mentioned translates the first words, "So stood the two eucharistical sacrifices in the house of God."

The order wherein they thus marched, in a pompous manner, round about the city, now seems a little obscure: but the sense of the whole description is this; That they being met together in the same place, half of the rulers went upon the wall on the right hand, accompanied with several priests and Levites, and Ezra the scribe at the head of them (ver.

41 And the priests; Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Michaiah, Elieonai, Zechariah, and Hananiah, with trumpets;

42 And Maaseiah, and Shemaiah, and Eleazar, and Uzzi, and Jehohanan, and Malchijah, and Elam, and Ezer. And the singers sang aloud, with Jezrahiah *their* overseer.

43 Also that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced; for God had made them rejoice with great joy: the wives also and the children rejoiced; so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off.

44 ¶ And at that time were some appointed over the chambers for the treasures, for the offerings, for the first-fruits, and for the tithes, to gather into them, out of the fields of the cities,

36), and the other half took the left hand, and walked upon the wall in the same order, accompanied with Nehemiah, who brought up the rear of them (ver. 38), and at length both parts of this *chorus* met in the temple; and there they stood still, and completed their praises and thanksgivings, and offered sacrifices, as it here follows. Where all the people walked it is not certain, but only that half of them went with Nehemiah upon the wall; the rest, it is likely, walking below, because the wall could not contain them.

Ver. 41, 42.] It doth not appear that they sounded the trumpets or sang while they were in the procession, but the song and the music began when they came to the house of God.

Ver. 43. *Also that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced.*] Feasting, I suppose, upon the eucharistical sacrifices which were then offered.

For God had made them rejoice with great joy.] By restoring the holy city to such a secure condition, that they praised the Lord there without fear of disturbance. It was also an universal joy. The singers sang with such loud voices, and had so many loud instruments, the women and children also shouting, that they might be heard at a great distance: or, the meaning may be, that the report of it was spread into far distant countries.

Ver. 44. *Some appointed over the chambers for the treasures.*] By "the treasures," he means those places where the oblations, first-fruits, tithes (which they had promised to pay duly, ch. x. 31, &c.), were laid up, and preserved for the use of the priests and Levites. Of which, that they might not be defrauded, a certain officer was at this time appointed, to see they were brought in according to the law, and to take care that every one had his portion.

For Judah rejoiced for the priests and for the Levites that waited.] They were so glad to see such a great concourse of them (ver. 27, &c.), and that they performed their duty upon this occasion to the general satisfaction of all that were present, that their hearts were enlarged in love to them, which moved them to take care they should never want the provision appointed by God for them.

Ver. 45. *Both the singers and the porters kept the*

portions of the law for the priests and Levites: for Judah rejoiced for the priests and for the Levites that waited.

45 And both the singers and the porters kept the ward of their God, and the ward of the purification, according to the commandment of David, and of Solomon his son.

46 For in the days of David and Asaph, of old, *there were* chief of the singers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving unto God.

47 And all Israel, in the days of Zerubbabel, and in the days of Nehemiah, gave the portions of the singers and the porters every day his portion; and they sanctified *holy things* unto the Levites, and the Levites sanctified *them* unto the children of Aaron.

ward of their God, and the ward of the purification.] These and other ministers (who also were Levites) did their duty so carefully, that they were much in the people's favour. For the singers "kept the ward of their God," that is, sang orderly in their courses, and praised God; and the porters "kept the ward of purification," that is, duly observed the orders about *purification* in not suffering any unclean person or unclean thing to come into the house of God.

According to the commandment of David, and of Solomon] Who had regulated all things belonging to the duty of these persons (see 1 Chron. xxv. xxvi.).

Ver. 46.] There were other famous men joined with Asaph, viz. Heman and Jeduthun; but he was the principal person whom David employed in this regulation. And this verse gives the reason why the Levites and the singers performed their duty so accurately; because, from the time of David, who constituted their orders and offices, there were some great men who presided over them, and were careful both to instruct them in their duty, and keep them to it.

Ver. 47. *And all Israel, in the days of Zerubbabel, and in the days of Nehemiah, gave the portions of the singers and the porters every day his portion.*] Those men that were appointed to look after the treasures, mentioned ver. 44, did their duty so well, that these inferior officers, much less the rest of the Levites and priests, never wanted what was due unto them, but had it every day while Zerubbabel and Nehemiah governed.

They sanctified holy things unto the Levites; and the Levites sanctified them unto the children of Aaron.] The people separated and set apart the tenth part of their crop for the use of the Levites; and the Levites separated from their tithes the tenth part of them for their priests. For the people had no right to the tenth part, but it was holy, that is, to be separated from the rest for God's ministers, the Levites; and the Levites had no right to the tenth part of their tithes which they had received from the people, but it was to be set apart (which is called *sanctified*), for the children of Aaron, that is, the priests.

CHAPTER XIII.

1 Upon the reading of the law separation is made from the mixed multitude. 4 Nehemiah at his return causeth the chambers to be cleansed. 10 He reformeth the offices in the house of God. 15 The violation of the sabbath, 23 and the marriages with strange wives.

1 On that day they read in the book of Moses in the audience of the people; and therein was found written, that the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God for ever;

2 Because they met not the children of Israel with bread and with water, but hired Balaam against them, that he should curse them; howbeit our God turned the curse into a blessing.

3 Now it came to pass, when they had heard the law, that they separated from Israel all the mixed multitude.

4 ¶ And before this, Eliashib the priest, having

CHAP. XIII.

Ver. 1.] This was not done upon the day of the dedication of the wall of the city, but upon some day after Nehemiah was returned to Jerusalem from Persia, whither he went to wait upon the king (ver. 6). For it is not likely that the people, who were so well affected to the ministers of God, as we read in the foregoing chapter, should so soon forget and neglect them; or that those who were appointed to look after their concerns (ch. xii. 41), should be turned out of their office immediately, or lay aside all care of them: for it is apparent, from verse 10, of this chapter, their dues were not paid them when Nehemiah was not there to look after them. But when he was returned, all this was amended, and other abuses corrected: he continuing the public reading of the law, at stated times, probably on the great festivals, when all the people met together (such as those mentioned ch. viii.), upon some day of which that portion of scripture was read, in Deut. xxiii. 2, which forbids the admission of the Ammonites and Moabites into the congregation of the Lord; the meaning whereof see in my annotations there. I will only add here, that they who by the congregation of God, in this place, understand the public assemblies for divine worship, are very much mistaken: for no man, of any nation, was forbidden to come and pray to God at the temple, but men of every nation, who would become proselytes, were admitted into their communion; and if they would be circumcised, had like privileges with all other Israelites, even to eat the passover (Exod. xii. 48, 49). They therefore, that think the meaning is, they should be excluded from all public offices, interpret it better: but that is not the truth neither; for it is to be understood of marrying with them, as I have shown in the explication of that law.

Ver. 2.] See upon Deut. xxiii. 4, 5.

Ver. 3.] Who were born of strangers, whom the law would not allow to partake of the rites of marriage with Israelites.

Ver. 4. Before this,] That is, before this separation was made.

Eliashib the priest,] There were several of this name in those times, and some of them priests (Ezra x. 6, 24, 26, 37). But this seems to have been the high-priest mentioned ch. iii. 1, for his family was much corrupted, as appears from verse 28 of this chapter.

the oversight of the chamber of the house of our God, was allied unto Tobiah:

5 And he had prepared for him a great chamber, where aforetime they laid the meat-offerings, the frankincense, and the vessels, and the tithes of the corn, the new wine, and the oil, which was commanded to be given to the Levites, and the singers, and the porters; and the offerings of the priests.

6 But in all this time was not I at Jerusalem: for in the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon came I unto the king, and after certain days obtained I leave of the king:

Having the oversight of the chamber] Here the singular number is used for the plural; for he had not the oversight of one chamber only, but of all the chambers, as the following verses. 5, 9 show. But this may seem to indicate, that Eliashib was not high-priest, it being below him to be "set over the chamber" (as the phrase is in the Hebrew), though the high-priest, no doubt, had an inspection over them all.

Was allied unto Tobiah:] An Ammonite, as he is often called in this book; with whom he ought to have contracted no affinity, by suffering his grandson to marry with Sanballat's daughter; who was the fast friend of Tobiah, and the great enemy of the Jews. We read also in Ezra that several of the priests had married strange wives; and among the rest some of the sons of the high-priest are there mentioned.

Ver. 5. He had prepared for him a great chamber.] By breaking down the partitions, it is likely, between several little chambers, where holy things were laid, he prepared one great room for his reception.

Where aforetime they laid the meat-offerings, the frankincense, and the vessels, &c.] All the offerings that belonged to the ministers of God (and the vessels wherewith they ministered), which there had been great care taken should be brought into these chambers (the latter end of ch. x.), were now all profanely thrown out to make room for this man.

Ver. 6. But in all this time was not I at Jerusalem:] They took this boldness in Nehemiah's absence; and were the more audacious, because many of the nobles of Judah (it is likely) favoured this Tobiah, and were his friends, as they had been heretofore (ch. vi. 17, 18).

For in the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon came I unto the king.] He was governor twelve years in this province; but did not continue all that time in Judea: for he sometimes stepped to Babylon, to give an account of his management to the king, who, it is likely (as I have before observed), would not dispense with so long an absence from his attendance to his office at court (see upon ch. ii. 6: v. 41).

After certain days] In the Hebrew the words are "at the end of days," that is, at the end of the year. For so the word *jamin* [days] often signifies in scripture, Exodus xiii. 10: Leviticus xxv. 29 (see below, verse 15).

Obtained I leave of the king:] To return to Jeru-

7 And I came to Jerusalem, and understood of the evil that Eliashib did for Tobiah, in preparing him a chamber in the courts of the house of God.

8 And it grieved me sore: therefore I cast forth all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber.

9 Then I commanded, and they cleansed the chambers; and thither brought I again the vessels of the house of God, with the meat-offering and the frankincense.

10 ¶ And I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given them: for the Levites and the singers that did the work were fled every one to his field.

11 Then contended I with the rulers, and said, Why is the house of God forsaken? And I gathered them together, and set them in their place.

12 Then brought all Judah the tithes of the

salem: from whence, it is probable, he heard of the forenamed disorders, and therefore once more begged leave to go thither, that he might redress them.

Ver. 7. *I came to Jerusalem, and understood of the evil that Eliashib did for Tobiah.*] He was fully informed what evil had been committed, before he went about to reform it.

In preparing him a chamber in the courts] In the court of the Israelites, which was a sacred place, into which no stranger might enter.

Ver. 8.] His indignation was raised, as well as his sorrow, to see such a profanation: first, in bringing a stranger into the place where only Israelites were to come; and he an Ammonite, one of the worst of the strange nations, and a greater enemy of the Jews than many of the Ammonites; for whose sake he had removed the holy things, and put Tobiah in their place, who brought his household-stuff along with him; and all this done by the high-priest, who ought to have opposed such an attempt, and, indeed, was the only man that could have hindered it, till Nehemiah came, whose authority, as governor under the king of Persia, was superior to his; by which he threw all his goods out of the chamber, and forced him also to depart. Here is no mention of his reprehending Eliashib, which is an argument, that he died after Nehemiah went from Jerusalem.

Ver. 9.] He gave order, that the chambers, which had been thus profaned, should be restored to their former sanctity by the water of purification, mentioned in the nineteenth of Numbers; whereby things, as well as persons, were cleansed from their impurities. And when the chambers were thus prepared, he brought in again all the vessels, and other things (mentioned verse 5), which had been thrown out to make room for Tobiah.

Ver. 10. *I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given them.*] For either the people did not pay them well, when they saw they were not laid up for their proper use in the place appointed, or Eliashib employed them for the entertainment of Tobiah; which he might as well do, as bring him into the sacred place: into which when they were not brought, the people, not knowing what became of them, might keep them to themselves (see Bishop Montague, of Tithes, p. 347).

For the Levites and the singers, that did the work, were fled every one to his field.] This made those that attended the service at Jerusalem forsake the city, and betake themselves to their country concerns, where they might make provision for the sustenance of their families. And, indeed, it is a great

corn and the new wine and the oil unto the treasuries.

13 And I made treasurers over the treasuries, Shelemiah the priest, and Zadok the scribe; and of the Levites, Pedaiah; and next to them was Hanan the son of Zaccur, the son of Mattaniah; for they were counted faithful, and their office was to distribute unto their brethren.

14 Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof.

15 ¶ In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine-presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals.

artifice of the devil, as Wolfius here observes, by his instruments to defraud the ministers of religion of their necessary maintenance, that he may thereby abolish religion itself.

Ver. 11. *Then contended I with the rulers.*] He earnestly expostulated with them, and reproved them.

Why is the house of God forsaken?] There was no account to be given of it, but the negligence of the magistrates; whom he awakens to their duty, by representing to them that God himself was highly affronted, by having none of his servants to attend him at his house.

I gathered them together.] He recalled the Levites to Jerusalem, out of the country, whither they were fled to look after their own estates.

Set them in their place.] Every one to his proper work and business.

Ver. 12.] When they saw these things were likely to go the right way, and be employed to their proper uses, they brought them to their proper place. For the people (as Conradus Pellicanus here notes) readily obey, if the magistrates and the priests be not remiss in their duty.

Ver. 13.] There had been some appointed heretofore unto this office (ch. x. 44, &c.), but they not performing their trust, Nehemiah sought out some persons, here mentioned, who had the general reputation of being men of integrity; whose business it was to give every one of their brethren his portion.

Ver. 14.] It is very natural here to observe, that to make provision for the maintenance of God's ministers, and of his worship and service, is a work of high esteem with God. For these are the *good deeds* (as appears by the foregoing verses) for which Nehemiah recommends himself to the divine favour and remembrance. And therefore what shall we think of the times wherein we live; when men account them the most religious to God-ward, who would unfurnish the house of God most, and who most rob his priests! This is the reflection which Mr. Mede made upon these words of Nehemiah, book i. discourse xxxiv.

Ver. 15. *In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine-presses on the sabbath, &c.*] The treading wine-presses, shows that he came back in the latter end of the year (as I have explained "in the end of days," verse 6), when he found them carrying in sheaves and wine, and all manner of burdens (that is, doing all manner of work), on the sabbath, as if it had been a common day.

I testified against them in the day wherein they sold

16 There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem.

17 Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day?

18 Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath.

19 And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath: and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day.

20 So the merchants and sellers of all kind

victuals.] Or, as Pellicanus translates it, "I contended with them, that they should sell provisions on such days as they might be sold, and not on the Sabbath."

Ver. 16. *There dwell men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware.*] The city of Tyre was a place of great trade, and, lying on the sea, abounded with fish, which they brought from thence to Joppa, and so to Jerusalem. Tyre was nigh to Sidon, which had its name (as Justin saith, lib. xviii. ab ubertate piscium, "from plenty of fish.")

And sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem.] Not only in the country, but in the holy city, as Jerusalem was called, where holy assemblies were to be held, and God worshipped solemnly, on the Sabbath.

Ver. 17. *Then I contended with the nobles of Judah.*] As I had done before, ver. 11, for they who did not correct abuses when it was in their power, were more in fault than that committed them.

What evil thing is this that ye do.] For if they had exercised their authority, the people durst not have done as they did.

Ver. 18.] He bids them reflect and consider, that this was one of the crimes of which their fathers were guilty; for which God suffered them to be carried captive out of their land, and their city to be destroyed (see Jer. xvii. 19—21, &c.). This aggravated their guilt, that they would not beware of those sins which had been their ruin; and would bring greater judgments upon them, because they were not amended by what they had suffered.

Ver. 19. *When the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark*] That is, when they who sat there could not see to do any thing, which was about sunset, the mountains about Jerusalem intercepting the light there sooner than in other places.

Before the sabbath.] In the evening of that day.

Some of my servants set I at the gates.] It seems, he could not trust to the common porters of the gates; and therefore appointed some of his own family, who he knew would neither be careless nor corrupted, to see the gates were kept shut, and all traffic hindered.

Ver. 20. *So the merchants*] Who came from Tyre and other places (ver. 16).

Lodged without Jerusalem once or twice.] In the open fields (as appears by the next verse), where, perhaps, they pitched their tents, and opened their packs, hoping to sell their wares on the sabbath to the country people, though they could not get admittance into Jerusalem.

Ver. 21. *I testified against them.*] He solemnly de-

clared to them, and called God to witness, that he would not suffer them to lodge there any more.

If ye do so again, I will lay hands on you.] Seize their persons and their goods, and punish them as offenders.

From that time forth came they no more on the sabbath.] Such power have good magistrates; especially when they are resolute. And it is very observable, that these being men of other nations, were not bound by the law of the Sabbath, and did not transgress in breaking it; yet he would not permit them to make the Jews, who were under the obligation of the law, to break it; and thereby trouble the commonwealth of Israel, by drawing the people into sin. It is also observable, that though buying and selling was not a servile work, yet he thought this comprehended in those words, "Thou shalt do no manner of work."

Ver. 22. *I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves.*] He thought the Levites would be more revered than his servants; and therefore appointed them to this office of keeping the gates on the Sabbath-day, that it might not fail to be sanctified as it ought to be. And they being also on that day to attend upon other offices which were holy, he commanded them also to cleanse themselves by some known purification, which might procure them the greater reverence. There was another reason why he joined the Levites with his servants to look after the gates on the Sabbath-day, because he would have this watch continued, when he and his servants were gone from Jerusalem, till this evil custom was quite-broken.

Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy.] He had besought God to remember his good deeds (ver. 14); but, to show that he did not think there was any proper merit or worthiness in them, which required a reward as a debt in justice due unto them, he here explains himself, and desires to be rewarded, or rather pardoned, out of God's free goodness, according to "the greatness" or "the multitude" of his mercies.

Ver. 23.] They had at this very time married strangers, as Pellicanus thinks; and by what Nehemiah did for their correction, one would think some were again revolted into that sin, which they had most solemnly renounced both before him and before Ezra (ch. x. 30; Ezra x.). So hard is it to root out tares, which will be continually sprouting up again.

Ver. 24.] Whom they had married. For their mothers, with whom they were bred, spake to them in the language of their own country, and not in the

25 And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto your sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves.

26 Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin.

language of the Jews; which it seems by this was very different from that of Ashdod, though they were neighbours to the Philistines. And so was the language of the Egyptians, and other countries thereabout, very different as Bochartus writes in his *Canaan*, lib. ii. cap. 1 (see Scaliger, *De Emend. Temp.* lib. vi. p. 580). But there doth not seem to have been such difference between the language of the Canaanites and the Hebrews in the time of Abraham; for he made use of no interpreters, that we read of, in his conversation with them. Yet it is probable, that by length of time these people had altered their language very much, which was preserved pure among the Jews.

Ver. 25. *I contended with them, and cursed them.*] He expostulated with them, and denounced God's judgment against them; or, as Aben Ezra thinks, he excommunicated them, and cast them out of the society of God's people. But that was in use only when they could not punish offenders according to their law, which now they had power to do; and accordingly it follows, that he did inflict punishments upon them.

Smote certain of them.] Ordered the officers to beat some of the most notorious offenders, either with rods, or with scourges, according to Deut. xxv. 2.

Plucked off their hair.] Which was a great disgrace in those eastern countries (see Isa. i. 6; Jer. xviii. 37); the hair being esteemed a great ornament and a token one was a freeman. Therefore "plucking off the hair" was a putting them to shame, and making them look like vile slaves.

And made them swear by God.] He also took an oath of them that they would reform. But this he had done before (ch. x. 29, 30); and therefore, since the most sacred promises of amendment did not keep them fast to God, he also severely chastised them in the manner before related, that nothing might be wanting to make them better.

Ver. 26. *Did not Solomon—sin by these things?*] He argued also with them, and persuaded them to amend, from the example of the greatest men, who had been undone by such marriages, particularly king Solomon.

Nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin.] As much as to say, If such a man as he, who excelled all men in wisdom, and was so highly in God's favour, that he preferred him before all his brethren to be king over all Israel, was not safe from seducement by strange women, how shall ye be able to preserve yourselves from their enticements?

Ver. 27.] That is, Would you have me connive at this wickedness, and so bring guilt upon myself, and ruin upon you?

Ver. 28. *One of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib*] It is supposed that Eliashib died before Nehemiah returned from Persia, and Joiada his son succeeded him, one of whose sons had offended in this matter. He was his grandson.

Was son in law to Sanballat] He is said by Josephus to be that Manasseh, who, by Sanballat's in-

27 Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God in marrying strange wives?

28 And *one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, was son in law to Sanballat the Horonite*: therefore I chased him from me.

29 Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood, and the covenant of the priesthood, and of the Levites.

30 Thus cleansed I them from all strangers,

terest, procured leave to build a temple in mount Gerizim, to which all the Jews that had married strange wives resorted (lib. xi. cap. 8), and, as Solomon Virga saith, in Schebet Judab, he made proclamation in all the countries round about, that who-soever would come to his temple, they should pay neither first-fruits nor tithes, but only make voluntary offerings: by which he gained many of the poor sort to him (see Selden, lib. ii. *De Synedr.* cap. 15, p. 623).

Therefore I chased him from me.] That he should not serve at the altar; which Josephus will have to be decreed by the great Sanhedrin, who, if he would have before them renounced that unlawful wife, and put her away, offered to continue him in the exercise of his priesthood. See Selden, *De Succession.* in Pontif. lib. ii. cap. 6, and lib. ii. *De Synedr.* cap. 15, p. 649, where he observes, that Solomon Virga saith, he was put out of his ministry at the temple by an assembly of all the priests, who met together and expelled him. But there was no need of their authority, for Nehemiah himself "chased him from him," that is, banished him from Judea, as Bertram expounds this phrase, in his *De Repub. Jud.* cap. 13, p. 165, &c.

Ver. 20. *Remember them, O my God.*] To punish them (that is, according to their deserts), as he desired God to remember him by rewarding him for the good he had done. But Rasi takes it for a prayer to God, to reform them and render them good for evil.

Because they have defiled the priesthood.] God required greater purity in the priests than in other Israelites, and in the high-priests especially, who might marry none but a virgin of his own people (see Lev. xxi. 6, 7, unto ver. 16).

The covenant of the priesthood, and of the Levites.] There was a covenant made with Phinehas (Numb. xxv.) of an everlasting priesthood, which they had violated, because the covenant was mutual, binding them to observe the laws of the priesthood, as God engaged himself to preserve them in their office. What covenant was made with the Levites, I do not find; but I suppose the meaning is, they dishonoured the whole tribe of Levi, who were set apart for divine ministries. For it is likely some of the Levites had transgressed in this matter, by the bad example of the priests. This great corruption of the priests seems to have been the occasion of God's sending Malachi, the last of the prophets, to correct it, after Ezra and Nehemiah had not been able to root out this corruption. And the covenant here mentioned, was that made in the twentieth of Artaxerxes, wherein they engaged to put away their strange wives. Thus Dr. Alix, whose judgment I prefer to my own, in this point.

Ver. 30. *Thus cleansed I them from all strangers.*] That is, both priests and Levites were separated from their strange wives.

And appointed the wards of the priests and the Levites, every one in his business.] To observe their courses of attendance at the house of God, and every

and appointed the wards of the priests and the Levites, every one in his business ;

31 And for the wood offering, at times ap-

pointed, and for the firstfruits. Remember me, O my God, for good.

one to perform there that business which was proper to him.

Ver. 31. *For the wood offering, at times appointed,*] He commanded them to observe the decrees which had been passed some time ago (ch. x. 34, 35). Maimonides, in his treatise of the Manner of offering Sacrifices, ch. 14, gathers from these words, that it was lawful for any man freely to vow either wine, or frankincense, or oil, or wood, to burn on the altar : for this, saith he, was a kind of sacrifice or offering, as Nehemiah here informs us.

Remember me, O my God, for good.] He concludes his book with a short prayer, to God, wherein he commends himself, and all he had done, unto God's gracious acceptance. As it becomes all men, especially those who are employed in divine things, if they have done any thing that is good, to remember it was by God's help and assistance, not by their own power ; beseeching the Father of mercies, by his only begotten Son, to make it serviceable to his church, and his own good. Thus Joh. Wolfius concludes his commentary upon this book.

THE

BOOK OF ESTHER.

THERE is a great variety of opinions concerning the author of this book. Whom a great number of late interpreters, and some of the Hebrew doctors, take to have been Mordecai ; which is the common opinion of the Latins, and of Clemens Alexandrinus among the Greeks ; which, they think, is sufficiently warranted by those words in the ninth chapter, ver. 20, &c., where it is said, "Mordecai wrote all these things, and sent letters unto the Jews," &c. This, they think, relates to this whole history, which he wrote as it is recorded in this book : but those words plainly relate only to the decree of observing the feast of Purim perpetually ; which supposes they had been acquainted with the occasion and ground of it before those letters came, as Huettius observes ; who therefore is of the same opinion with the Talmudists in Baba Bathra, that this book was written by the men of the great synagogue. Which opinion he the rather embraces (though I see no ground at all for it), because it comprehends theirs who think Mordecai was the author, and theirs who ascribe it to Ezra, and theirs who think it was Joiakim the son of Jeshua the high-priest ; for all these might well have been in that synagogue. Whoever was the author, Maimonides saith (in his *More Nevochim*, par. ii. cap. 45) their wise men openly declare, the book of Esther was dictated by the Holy Ghost ; that is, as he explains it, by a motion or impulse (as he calls it) from the Spirit of God, who excited him to write this history, as by the same motion others indited psalms, and gave wholesome precepts, to regulate the lives of men (see ch. x. 3).

And that this history fell out after the captivity of Babylon was ended, and after the time of Darius the Mede, is very evident : for Shushan was not the royal city of the Medes, but of the Persians. Nor had the Medes so large a dominion, as from India to Ethiopia. But in what reign of the Persian kings these things fell out, is hard to determine (see the last verse of this book).

CHAPTER I.

1 *Ahasuerus maketh royal feasts.* 10 *Vashti, sent for, refuseth to come.* 13 *Ahasuerus, by the counsel of Memucan, maketh the decree of men's sovereignty.*

I Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus, (this is Ahasuerus which reigned, from

India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces :)

CHAP. I.

Ver. 1. *In the days of Ahasuerus,*] This was a Persian, but which of them is a great doubt ; for learned men think several of them had this name. There are, I think, eight several opinions about him

here mentioned. Our great primatè Usher takes him to have been Darius Hystaspes ; but he married the daughter of the great Cyrus, to confirm himself in his kingdom, and would not have so easily parted with her as Ahasuerus did with Vashti. The great Scaliger therefore thinks him to have been his suc-

2 That in those days, when the king Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Shushan the palace,

3 In the third year of his reign, he made a feast unto all his princes and his servants; the power of Persia and Media, the nobles and princes of the provinces, being before him.

4 When he shewed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honour of his excellent majesty many days, even an hundred and fourscore days.

cessor Xerxes; whose wife's name being Amystris, he takes her for Esther, this name being in the Persian language Ham-esther. But this hath been confuted by many learned men, particularly by Jacobus Capellus; who observes, that this Amystris was the daughter of a powerful man among the Persians, whom Herodotus calls Otanes. Several other reasons he gives against this in his *Historia Sacra et Exotica*, ad A. M. 3640, 3650, where by good arguments he proves it was not Artaxerxes Longimanus, nor Darius Nothus, nor Artaxerxes Mnemon, but concludes, that it was the next king, Ochus, which agrees well with his Persian name, which was Achasch, to which Veresch being added as his surname, he was called by the Persians Achasch-veresch, which the Greeks translated Ahasuerus.

This is Ahasuerus which reigned from India even unto Ethiopia,] We are told by Herodotus, that Darius conquered India (lib. iv. cap. 44). And there might well be so many provinces between that and Ethiopia, whether we understand thereby the country beyond Egypt, or that near Arabia. Herodotus seems to direct us to the former, when he said, That Darius found by his conquests, that Asia, in that eastern part of the world, was like to Libya.

Ver. 2. When the king Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom,] Enjoying peace and quietness throughout his large dominions. Some think, this phrase, "when he sat on the throne of his kingdom," signifies when he began to reign. But this is confuted by ver. 3, which saith, in the third year of his reign he did what follows.

Which was in Shushan the palace,] This was a noble city, which Strabo calls Πόλιν ἀξιολογουτάτην, "a most famous and highly-to-be-praised city;" where Cyrus and the Persian kings, after the conquest of the Medes (whose country was remote), settled their royal seat, that they might not be far from Babylon. The country about it also was wonderfully fruitful, producing a hundred, and sometimes two hundred fold, as he writes, lib. xv. p. 727, 731. It was built, as Pliny saith, by Darius (lib. vi. cap. 27): or rather enlarged, by building there a most magnificent palace, as Ælian explains it (lib. xiii. De Animal. cap. 59); which Aristotle, in his book De Mundo, calls Θαυμαστόν βασιλείου οἶκον, "a wonderful royal palace," shining with gold, and amber, and ivory.

Ver. 3. He made a feast unto all his princes and his servants,] By his servants are meant his subjects; who were called servants in the eastern countries. And it was the manner of the Roman emperors sometimes to feast all the people of Rome, as well as the senate.

The power of Persia and Media,] And first he speaks of the feast made for the great men, whom he calls the "power of Media and Persia;" men in power, as we now speak.

The nobles and princes of the provinces, being before him,] He explains who they were; the governors of provinces, and other noble persons, who were all then at his court. The word *parthemim*, which we translate nobles, some would have to be the corruption

5 And when these days were expired, the king made a feast unto all the people that were present in Shushan the palace, both unto great and small, seven days, in the court of the garden of the king's palace;

6 Where were white, green, and blue, hangings, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble: the beds were of gold and silver, upon a pavement of red, and blue, and white, and black, marble.

of the Greek word *καράτιμος*, "honourable persons;" and Junius, with others, deduce it from the Greek word *πῦρος*. But the Greeks were not yet got among them; and therefore it is a Persian word, signifying governors, as R. Solomon expounds it: and Joseph Kimchi thinks they were such great men as governed that tract of land that lay upon the river Phrath, that is, Euphrates. But Hottinger will have it to be a compound word from *par*, which signifies high, and *ram*, which signifies spirit; as much as to say "high-spirited" or "heroic" persons; which seems to me to be but an ingenious conceit.

What the occasion of this feast was, is variously conjectured. Some think, it was begun on his birthday. The Targum saith, a great rebellion had been lately suppressed, which filled him with joy. But the next words seem to inform us, that it was to show his magnificent greatness to all his subjects. For in those countries they delighted much in making great feasts; as we read afterward, that Alexander (when he was there) entertained τετρακοσίου ἡγεμόνας, "four hundred captains," or great commanders, who all sat in silver chairs, &c., as Duris tells us in Athenæus, lib. i. Deipnosoph. cap. 14.

Ver. 4.] Which was for the space of six months; from the vernal to the autumnal equinox; which is a hundred fourscore and seven days. For Vashti kept a feast of seven days, at the end of his feast for the women of Susa, as Ochus did for the men (ver. 7, 10). Thus Jacobus Capellus. Some indeed will have it, that he was thus long in making preparation for this splendid entertainment, which did not last many days. But this custom is continued still to this day, of keeping an annual festival a hundred and eighty days, if we may give credit to Dr. Fryar, who lived lately in this country, and gives us an account of it in his Travels (letter v. cap. 12, p. 348).

Ver. 5. The king made a feast unto all the people that were present in Shushan] Not only to the inhabitants of Shushan, but to all that were present in the city, out of all parts of his dominions, the Israelites not excepted, as the Targum saith.

In the court of the garden of the king's palace,] In the entrance of the royal palace; which was very spacious and planted with all sorts of fruit-trees, and aromatics, as the Targum explains it.

Ver. 6. Where were white, green, and blue, hangings, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble,] How the Targum came to fancy that these hangings, being spread from one tree to another, were tied to them with silken purple strings, I know not; for the text saith expressly, they were hanged on pillars of marble, set up, no doubt, for that purpose.

The beds were of gold and silver,] On which they sat, or rather lay, at their meat. The beds themselves were of *meliim* (as Jonathan expresses it), of the softest wool; that is, the Milesian, which is the best in the world, as Bochartus hath observed out of many authors, in his Phaleg, lib. i. cap. 8. But the *bedsteads* were of "gold and silver;" that is, studded with gold and silver, or overlaid with plates of them as the

7 And they gave them drink in vessels of gold, (the vessels being diverse one from another,) and royal wine in abundance, according to the state of the king.

8 And the drinking was according to the law; none did compel; for so the king had appointed to all the officers of his house, that they should do according to every man's pleasure.

9 Also Vashti the queen made a feast for the women in the royal house which belonged to king Ahasuerus.

10 ¶ On the seventh day, when the heart of

the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, and Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, the seven chamberlains that served in the presence of Ahasuerus the king,

11 To bring Vashti the queen before the king with the crown royal, to shew the people and the princes her beauty: for she was fair to look on.

12 But the queen Vashti refused to come at the king's commandment by his chamberlains: therefore was the king very wroth, and his anger burned in him.

manner was; as Dietericus shows in his Antiq. Biblicæ, p. 385.

Upon a pavement of red, and blue, and white, and black, marble.] In the Hebrew, Upon a pavement "of bahat, and ses, and dar, and sochereth," which signify several sorts of stones, as Bochartus hath proved beyond contradiction: but what stones are here meant is not easy to resolve, nor is it of much moment to know. He hath spent a large chapter to prove that dar signifies a pearl; which, though very precious, it is not incredible was used in this Persian luxury, among other stones, to adorn this pavement. Which he justifies by many good arguments; and shows there are examples of such profuseness in other histories (Hieroicoicon, par. ii. lib. v. cap. 8). Drusius also hath said a great deal about sochereth, to which I refer the learned reader, Miscellanea, cent. i. cap. 74.

Ver. 7.] There was a great variety of wines, it is likely, as well as great plenty; and great variety of vessels to drink in, different from all that they had seen. So Drusius translates those words in the parenthesis, *variantia diversa vasa*, as the Jews are said, ch. iii. 8, to have laws different from all other people, where there is the same word (Miscellanea, cent. i. cap. 16). Strabo saith, these princes were so luxurious that they had their wine from Syria, called *chalybomium*; and the water they drank with it, from Euleus, it being *καίτων ελαφρότατον*, "the lightest of all other waters."

Ver. 8. And the drinking was according to the law; none did compel:] The plainest translation seems to be, "the drinking according to custom, none did compel." It was customary to compel men to drink more than they had a mind to do; but this prince left every man to his liberty, that no man should incur any displeasure if he did not drink what others would impose upon him. But Drusius thinks the word *dath* never signifies a custom.

For so the king had appointed to all the officers of his house, that they should do according to every man's pleasure.] Which made the feast most acceptable, when every one drank for his own pleasure, and not for other men's. And such had been the custom of the ancient Persians, who (as Xenophon tells us) were very sparing in eating and drinking, though in his time they were grown extremely riotous. But nothing was more barbarous than their pressing men to drink beyond their inclinations; which the son of Sirach expresses by the word *βλιβειν* (Ecclus. xxxi. 37), it being no less inhuman to force a man to drink when he is not thirsty, than to deny him drink when he is ready to perish with thirst. According to an ancient saying of Sophocles in Athenæus, lib. x. *Τὸ πρὸς βίαν πίνειν, Ἴσον κακὸν τῷ δειψᾶν βίῳ*. "To compel a man to drink by force, is as bad as to compel him to endure thirst for want of drink."

Ver. 9. Also Vashti the queen made a feast for the women] I have before said, it is not likely (as primate

Usher thinks) that this was Atossa the daughter of Cyrus, whom Darius Hystaspes married: for the reason of that match being to strengthen himself in the kingdom, he would not have so lightly parted with her. Jacobus Capellus thinks, by the addition of the word *par* to her name, she was called by the Persians *Par-vashti*, which by the Greeks is pronounced *Parvysatis*, the mother of Artaxerxes Mnemon. But she could not be the wife of Ochus, who was his son.

In the royal house which belonged to king Ahasuerus.] Where she entertained the wives of the princes, and other women; not in the open air, as the men were, but more privately, as was fit for women, who were not wont to eat together with men.

Ver. 10. On the seventh day,] Which was in the conclusion of this feast.

When the heart of the king was merry with wine,] Which made him a little forget himself, and not consider what became both his own state and that of the queen.

He commanded—the seven chamberlains that served in the presence of Ahasuerus.] These eunuchs (as the word is translated in the margin) were men of principal authority in the court; where they had great offices about the king. And therefore he did her honour enough, in sending so many of them to wait upon her, and let her know his pleasure.

Ver. 11.] It is a very absurd conceit of the former Targum, who saith, he commanded her to be brought quite naked, that her comely proportions might be seen as well as her face. And yet in Pirke Eliezer they are so bold as to say, it was the custom of the Persian kings to have their wives publicly dance before them naked. It was too much, she thought, that he should expose her countenance to be beheld, especially by all the people: which was contrary to the custom of that country; where they kept their wives very close from the sight of all men but themselves.

Ver. 12. But the queen Vashti refused to come,] Which she might do out of modesty, not pride; because, as I said, it was contrary to the custom; and the great men, inflamed with wine, might be provoked by her beauty (as Jacobus Capellus speaks) to lust after her.

Therefore was the king very wroth, and his anger burned in him.] It was the more immoderate, because his blood was heated with wine: which made his passion too strong for his reason. Otherwise he would not have thought it decent for the queen, nor safe for himself, to have her beauty (which was very great) exposed in this unusual manner. Josephus saith, he was the more enraged, because he sent more than once to her, but still she refused to come. Which is not probable; for though it would have become him to send again to know her reason for refusing, yet he persisting in his command, one would think she would have yielded obedience.

13 ¶ Then the king said to the wise men, which knew the times, (for so was the king's manner toward all that knew law and judgment :

14 And the next unto him was Carshena, She-thar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan, the seven princes of Persia and Media, which saw the king's face, and which sat the first in the kingdom;)

15 What shall we do unto the queen Vashti according to law, because she hath not performed the commandment of the king Ahasuerus by the chamberlains?

16 And Memucan answered before the king and the princes, Vashti the queen hath not done wrong to the king only, but also to all the princes, and to all the people that are in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus.

17 For this deed of the queen shall come abroad unto all women, so that they shall despise

their husbands in their eyes, when it shall be reported, The king Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, but she came not.

18 Likewise shall the ladies of Persia and Media say this day unto all the king's princes, which have heard of the deed of the queen. Thus shall there arise too much contempt and wrath.

19 If it please the king, let there go a royal commandment from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes, that it be not altered, That Vashti come no more before king Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal estate unto another that is better than she.

20 And when the king's decree which he shall make shall be published throughout all his empire, (for it is great,) all the wives shall give to their husbands honour, both to great and small.

Ver. 13. *Then the king said to the wise men, which knew the times,*] What had been done in former days; or, what was fit to be done on all occasions: men well versed in ancient histories (as Vitringa explains it), and in the laws and customs of their country; who were able to give counsel in all dubious and perplexed cases, such as this was, which rarely happened (De Synag. Vetèri, par. ii. lib. i. cap. 8).

For so was the king's manner toward all that knew law and judgment:] It was his constant practice: and he did not forget this laudable practice even in his drink, to consult with his counsellors before he resolved any thing: who were skilled in the laws of their country, and could judge what advice was to be given in all cases.

Ver. 14. *The next unto him was—the seven princes of Persia and Media,*] These are called the king's seven counsellors in Ezra vii. 14, who took their original from Daniel, who, being in great power under Darius the Mede, and having a great hand in framing the government of that state, caused the Persian court (as Mr. Mede conjectures) to resemble that of heaven, ordaining seven chief princes to stand before the king, as seven great angels are said in Scripture to stand before the throne of God (see book i. discourse x.).

Which saw the king's face,] Who were his principal ministers, and admitted into his presence; which was not allowed to every one, but only to the great men of the kingdom (see Grotius upon Matt. xviii. 10).

Which sat the first in the kingdom;] Next to the king; being his royal judges, who determined what was right among the Persians, and were the interpreters of the laws of the country. Of whom Herodotus makes mention, lib. iii. cap. 14, 31, and Plutarch, in Artaxerxes, as primate Usher observes.

Ver. 15.] These words make it plain, that the fore-named great persons were the supreme judges of what was law; and that the king did not govern arbitrarily, by his own will and pleasure, but by the laws of the kingdom.

Ver. 16. *Memucan answered*] He is the last of the seven princes, mentioned ver. 14, which inclines me to think, that the puny judge, as we now speak, delivered his opinion first (as they do here), and so they spake in order till they came to the first. And thus I find the latter Targum takes it, "He was the least of them, and therefore gave his opinion first." But others take it quite contrary, that Memucan was the president of the council, or the king asked him first what he thought of the matter. He declared it

to be a crime of such a dangerous nature, that it would have a mischievous influence upon the whole kingdom, if it were not severely punished.

Ver. 17. *For this deed of the queen shall come abroad,*] This transgression of the king's commandment (as Maimonides explains it, in More Nevoch. par. i. cap. 23) will be known everywhere; for it could not be concealed, being a public affront to his majesty.

So that they shall despise their husbands] His opinion was, that then they would take upon them to disobey their husbands, and slight their commands, when they heard what Vashti had done, and was not punished for it.

Ver. 18. *Likewise shall the ladies of Persia and Media, &c.*] He repeats it again, that it would have this effect immediately, especially on the great women, who, from this time forward, would take example by the queen, and say to their lords, Are you more honourable than Ahasuerus the king, whose wife would not come when she was sent for! So the latter Targum.

Thus shall there arise too much contempt and wrath.] Contempt in the wives, and wrath in their husbands, which would make great brawlings and contentions in all families.

Ver. 19. *If it please the king, let there go a royal commandment from him,*] He would not have a mere order given, but a law made, which, as it follows, should stand inviolable. The same Targum saith, that Memucan had married a wife, who, being richer than himself, was very proud, and would not speak to him but in her own language; and now he took this opportunity to be revenged of her, and make her do whatever he pleased.

That it be not altered,] This was cunningly done, saith the same Targum; for if she had recovered the king's favour, when his anger was over, this counsel might have cost him his head. But what made laws unalterable among them is uncertain. The Targum saith, because the king confirmed it by an oath, and then it became immutable; or, it was sealed, not only by the king, but by all the princes, as one would guess from Dan. vi. 8, 12, 15.

Let the king give her royal estate unto another] This was a very rigorous decree. But Drusius observes, that the Persians were inclined to be severe to their wives.

Ver. 20.] For none would dare to disobey, when they heard that the greatness of the queen could not preserve her from such a heavy punishment.

21 And the saying pleased the king and the princes; and the king did according to the word of Memucan:

22 For he sent letters into all the king's provinces, into every province according to the

Ver. 21.] With whom all the other six judges concurred in their opinion.

Ver. 22.] The meaning seems to be, that this decree was published in every province, after the manner that such things used to be proclaimed, and in their own tongue, that every one, women as well as men, might understand it. The decree runs thus in the Hebrew, "That every man should bear rule in his own house, and speak in the language of his people." It seems the Persians had yielded so much to their wives, that when they had married a stranger, they suffered her to bring her own language into the family. But this decree altered that custom, and allowed no other language to be spoken in the family

writing thereof, and to every people after their language, that every man should bear rule in his own house, and that it should be published according to the language of every people.

but that of the man, and of the people among whom he lived (see *De Dieu*). And thus the former Targum, "Every man shall rule in his own house, and compel his wife to speak in the language of her husband, and in the language of his people." Which, indeed, was a token of dominion; all conquerors endeavouring to bring in their own language into the country which they have conquered. The latter Targum hath only these words, that "every man shall be honoured in his own house, and speak according to the language of his people;" that is, give his commands in his own language, which every one was bound to learn.

CHAPTER II.

1 *Out of the choice of virgins a queen is to be chosen.* 5 *Mordecai the nursing father of Esther.* 8 *Esther is preferred by Hegai before the rest.* 12 *The manner of purification, and going in to the king.* 15 *Esther best pleasing the king is made queen.* 21 *Mordecai discovering a treason is recorded in the chronicles.*

1 AFTER these things, when the wrath of king Ahasuerus was appeased, he remembered Vashti, and what she had done, and what was decreed against her.

2 Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, Let there be fair young virgins sought for the king:

3 And let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather together all the fair young virgins unto Shushan the palace, to the house of the women, unto the

custody of Hegai the king's chamberlain, keeper of the women; and let their things for purification be given them:

4 And let the maiden which pleaseth the king be queen instead of Vashti. And the thing pleased the king; and he did so.

5 ¶ Now in Shushan the palace there was a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite;

6 Who had been carried away from Jerusalem

CHAP. II.

Ver. 1.] When his anger was abated, and the wine gone out of his head, his ancient love began to revive to Vashti, whose beauty was exceeding charming; but then he remembered withal her undutiful behaviour, and the decree he had passed against her, which was irrevocable, so that he was in a great strait. Yet the latter Targum saith he called for the seven princes, who had given him the forenamed counsel, and said unto them, I am no longer angry at Vashti, but at you, who, from what I said in my drink, took occasion to destroy her; and thereupon commanded them all to be slain. For which there is no ground; but by what follows it appears to be a fable.

Ver. 2.] The same servants, in all likelihood, mentioned ver. 14 of the foregoing chapter, who continually attended him. And when they saw him afflicted, contrived by a new love to blot out the remembrance of the old.

Ver. 3.] The better to divert him, they propound that a great number of the most beautiful virgins that could be found should be brought from all parts to Shushan, that out of them he might take his choice which of them he would make his queen.

The house of the women.] Or rather "of the virgins;" for the house of those who were women or wives was different from this, and under another governor (ver. 14).

Unto the custody of Hegai—keeper of the women;]

Of the virgins, as Shaashgaz was of the women or concubines (ver. 14).

And let their things for purification be given them: In this house, saith the former Targum, there was a place for bathing, and they were furnished with ointments and perfumes, and all other things necessary either for ornament or cleanliness; for the Hebrew word signifies both.

Ver. 4.] He approved of the advice, and gave order about it.

Ver. 5. *In Shushan the palace there was a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai.*] Who is thought by some to have come to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel (because one of that name is mentioned in his company), but returned back again to Babylon, being one of the king's servants; for he was one of his guard, or keeper of the door; or, as we translate it, he "sat in the king's gate" (ver. 19, 21). But this was another Mordecai, as appears from the time wherein he lived, in the latter end of the Persian empire.

The son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite;] The latter Targum here gives his pedigree down from Benjamin, the son of Jacob, but mixed with such fables that no credit can be given to it.

Ver. 6.] Mordecai was not then carried away but Kish, who is mentioned just before, from whom Mordecai was descended (see our Rainoldus. Cens. lib. Apocryph. prælect. cxlvi.). And Bonfrerius also hath well observed (in his appendix to his Præloquium to

with the captivity which had been carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away.

7 And he brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter: for she had neither father nor mother, and the maid was fair and beautiful; whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter.

8 ¶ So it came to pass, when the king's commandment and his decree was heard, and when many maidens were gathered together unto Shushan the palace, to the custody of Hegai, that Esther was brought also unto the king's house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women.

9 And the maiden pleased him, and she obtained kindness of him; and he speedily gave

his Commentaries on the scripture, ch. 7), if he himself was then brought from Jerusalem, he must be at least a hundred and ten years old (supposing this history to have fallen out in the time of Darius Hystaspes) when he came into the place of Haman; for, from the captivity of Jeconiah, till their deliverance from captivity, was eighty-one years; and from thence to the reign of Darius Hystaspes was almost twenty years, as Eusebius saith; and Haman was hanged in the twelfth year of this king; so here are a hundred and ten years. But it is not credible that a man of such a great age should be advanced to such authority as he had; and more incredible that Esther, who was his cousin-german should be beloved of Ahasuerus when she was an old maid, as she must have been, if Mordecai was of these years.

Ver. 7. *He brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter.*] Her Jewish name was *Hadassah*, signifying in Chaldee a *myrtle*, as the former Targum saith; but her Persian name was *Esther*, which he fancies was from the Greek word, ἄστρη, a *star*. But the other Targum derives it from *sator*, which signifies *hidden*, because she was hidden in Mordecai's house a long time, and no man saw her but he; or rather, because her nation was concealed and not known. Primate Usher thinks, that as *Vashti* was *Atossa*, so *Esther* was she whom the heathens called *Artystona*; who, as Herodotus saith, was the wife *Darius* loved above all other, and had her statue made of pure gold (lib. ii. cap. 88, and lib. vii. cap. 69). He saith, indeed, that she also was another daughter of *Cyrus*, and sister to *Atossa*; but he was either ignorant (as that great man thinks) of the Persian genealogies, or out of envy concealed their original. It is more likely he gives a true account of her descent, as he doth of other things, and she was not *Esther*.

For she had neither father nor mother.] Her father died, saith the former Targum, when her mother was big with child of her, and her mother died as soon as she was brought to bed.

Whom Mordecai, — took for his own daughter.] The Vulgar translates it, *adopted her* for his daughter. Which doth not signify such an adoption as among the Romans (as Mr. Selden observes), but only paternal love and care to bring up a child who had lost her parents. For the Hebrew doctors are so far from acknowledging any adoption, that they say he took her to make her his wife. So *Jarchi* by *bat* [daughter] understands *beth a house*; which the LXX. follow, he educated her εἰς γυναῖκα, "to be his wife" (lib. De Succession. cap. 4. p. 18).

Ver. 8.] The words which we translate "was brought," may be translated *was taken*: and that by force, as the word sometimes signifies, and as the former Targum here explains it, "she was brought by

her her things for purification, with such things as belonged to her, and seven maidens, *which were meet to be given her*, out of the king's house: and he preferred her and her maids unto the best *place* of the house of the women.

10 Esther had not shewed her people nor her kindred: for Mordecai had charged her that she should not shew it.

11 And Mordecai walked every day before the court of the women's house, to know how *Esther* did, and what should become of her.

12 ¶ Now when every maid's turn was come to go in to king *Ahasuerus*, after that she had been twelve months, according to the manner of the women, (for so were the days of their purifications accomplished, *to wit*, six months with oil

violence." The latter Targum tells the manner of it at large, That *Mordecai*, hearing of this order, hid his cousin in a private place where the officers could not find her. But when the virgins were gathered together, and *Esther* was missing, whom all the neighbours knew to be a very great beauty, they procured an order from the king to *Mordecai*, that upon pain of death he should produce her; which he did. But perhaps I take too much notice of these Jewish fables.

Ver. 9. *The maiden pleased him, and she obtained kindness of him;*] That is *Hegai*, who was much taken with her countenance, and her mien, and her sweet disposition (it is likely), and all other things, which he thought would make her acceptable to the king.

He speedily gave her her things for purification.] That she might be fit before the usual time to go in unto the king, that is, in a year's time, as some understand it (ver. 12, 16).

With such things as belonged to her.] For her clothes and diet, which the former Targum makes to be very sumptuous.

Seven maidens.] One for every day in the week, saith the same Targum, whose names he gives us, and the days of the week on which they waited.

Which were meet to be given her.] Persons of quality, fit to attend her.

He preferred her and her maids unto the best place of the house] And did her so much honour, that he assigned her and her maids the best apartment in the house of virgins.

Ver. 10.] *Let* she should be contemned, and looked upon as no better than a slave.

Ver. 11.] He might walk there without being suspected, because he belonged to the court, and was a man of condition: for those that were carried away in *Jeconiah's* captivity (as his ancestors were) were of the better sort (2 Kings xxiv. 14, &c. Dan. i. 4). And *Esther* might find means, by some of those that attended her, to let him know the state of her health, and of her affairs.

Ver. 12. *Now when every maid's turn was come to go in to king Ahasuerus, after that she had been twelve months.*] They were kept close so long, that the king might be sure he should not be imposed upon by a child hoggotten by another man. And besides, it was suitable to the state of the king to have them wait a great while, before they were brought into his company: and another reason here follows. *Herodotus* explains the first words, lib. iii. cap. 69, where he saith, the Persian women go in to their husbands, ἐν περιστροφῇ, "in a circle," by turns.

Six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours.] It is observed by *Pliny*, lib. xiii. cap. 1.

of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours, and with *other* things for the purifying of the women ;)

13 Then thus came *every* maiden unto the king ; whatsoever she desired was given her to go with her out of the house of the women unto the king's house.

14 In the evening she went, and on the morrow she returned into the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's chamberlain, which kept the concubines : she came in unto the king no more, except the king delighted in her, and that she were called by name.

15 ¶ Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her for his daughter, was come to go

that ointments were first invented by the Persians ; which were very necessary in so hot a country, where men and women are apt to sweat much, and smell rankly, without great care to keep themselves clean and sweet. For which purpose the oil of myrrh was much used, being very fragrant, and apt also to make the skin soft and smooth, and to cleanse it from scurf. The sweet odour served to the same use, to take away all ill scents, and, as some think, to make the body more vigorous.

There are many authors (as Fortunatus Scacchus observes) who take the word *mor* to signify not *myrrh*, but that fragrant herb which we call *marum*. or as some think, *marjoram*, from which excellent oils were drawn (lib. i. Myrothecium, cap. 50), but he takes it, as we do, for *myrrh* : from whence not only a noble oil was drawn, but being beat to a powder, such a fumigation was made with it, as was offered unto their gods. Whence Athenæus blames Alexander's arrogance, for suffering Σάπια, καὶ τὰ ἄλλα θυμάρια, "myrrh and other sweet odours to be offered to him" (lib. xii. cap. 8).

Six months] This was a long time, which was set (first that oil, and as many more with sweet odours) for their purification : or rather for their absterion or cleansing, as the same Scacchus observes : for there were no such purifications here used, as were among the Jews ; but it is a known thing, that, as women in all countries were wont to spend a great deal of time in their dressing, and trimming up of themselves, that they might appear well abroad ; so much more in this country, and when they were to go to the bed of a great king. A year, indeed, was a long time ; but Athenæus saith, that among the Sybarites (who were a delicate, luxurious people), there was a sanction that the women, when they were called to the public sacrifices at great festivals, πρὸ ἐναντίον τῆν παρασκευὴν ποιῆσαι, "were to make preparation for it a year before."

With other things for the purifying of the women ;] Whatsoever was proper for this purpose, was used in their preparations for the king's bed.

Ver. 13.] Whatsoever ornaments or attendants she desired.

Ver. 14. *On the morrow she returned into the second house of the women,*] She returned no more into the former house, having lost her virginity : but was treated in another house, as one of the king's wives : for so concubines were, of a secondary sort, as I have often noted.

She came in unto the king no more, except—she were called by name.] For every one's name was registered as the Targum saith, and the night, I suppose, when she went in unto the king.

in unto the king, she required nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed. And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her.

16 So Esther was taken unto king Ahasuerus into his house royal in the tenth month, which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign.

17 And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins ; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti.

18 Then the king made a great feast unto all his princes and his servants, *even* Esther's feast ; and he made a release to the provinces, and gave gifts, according to the state of the king.

Ver. 15. *When the turn of Esther,—was come to go in unto the king, she required nothing*] But was contented with her own natural beauty, and desired nothing of art to recommend her.

But what Hegai—appointed.] Yet she did not refuse what he, who had been so kind to her, ordered for her.

Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her.] All that beheld her, as she passed from the house of the women to the king's house, admired her beauty : which needed no ornament, for the greatest ornaments of virgins are modesty (as Pellicanus speaks), silence, well-disciplined eyes, a serene countenance without levity, a horror of all wantonness ; which meeting all in her, made her acceptable to every one that saw her.

Ver. 16. *So Esther was taken unto king Ahasuerus into his house royal*] She was not sent back in the morning unto the second house of the women, as the rest were, but the king kept her in his own house, intending to make her more than a concubine.

In the tenth month,—in the seventh year of his reign.] He made the great feast we read of in the foregoing chapter in the third year of his reign, in the end of which Vashti was sent away. How it came to pass that it was so long before Esther was advanced to succeed her, seems difficult to resolve : but we are to consider, that a great deal of time was spent in gathering the virgins together, and that she was a year in preparing herself for admission to the king ; and several, it is likely, went in before her, who had also their time for preparation : and took some time, it is likely, to try how he liked her wit, humour, and conversation.

Ver. 17.] She being at this time, as Jacobus Capellus computes, twenty years old, ad A. M. 3645. But some make a question whether she did not commit a great sin to come at this dignity, not considering the custom of those times and countries. For those persons whom the king took into his bed after the manner before mentioned, were not harlots, but became his wives of a lower sort ; for whom he provided ever after, and they were no longer chargeable to their parents or friends ; nor might any other man marry them. Such a one Esther would have been, if he had not liked her so well as to do more for her. Which, no doubt, was ordered by a special providence of God, who thus rewarded her virtue, and also preserved the whole nation of the Jews from perishing.

Ver. 18. *Then the king made a great feast—even Esther's feast ;*] So it was called, because it was made in honour of her, and, if we may believe Josephus, lasted a whole month.

19 And when the virgins were gathered together the second time, then Mordecai sat in the king's gate.

20 Esther had not yet shewed her kindred nor her people; as Mordecai had charged her: for Esther did the commandment of Mordecai, like as when she was brought up with him.

21 ¶ In those days, while Mordecai sat in the king's gate, two of the king's chamberlains, Bigthan and Teresh, of those which kept the

He made a release to the provinces,] At this feast he gave the people some ease in their imposts, and forgave them some of the duties they were bound to pay him. Some have affirmed, that this is reported by Herodotus to have been the custom of the Persian kings at their marriages. But I can find no more than this in him, that ὁ καθιστάμενος Βασιλεὺς, "when he was made king, he remitted the tribute that was due to him from all the cities" (lib. vi. cap. 59).

And gave gifts,] He made great presents to the queen, as the manner of the Persian kings was; who gave to their queen at their marriage such a city to buy them clothes, such a one for their hair, another for their necklaces and other ornaments, and so for the rest of their expenses. Here the latter Targum tells an idle tale, how the king desired Esther to tell him what country she was of, and who were her ancestors from whom she descended. To which she answered, that her parents dying when she was an infant, she did not know who were her forefathers: which the king hearing, he released all men of their taxes, and gave them gifts, saying, I will be kind to all people of all nations, because I will be sure to be kind to the people of Esther, who are among some of them.

Ver. 19.] This doth not signify that there was another inquisition for virgins after Esther was married; but, to join this history with what follows, he repeats what was said before, ver. 2, that at the time when this second collection of virgins was made for the choice of a new wife, as there had been one before, when Vashti was married, then Mordecai was in attendance at the gate of the palace; and so proceeds to show how he discovered a plot against the life of the king.

Ver. 20. *Esther had not yet shewed her kindred nor her people; as Mordecai had charged her:]* Which he would not have her to discover, lest she should be

door, were wroth, and sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus.

22 And the thing was known to Mordecai, who told it unto Esther the queen; and Esther certified the king thereof in Mordecai's name.

23 And when inquisition was made of the matter, it was found out; therefore they were both hanged on a tree: and it was written in the book of the chronicles before the king.

hated for her nation's sake, or her nation be envied for her good fortune.

For Esther did the commandment of Mordecai,] A rare example of virtue, that she should be so servant of him when she was a queen; for most forget what they were, when they are unexpectedly grown very great.

Ver. 21.] These were two great men, who, perhaps, kept the door of the king's bedchamber, and were incensed at the divorce of Vashti (whose creatures they were), or at the advancement of Esther, knowing her to be related to Mordecai, who they were afraid would be raised to greater power than themselves. Thus the former Targum writes, "Doth not the queen by her power with the king intend to turn us out of our places, and put in Mordecai?" therefore they resolved to poison him, as both that and the latter Targum understand it.

Ver. 22.] One of their servants, whose name (as Josephus saith) was Barnabazus, discovered the conspiracy to Mordecai, who found means to inform Esther of it, and she acquainted the king with it from Mordecai.

Ver. 23. *When inquisition was made of the matter it was found out:]* His information which he gave to the king appeared to be true, upon a due inquiry into the matter.

Therefore they were both hanged on a tree: and it was written in the book of the chronicles before the king.] In the day-book, wherein all memorable things were recorded, to be read (as the Targum observes) before the king, when he required. Here we may see the infelicity and the danger of the most potent persons: the life of a great king depending upon the fidelity of one single person, whose service was neglected by the court, though a memorial was made of it. Thus all masters of families are obnoxious to the perfidiousness of their servants that wait upon them. They are the words of Conradus Pellicanus.

CHAPTER III.

1 Haman, advanced by the king, and despised by Mordecai, seeketh revenge upon all the Jews. 7 He casteth lots. 8 He obtaineth by calumny a decree of the king to put the Jews to death.

1 AFTER these things did king Ahasuerus promote Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him.

2 And all the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed, and revered Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence.

CHAP. III.

Ver. 1. *After these things]* About five years after, as appears from ver. 7.

Did king Ahasuerus promote Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite,] He was descended from the royal race of the Amalekite kings, and grown into great favour in this court, as Daniel and his companions, who were of noble blood also (Dan. i. 3). The

latter Targum hath given us the pedigree of Haman, up to Eliphaz, the eldest son of Esau.

And set his seat above all the princes that were with him.] Either of his own or other nations. For it is likely the Persian kings, as the Chaldee before them, had many kings and princes, whom they had conquered, with them, who had the honour sometimes to sit on royal seats before them (2 Kings xxv. 28).

Ver. 2. *And all the king's servants, that were in the*

3 Then the king's servants, which *were* in the king's gate, said unto Mordecai, Why transgresses thou the king's commandment?

4 Now it came to pass, when they spake daily unto him, and he hearkened not unto them, that they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai's matters would stand: for he had told them that he *was* a Jew.

5 And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath.

6 And he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone; for they had shewed him the peo-

ple of Mordecai: wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that *were* throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, *even* the people of Mordecai.

7 ¶ In the first month, that *is*, the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of king Ahasuerus, they cast Pur, that *is*, the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month to month, to the twelfth month, that *is*, the month Adar.

8 ¶ And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws *are* diverse from

king's gate, bowed, and revered Haman:] To bow the knee or the body to all great persons was a common respect; for which there needed not a particular command to require this of every body with respect to Haman, since no doubt they did it to all princes, and would much more do it to him, who took place of them all, and was the prince's favourite. There was therefore some kind of divine honour intended in this: such as was paid to the Persian kings themselves, to whom the Greeks would not pay this sort of respect, because it was accounted divine. And the word *reverence* imports something beyond *bowing*, which was falling flat upon their faces to the ground. Such prostrations the kings of Persia expected: and Ahasuerus, to express his great affection to Haman, would have it paid to him. The former Targum I believe thought of this, when he saith, "They in the king's gate bowed down to his image which he had set up, and worshipped Haman."

But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence.] Because he was of a nation devoted by God to destruction, with whom therefore the Jews would have no friendship, nor show them any kindness, but remember the injuries they had done them (Deut. xxv. 18, 19). But this doth not seem a reason weighty enough, why he should not pay him civil respect, which was given to all men in great place, especially since by denying it he might expose his whole nation to danger. This is an argument that there was something more intended: and accordingly the author of the apocryphal additions to this book understood it, who represents Mordecai praying after this manner: "Thou knowest, O Lord, that it is not contumacy, nor pride, nor desire of vain-glory, that makes me not worship Haman; for I would willingly kiss his feet, for the safety of Israel: but I do it, that I may not prefer the glory of a man to the glory of God; nor adore any one but thee my Lord alone."

Ver. 3.] I suppose it seemed strange to them, that one single person should refuse to do what everybody did, especially since thereby he disobeyed the king: therefore they expostulated with him, to make him sensible of his duty and his danger.

Ver. 4. *He hearkened not unto them.*] Seemed not to regard what they said, and perhaps gave them no answer.

They told Haman, to see whether Mordecai's matters would stand:] Whether he would persist in his stiffness, and what would be the issue of it.

For he had told them he was a Jew.] Being much pressed by them, he confesses the reason why he could not do as they did. For, that they might not think it was pride or sullenness, that made him not comply with the king's order, he acquaints them plainly of what religion and what nation he was; who might not show any respect to an Amalekite (as some take it) or worship any but God alone, as I take the mean-

ing to be. And thus the latter Targum here explains it: when they asked him why he did not obey the king, he answered, "What is the son of man that he should exalt himself? what is he that is born of a woman, who comes lamenting into the world, and is of few days, and then returns to his earth, that I should worship him? No, I worship God, the living God, who endures for ever," &c. And so he goes on, describing very well the glorious majesty of God, the Lord of heaven and earth, and thus concludes, "He is to be praised by us, and before him we ought to bow down ourselves."

Ver. 5.] It is likely he did not mind what every one did that was in the king's gate (where there was a great crowd), till he was told of Mordecai's neglect: and then he marked him when he next passed by, and was highly enraged at him.

Ver. 6.] He disdain'd to take so poor a revenge as to rid himself of one man alone, but resolved to make the whole nation suffer, who he knew were enemies to that nation from whence he sprung.

Ver. 7.] It was the manner of the eastern country, by casting lots into an urn, to inquire what days would be fortunate, and what not, to undertake any business in: according to which superstition Haman endeavoured to find what time of the year was most favourable to the Jews, and what most unlucky. And first he inquired what month was most unfortunate, and found the month Adar, which was the last month in the year, answerable to our February. For, as Guill. Schieckard observes, there was no festival solemnity in this month, nor was it sanctified by any peculiar rites. And then he inquired the day, and found the thirteenth day was not auspicious to them (ver. 13). Some think there were as many lots as there were days in the year, and for every day he drew a lot; but found none to his mind, till he came to the last month of all, and to the middle of it (see Hottinger's *Smegma Orientale*, p. 75). Now this whole business was governed by a wonderful providence of God; by whom these lots were directed, and not by the Persian gods, to fall in the last month of the year; whereby almost a whole year intervened between the design and its execution, and gave time for Mordecai to acquaint Esther with it, and for her to intercede with the king, for the revoking or suspending his decree, and disappointing the conspiracy.

Ver. 8. *Haman said unto king Ahasuerus.*] Or rather had said: for it is not likely he would cast his lots till he knew his mind, for fear he should lose his labour.

There is a certain people scattered abroad, and dispersed among the people in all the provinces.] For a great number of them, being well settled in the land of their captivity, would not return to Judea when Cyrus gave them leave; whom Haman represents as a despicable people, or vagrants and stragglers (as the latter Tar-

all people; neither keep they the king's laws; therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them.

9 If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed: and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the hands of those that have the charge of the business, to bring it into the king's treasuries.

10 And the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' enemy.

11 And the king said unto Haman, The silver is given to thee, the people also, to do with them as it seemeth good to thee.

12 Then were the king's scribes called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and there was written according to all that Haman had commanded unto the king's lieutenants, and to the

gum understands it), dispersed here and there up and down in his dominions.

Their laws are diverse from all people; neither keep they the king's laws:] A proud, high-spirited people (as the same Targum represents the sense), who live by laws of their own, and will observe none of the king's; for they will neither eat of our meat, nor drink of our wine, nor keep our festivals: but have several of their own, on which they will not work, nor do the king's business. All which he sets forth at large in that paraphrase.

Therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them.] The former Targum thus glosses upon these words, "The king gets nothing by them, while they live in this kingdom; but what will he not get if he destroys them all!" The other Targum makes him represent them as griping usurers, which was to the damage of the king's people.

Ver. 9. *If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed:]* He desires, not only a verbal command, but an order in writing, for their utter extirpation as a pestilent people.

I will pay ten thousand talents of silver] He promises to compensate the loss of the tribute which they paid yearly by a vast sum of money, which he would pay immediately. But he intended not to pay one farthing of it himself, it being easy to raise it out of the spoil of the Jews' goods (ver. 13).

To the hands of those that have the charge of the business,] Not of those who had the charge to kill them, but of those that received the king's money; as appears by the next words, "to bring it into the king's treasuries." And so the same Targum, "I will pay it into the hands of those who coin the king's money;" that is, into the mint, as we now speak.

Ver. 10.] Without any examination into the condition of the people, he consented to their destruction. So loath are men that love their pleasure to take any pains to distinguish between truth and falsehood.

Ver. 11.] He gave him power to draw up what decree he pleased, and seal it with his own ring; but as for the money, he loved him so much, he would have none of it.

Ver. 12. *Then were the king's scribes called]* As there were sacred scribes among the Jews, who were men learned in the law, so there were political both among them and other nations, as L'Empereur observes upon Bertram, De Repub. Jud. p. 381. And there were two sorts of them; one of which was employed in writing public letters or contracts, and other acts that were to be signed by authority, the

governors that were over every province, and to the rulers of every people of every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language; in the name of king Ahasuerus was it written, and sealed with the king's ring.

13 And the letters were sent by posts into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to take the spoil of them for a prey.

14 The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published unto all people, that they should be ready against that day.

15 The posts went out, being hastened by the

more honourable and highest of which were such as are called here the "king's scribes," whom the Chaldees call the king's notaries, and we now call secretaries of state.

On the thirteenth day of the first month,] This was not wisely projected, to let his design be known so long before it was to take effect; for the king's mind might alter, or the Jews might find some way to deliver themselves, or might steal out of the kingdom.

In the name of king Ahasuerus was it written, and sealed with the king's ring.] He himself indited the decree by the royal authority, and made it, no doubt, as strict as it was possible; and perhaps commanded it to be executed under great penalties, by all manner of officers, who were required to take care to see it done. And that none might be ignorant, it was written in the language of every people, and in the character they could read.

Ver. 13. *The letters were sent by posts into all the king's provinces,]* Concerning these posts which were in use among the Persians, see Herodotus, lib. viii. cap. 98, where, describing the despatches, which were sent into Persia, to carry the news of Xerxes's overthrow, he saith, *Τοῦτων δὲ τῶν Ἀγγέλων οὐδὲν ἔστι δάσασον, ὅτι παραγίνεται θνητῶν ἰσόν, &c.* "There is nothing upon earth swifter than these messengers, whom neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor night, can hinder from finishing their course speedily." The manner of which he there sets down, which the Persians, he saith, call Ἀγγαίηρον.

To take the spoil of them for a prey.] This was a strong motive to such a bloody execution, that they who killed them should enrich themselves by their spoil.

Ver. 14.] Copies of this original decree of the king were sent into every province, and there ordered to be published, requiring them to be ready against that day.

Ver. 15. *The posts went out, being hastened by the king's commandment, and the decree was given in Shushan]* He procured a new commandment from the king, requiring their speedy delivery of this decree, that the people might not want time to prepare for its execution; and he also got it signed by the king's council: for that seems to be meant by its being given in Shushan.

The king and Haman sat down to drink;] It is likely Haman made an entertainment for the king, to thank him for his great kindness to him in this grant.

But the city Shushan was perplexed.] The Jews

king's commandment, and the decree was given in Shushan the palace. And the king and Ha-

man sat down to drink; but the city Shushan was perplexed.

that lived there, who were very numerous, knew not what to do: and it is probable other people in the city were very fearful what would become of them; not knowing but that they might also suffer in such

a massacre: and perhaps some of them were related to the Jews, or had made friendship with them, and therefore were much concerned at this horrid decree.

CHAPTER IV.

1 *The great mourning of Mordecai and the Jews.* 4 *Esther, understanding it, sendeth to Mordecai, who sheweth the cause, and adviseth her to undertake the suit.* 10 *She excusing herself is threatened by Mordecai.* 15 *She appointing a fast undertaketh the suit.*

4 *Esther, understanding it, sendeth to Mordecai, who sheweth the cause, and adviseth her to undertake the suit.* 10 *She excusing herself is threatened by Mordecai.*

1 WHEN Mordecai perceived all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry;

ceedingly grieved; and she sent raiment to clothe Mordecai, and to take away his sackcloth from him: but he received it not.

2 And came even before the king's gate: for none might enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth.

5 Then called Esther for Hatach, one of the king's chamberlains, whom he had appointed to attend upon her, and gave him a commandment to Mordecai, to know what it was, and why it was.

3 And in every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

6 So Hatach went forth to Mordecai unto the street of the city, which was before the king's gate.

4 ¶ So Esther's maids and her chamberlains came and told it her. Then was the queen ex-

7 And Mordecai told him of all that had happened unto him, and of the sum of the money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the Jews, to destroy them.

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 1. *When Mordecai perceived all that was done,]* Which it is likely he heard by some friend before it was publicly known, but did not express his grief till the edict was hung up.

Mordecai rent his clothes,] Both before and behind, saith the latter Targum.

And put on sackcloth with ashes,] As the manner was, in great sorrow.

And went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry:] Saying, as the same Targum expresses it, What a heavy decree is this which the king and Haman have passed upon us? Not against a part of us, but upon us all, to root us out of the earth: whereupon all the Jews flocked about him; and he caused the book of the law to be brought to the gate of Shushan, covered with sackcloth; and therein he read those words of Moses in Deut. iv. 30, 31, "When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, in the latter days, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shall be obedient to his voice (for the Lord thy God is a merciful God), he will not forsake thee, nor destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers, which he sware unto them." After which he exhorted them to fasting, humiliation, and repentance, according to the example of the Ninevites.

Ver. 2. *And came even before the king's gate:]* That his cry might come to the ears of Esther. But he durst not take his place in the gate, because none that were in mourning might come there: so careful they were, not in the least to disturb the king in his pleasures. By this it appears, as from many other places, that in the gate they made their court, as we speak, and despatched all public affairs (as I have noted often before), which was here practised more than in other places, because the Persian monarchs lived more retired than other princes, few but those who attended them being admitted into their palace.

Ver. 3.] All day long they fasted, and wept, and lamented themselves; and in the night many lay, not in their beds, but on the ground in sackcloth and ashes.

Ver. 4. *So Esther's maids and her chamberlains came and told it her.]* As a piece of news, or perhaps they understood there was some relation between them.

Then was the queen exceedingly grieved:] Imagining some mischief had befallen him, and not knowing what it was.

She sent raiment to clothe Mordecai,] That he might come to court, and take his place in the gate.

But he received it not.] This, no doubt, very much increased her grief.

Ver. 5. *Then called Esther for Hatach, one of the king's chamberlains,]* In whom the king had a great confidence, and whom she could intrust with such a message.

And gave him a commandment to Mordecai, to know what it was,] What was the cause of his weeping and wailing, and why he would not accept of the garments which she sent him; as the latter Targum very well explains it.

Ver. 6.] Where, it is like, he still continued lamenting their miserable condition.

Ver. 7. *Mordecai told him of all that had happened unto him,]* How he had refused to worship Haman (as the former Targum explains it), and how this had incensed him against the whole nation.

And of the sum of the money that Haman had promised to pay] The ten thousand talents he had offered, to procure the king's consent to their destruction.

Some of the Jews here add another marvellous thing which had happened to Mordecai the very night before Hatach came to him, which he desired Esther might be acquainted withal: whether it be true or false, I think fit here to remember it (it seeming to be so piously designed), as I had it, near threescore years ago, from a great man in the Jewish learning,

8 Also he gave him the copy of the writing of the decree that was given at Shushan to destroy them, to shew *it* unto Esther, and to declare *it* unto her, and to charge her that she should go in unto the king, to make supplication unto him, and to make request before him for her people.

9 And Hatach came and told Esther the words of Mordecai.

10 ¶ Again Esther spake unto Hatach, and gave him commandment unto Mordecai ;

11 All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, *there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live : but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days.*

who quotes for it R. Moses Almosnino, in a book called *Jede Moseh* (the hands of Moses), where he says, That Mordecai going home in great heaviness, reflecting on the danger his whole nation was in, met three boys coming from school, whom he examined what they had learned that day ; one of them told him his lesson had been in Prov. iii. 25, 26, " Be not afraid of sudden fear, nor of the desolation of the wicked when it cometh : for the Lord shall be thy confidence," &c. Then Mordecai cried out, I am confident this desolation shall not be so speedy. Then the second child told him he had learned that day, Isa. viii. 10, " Take counsel together, it shall come to nought ; speak the word (or pronounce the decree), it shall not stand ; for God is with us." O the wonderful goodness of God, said Mordecai, that thus out of the mouth of babes and sucklings ordaineth strength ! And what have you learned ? said he, to the third child ; who answered, Isa. xli. 4, " Even to your old age I am he (that is, the God) ; unto hoar hairs will I carry you ; I have made, and I will bear : even I will carry, and will deliver you." Now, blessed be God, cried Mordecai, that hath not left us comfortless ; his hand shall be with us, as in former ages, &c. But another great man, in this learning, hath lately admonished me that this rabbin is but of yesterday, and designed to elude the prophecy of Psalm viii. quoted in the gospel, and therefore unworthy to be mentioned in this place.

Ver. 8. *Also he gave him the copy of the writing of the decree*] That she might be fully satisfied what was intended.

To charge her that she should go in unto the king,] He charged her, I suppose, in the name of God, or, as she loved her nation, to go and earnestly to beseech the king to be merciful to the Jews, as the Targum expounds it.

Ver. 11. *All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know,*] That is, nobody, either in the court or in the whole kingdom, was ignorant.

That whosoever,—shall come unto the king in the inner court, who is not called,] Here the king kept retired from all company, but such as he called for, or was pleased to admit.

There is one law of his to put him to death,] Let him be of ever such quality there was no exception : but one law reached all that were so presumptuous. This seems to have been an ancient law in that country, mentioned by Herodotus, lib. i. and Athenus, lib. xii. But the former Targum will have it, that it was

12 And they told to Mordecai Esther's words.

13 Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews.

14 For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, *then* shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place ; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed : and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for *such* a time as this ?

15 ¶ Then Esther bade *them* return Mordecai *this answer,*

16 Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day : I also and my maidens will fast likewise ; and so

procured by Haman, that none might come into the king's presence unless he introduced them.

Except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre,] Which, I suppose, was so seldom done, that few would venture to stand in need of a pardon. A sceptre was the ensign of the highest and most absolute authority : so that, as Wagenseil observes, when Mordecai was advanced to the greatest dignity next to the king, having royal apparel, and a great crown on his head (viii. 15), yet he had no sceptre ; for that was proper and peculiar to the king.

But I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days,] Which might justly make her fear his love was cooled to her, and then her person and petition might not be acceptable to him.

Ver. 12.] There seems to have been more than one person that went with this message, to confirm the truth of what she said.

Ver. 13.] He would not have her flatter herself with a vain imagination, that because she was queen she should be spared ; for she would find no more privilege in the king's house than the rest of the Jews did abroad.

Ver. 14.] He did not know whence, but he confided in God, that by some means or other he would preserve them from utter destruction. And would have her believe that God would cut off her and her family for self-love, and want of zeal to preserve her nation. Rather than refuse to intercede for her people, he would have her think (though there was danger in it) that God had raised her up to the dignity in which she was, on purpose that she might be the deliverer of her people, and therefore go courageously about it.

Ver. 16. *Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan,*] Not all into one public congregation, for that might have given suspicion of an intended insurrection, but in several private assemblies.

And fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day :] None, or very few, could keep a fast for three days and nights, without tasting any meat or drink : the meaning therefore is, that they should make no set meal in their families, neither dinner nor supper, but only eat and drink so much at night as would support them in prayer to God for a blessing upon her undertaking ; or, as Josephus understands it, they should abstain from all delicacies, and be content with hard and coarse fare. But Drusius thinks this fast was only one whole day and two nights, according as it is said of our Saviour, that he lay three days and three nights in the grave ; and then they

will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.

might fast so long without taking any refreshment: and in those hot countries we read of monks that fasted four or five days.

I also and my maidens will fast likewise;] It is not likely her maidens were Jews; yet notwithstanding they might be disposed to fast with her; which was not unusual with the gentiles in times of great distress, as appears by the story of the Ninivites, whose fast the Targum thinks Mordecai imitated, making the cattle, oxen, and sheep to abstain, as well as men and women.

And so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law;] Being thus recommended to God, she resolved not so much to regard the law, as the preservation of her people; for there are in some cases such violent circumstances, that to observe the law, as Grotius notes, would be to offend the chiefest law. Whither Puffendorf refers what we read in Valerius Maximus, lib. iii. cap. 7, n. 1, cap. 8, n. 6.

17 So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him.

And if I perish, I perish.] This is not a speech of despondence, but of courage and resolution; being as much as to say, I am content to perish in so good a cause; and if I perish for it in this world (as the Targum glosses), I shall have my portion in the world to come.

Ver. 17.] Betook himself to fasting and prayer (unto which he called all the Jews) as long as Esther required, omitting the joys of the paschal feast, and turning it into a fast, if we may believe the former Targum: for that paraphrast thinks, that Haman laying his plot in the month of Nisan (ii. 7), and Mordecai presently applying himself to defeat it, these things must fall out about the passover, which was in this month. But in memory of this the Jews keep a fast on the thirteenth of Adar, which they call *Esther's fast*.

CHAPTER V.

1 *Esther, adventuring on the king's favour, obtaineth the grace of the golden sceptre, and inviteth the king and Haman to a banquet.* 6 *She, being encouraged by the king in her suit, inviteth them to another banquet the next day.* 9 *Haman, proud of his advancement, repineth at the contempt of Mordecai.* 14 *By the counsel of Zeresh he buildeth for him a pair of gallows.*

1 Now it came to pass on the third day, that Esther put on her royal apparel, and stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house: and the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house, over against the gate of the house.

2 And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, that she obtained favour in his sight: and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his

hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre.

3 Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, queen Esther? and what is thy request? it shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom.

4 And Esther answered, If it seem good unto the king, let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him.

5 And the king said, Cause Haman to make haste, that he may do as Esther hath said. So

CHAP. V.

Ver. 1. *On the third day,*] In the conclusion of the fast, or, as the former Targum, on the third day of the passover.

That Esther put on her royal apparel, and stood in the inner court;] But first, saith the latter Targum, she made a solemn prayer to God, with many tears, as soon as she was dressed, saying, "Thou art the great God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of my father Benjamin: as thou didst deliver Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, out of the fiery furnace, and Daniel from the lion's den, so deliver me now out of the hand of the king, and give me grace and favour in his eyes," &c. And so he goes on in a very long prayer.

The king sat—over against the gate of the house.] So that he could see every one that came into the court.

Ver. 2. *When the king saw Esther—she obtained favour in his sight;*] He was much moved, saith the former Targum, to see trouble in her countenance, and her eyes full of tears; and so immediately comforted her in the manner following.

The king held out to Esther the golden sceptre;] In token of his favour, and inviting her approach. But the other Targum says, that the officers about him, as soon as she entered, ran to apprehend her, that she might be put to death: but the king stopped them, by his showing she was acceptable to him. So true is

that of Solomon, "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord; as the rivers of water, he turneth it whithersoever he will" (Prov. xxi. 1).

So Esther—touched the top of the sceptre.] Kissed it, saith the Vulgar, or put her hand under it, saith Grotius, in token of her subjection and thankfulness for his favour.

Ver. 3.] This is a usual form of speech among kings, when their hearts are enlarged, and they overflow with affection to others, or when they give them the freest liberty to demand what they please, as Grotius explains it upon Matt. xiv. 7. It is a foolish addition, which the latter Targum here makes, that he excepted one thing, which was the building the house of the sanctuary at Jerusalem, which he would not grant, because he promised Geshem, Sanballat, and Tobiath, it should not be built, lest the Jews should rebel.

Ver. 4.] It was very prudent not to open her mind presently, but first to endear his affection by feasting, music, dancing, and whatsoever might please him: and it was no small pleasure, it is likely, that she invited his favourite to come to her entertainment together with him. There was also a singular providence of God in this matter, which so disposed her mind, that the high honour the king bestowed on Mordecai the next day might fall out between this and that, and make way for her petition.

Ver. 5. *Cause Haman to make haste.*) Get himself ready with all speed.

the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

6 ¶ And the king said unto Esther at the banquet of wine, What *is* thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: and what *is* thy request? even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed.

7 Then answered Esther, and said, My petition and my request *is*;

8 If I have found favour in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my petition, and to perform my request, let the king and Haman come to the banquet that I shall prepare for them, and I will do to-morrow as the king hath said.

9 ¶ Then went Haman forth that day joyful and with a glad heart: but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, that he stood not up, nor moved for him, he was full of indignation against Mordecai.

10 Nevertheless Haman refrained himself:

Ver. 6. *The king said unto Esther at the banquet of wine.*] At the conclusion of the entertainment: for they did not drink wine, but water, at the beginning of their feasts.

What is thy petition?] This shows it was not a sudden passion of love that made him speak so kindly to her before, but he had a settled affection for her, which disposed him to be very bountiful, and showed he was much pleased with her entertainment.

Ver. 8.] That is, make her request to him; which she thought would be more seasonable, when she had won his heart by fresh expressions of her desire to please him, and obtained also a new promise from him, that he would deny her nothing: for there was need of a great preparation, to dispose him to do so great a thing for her, as to revoke or suspend his own decree. The latter Targum, after his fashion, gives several frivolous reasons why she invited Haman to the banquet twice; but the last of them is tolerable. The Israelites were in great expectation of the issue of this feasting, and hoped to see Haman presently cut off; but she was resolved to turn their thoughts the right way, that is, from her unto God, looking for mercy from their heavenly Father.

Ver. 9. *Then went Haman forth that day joyful*] To think he was in such favour with the queen, as well as with the king. The Targum still repeats it, that he saw Mordecai would not rise up before this image.

Ver. 10. *Nevertheless Haman refrained himself:*] From taking any sudden revenge.

He sent and called for his friends, and Zeresh his wife.] The daughter of Totni (saith the latter Targum), one of the king of Persia's governors beyond the river.

Ver. 11. *Haman told them of the glory of his riches,*] How splendidly he lived.

And the multitude of his children,] It was a glory in this country, as Drusius observes, to have abundance of children; but the Targum had no shame, when he affirms he had two hundred and fourscore, besides those ten that were princes in the provinces, and besides Shimstæus the king's secretary.

All the things wherein the king had promoted him,] What offices and dignities he had conferred upon him

and when he came home, he sent and called for his friends, and Zeresh his wife.

11 And Haman told them of the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and all *the things* wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king.

12 Haman said moreover, Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself; and to-morrow am I invited unto her also with the king.

13 Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.

14 ¶ Then said Zeresh his wife and all his friends unto him, Let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high, and to-morrow speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon: then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet. And the thing pleased Haman; and he caused the gallows to be made.

How he had advanced him] So that he took place of the greatest princes who were natives of the country, and of all the officers in the court.

Ver. 12.] He did not fail to relate the peculiar honour the queen had done him, which he could not but look upon as a token that he was established in the favour of the court.

Ver. 13.] How small a matter will spoil all the satisfaction of those who are arrived at the top of human felicity! immense riches, glory, and honour, gave not Haman so much pleasure, as he felt pain from one man's disrespect unto him: and yet he might have given himself ease before this, by speaking one word to the king to displace Mordecai, or put him to death, if his pride and passion would have let him be contented, without the destruction of a whole nation.

Ver. 14. *Let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high,*] That men might see him that was hanged on it afar off, and be struck with the greater terror, by that spectacle, of giving any disgust to Haman. They advised him not to wait till the general slaughter of all the Jews, but to rid him presently of Mordecai: for which he had now a fair opportunity, being to attend on the king to-morrow unto the banquet.

Then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet.] When his heart was eased of this trouble, the despatch of his enemy, and the banquet, giving him a double pleasure.

He caused the gallows to be made.] And set up before the door of Mordecai's house, saith the former Targum, against the plain words of this history, vii. 9, where it is said, they stood in Haman's house; from whence, it is possible, he intended to remove them to the door of Mordecai: that Targum hath a great deal of frivolous stuff about this consultation which Haman's friends had how to destroy Mordecai; some advising one way, and some another, but none approved of till this was propounded. The reason given for it is foolish; but at last he concludes piously, that the Jews were extremely troubled at the sight of the gallows, and all cried to God in the words of the Psalmist (cxiii. 2), "Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us."

CHAPTER VI

1 *Ahasuerus, reading in the chronicles of the good service done by Mordecai, taketh care for his reward. A Haman, coming to sue that Mordecai might be hanged, unawares giveth counsel that he might do him honour.*
 12 *Complaining of his misfortune, his friends tell him of his final destiny.*

1 Ox that night could not the king sleep, and he commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king.

2 And it was found written, that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's chamberlains, the keepers of the door, who sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus.

3 And the king said, What honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this? Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, There is nothing done for him.

4 ¶ And the king said, Who is in the court? Now Haman was come into the outward court of the king's house, to speak unto the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him.

5 And the king's servants said unto him, Be-

hold, Haman standeth in the court. And the king said, Let him come in.

6 So Haman came in. And the king said unto him, What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour? Now Haman thought in his heart, To whom would the king delight to do honour more than to myself?

7 And Haman answered the king, For the man whom the king delighteth to honour,

8 Let the royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head:

9 And let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man *withal* whom the king delighteth to honour, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city,

CHAP. VI.

Ver. 1. *On that night could not the king sleep,*] Now follows a wonderful turn of affairs: God so disposing it, that the king could take no rest in the night; and instead of music and singing, and diverting himself with his wives and concubines, he called for the records of the kingdom to be read to him.

He commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles:] These were diaries, wherein was set down what passed every day, which we now call journals (as I observed ii. 13). And in them it was the manner of the Persians to set down the names of those who had done the king any eminent service; as Grotius notes out of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Procopius.

Ver. 2.] It was a singular providence of God, that they should read in that very part of the book wherein the service of Mordecai was recorded. And the latter Targum, to increase the wonder, saith, that Shimstæus, who brought the book, and opened it at this place, seeing this which was written of Mordecai, turned over the leaves, and would have read in another part of the book; but the leaves flew back again to the same place where he opened it, and he was forced to read that story to the king.

Ver. 3.] Great men sometimes are unmindful of the highest services that are done them, and take no care to reward them. Though some think the king ordered him a reward, of which, by the artifice of those in the court, who hated the Jews, he was deprived. But there was a special providence in it, that he went without a reward then, which procured it for him most opportunely at this time. It is not improbable, that, as Josephus saith, the history of some of his ancestors was read before they came to his reign; wherein was set down what service men had done, and what preferment or gifts had been bestowed upon them; which moved the king to ask, when they came to this story of Mordecai, what had been done for him?

Ver. 4. *Who is in the court?*] For he was resolved immediately to show how sensible he was of his service.

Now Haman was come into the outward court]

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He was come very early to court, that he might gratify his revenge, and go with more pleasure to the banquet. This was another part of God's providence, to bring him so soon to court when the king was thus disposed.

Ver. 5.] Which he durst not do, as great as he was, without leave.

Ver. 6. *What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?*] The king, in all probability, would not have asked this question, but ordered himself what he thought fit, if God had not intended that Mordecai should have the greatest honour done him, and that by the judgment of his greatest enemy.

To whom would the king delight to do honour more than to myself?] He had reason to think so, because he had already heaped so many favours upon him, and was now invited by the queen to keep him company at her banquet.

Ver. 8. *Let the royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear,*] When he went abroad, and appeared publicly among his people; which should rather be translated, "the royal robe," an external garment, or stole, coming down to his feet, which none wore but himself.

The horse that the king rideth upon,] I suppose it was a horse which none might ride upon but himself; like the mule among the kings of Israel, which was peculiarly appointed to their own use, as I have noted on 1 Kings i. 33, Herodotus (lib. i.) mentions such a generous and most noble horse belonging to the king of Persia.

The crown royal which is set upon his head:] That is, upon the horse's head, upon which there was a royal ornament; as there is now at Rome, called a *fiocco*. For *keter* is a large word, signifying any ornament about the head or the neck. And that this refers to the horse, not to the king, is plain in the Hebrew, and from the next verse, and ver. 10, 11, where there is no more mention of this *keter*; but only of the robe, and of the horse to which this royal ornament upon his head belonged (see Ludovicus De Dieu).

Ver. 9.] This proclamation, in all likelihood, was made by some public officer.

and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour.

10 Then the king said to Haman, Make haste, and take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate: let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken.

11 Then took Haman the apparel and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and brought him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaimed before him, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour.

12 ¶ And Mordecai came again to the king's

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13 And Haman told Zeresh his wife and all his friends every thing that had befallen him. Then said his wise men and Zeresh his wife unto him, If Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him.

14 And while they were yet talking with him, came the king's chamberlains, and hastened to bring Haman unto the banquet that Esther had prepared.

Ver. 10.] It is very likely these words astonished Haman, and made as great commotions in him, as the Targum here describes: but he durst not dispute the king's command, nor ask him what Mordecai he meant (there being many of that name), when the king had plainly told him on whom it was he intended to bestow this honour. But if he made any difficulty to obey this command, or desired to be excused, the king bade him say no more, but go (as the verse concludes), and "let nothing fail of all that he had spoken."

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4 For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my tongue, although the enemy could not countervail the king's damage.

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6 And Esther said, The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman. Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen.

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As the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face.] That he might not see the face of the king any more ; or rather, as a man condemned, this told him his doom ; for it is likely the king, when he saw him in that posture, made a sign what they should do with him, which immediately was performed. Though Aben Ezra saith, this was always done to those with whom the king was angry, though they were not put to death ; to show them what they deserved, never to see the king more.

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Hang him thereon.] But whether dead or alive is not said, as Salmasius observes; who shows, by many instances (in his book De Cruce, p. 494), that it was the manner of the Persians, first to cut off the heads of malefactors, and then to hang them on a gibbet. Josephus, indeed, saith that he commanded Haman, *ἐκ σταυροῦ χρισμῶσδ' αὐτῶ ἀποθανεῖν*, "to be put to death hanging on a cross;" but crucifying was not a Persian punishment; nor did the Romans let the bodies of malefactors die on the cross themselves; but they extinguished them some other way.

Ver. 10. *So they hanged Haman on the gallows.*] The latter Targum here adds a great deal of frivolous stuff, how the king sent for Mordecai, and charged him to see the execution done upon Haman; and how he begged of Mordecai to spare his life, at least

and sealed it with the king's ring, and sent letters by posts on horseback, and riders on mules, camels, and young dromedaries :

11 Wherein the king granted the Jews which were in every city to gather themselves together, and to stand for their life, to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish, all the power of the people and province that would assault them, both little ones and women, and to take the spoil of them for a prey.

12 Upon one day in all the provinces of king Ahasuerus, namely, upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar.

13 The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was pub-

lished unto all people, and that the Jews should be ready against that day to avenge themselves on their enemies.

14 So the posts that rode upon mules and camels went out, being hastened and pressed on by the king's commandment. And the decree was given at Shushan the palace.

15 ¶ And Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a garment of fine linen and purple : and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad.

16 The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honour.

17 And in every province, and in every city,

word *mare* among the ancient Gauls was derived, which Pausanius tells us signified a horse: for there was such a transposition of letters as is in the word *forma*, which comes from *μορφή*. In his *Canaan*, lib. i. cap. 42, there is extant a work of a very learned young man of our own (now with God), who, after that he had observed that neither the latter nor the ancient Jews, nor the Gemarists themselves knew what to make of this word, hath made a large discourse about it (see Guil. Guisius, in his annotations upon that title in the *Mischna*, called *Kelaim*).

The sense of the whole is, that he sent men on horseback (naked, as the first Targum will have it, that they might be lighter), and upon other creatures as swift as horses, and upon mules both old and young, according as the places were nearer or farther off. So he ordered the letters to be sent with great speed by the post, which carried them from stage to stage, till they came to the place whither they were directed.

Ver. 11. *Wherein the king granted the Jews which were in every city to gather themselves together.* Notwithstanding that former decree sent by Haman.

To stand for their life, to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish, all the power of the people and province that would assault them, &c.] It must be presumed that some would obey the former order, out of their hatred to the Jews; therefore this gives them authority, if any attempt was made upon them, either in great bodies or small parties, not only to defend themselves and repel them, but to make as great a slaughter of them as they were able (for he uses many words to express the liberty he gave them to destroy their enemies), not sparing children and women; and to possess themselves of their goods, as men used to do in war, and as Haman had procured them license to take the goods of the Jews (iii. 13).

Ver. 12.] Which day was chosen and appointed by Haman for their destruction.

Ver. 13. *The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province*] To warrant them to do what was therein commanded.

That the Jews should be ready against that day to revenge themselves on their enemies.] Furnish themselves with arms, and all things necessary for their defence, and to annoy their enemies on that day. The latter Targum makes bold to insert a copy of this letter, which imports that the king was deceived by Haman, who persuaded him to write the former letter; but now he had hanged him, because he found the Jews to be an innocent people, worthy of his protection: and especially commended Esther and Mordecai, whom he had taken into his favour: and therefore sent this new signification of his will and pleasure to them in the behalf of the Jews. There are many expressions in it, which, no doubt, he never used; but the sense of it is good.

Ver. 14. *So the posts that rode upon mules and camels went out.*] Here are two of the same words used again, *reches* and *ahasteranim*; the latter of which is translated *camels*, as it was before; which, though they be not swift creatures, yet are very fit to travel through dry countries better than horses, being very patient of thirst and labour.

Being hastened and pressed on by the king's commandment.] Who gave them a strict charge to make all the speed possible to disperse this new order.

The decree was given at Shushan] As that sent by Haman was (iii. 15), and, as I there observed, signed, it is probable, by the king's counsellors.

Ver. 15. *Mordecai went out—in royal apparel of blue and white.*] In such robes as the princes of Persia were wont to wear.

With a great crown of gold.] Not like that of the kings; but such a coronet as was used by the greatest peers of the realm.

With a garment of fine linen and purple.] This was his inner garment, as the former was the outward. The former Targum hath made an extravagant description of the riches of the habit, wherein Mordecai appeared; his tunic costing four hundred and twenty talents of gold; and many such things which he saith about his sword, and the chain of gold about his neck, which it would be a vanity to mention. But one thing he saith, which is pious, if it were truly related; that Esther looking out of her window, saw him walk in this state: and he spying her, said those words of the Psalmist (cxxxiv. 6), "Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given me a prey unto their teeth." To which she replied in the words of Ps. cxxii. 7, "Our help standeth in the Lord, who hath made heaven and earth."

The city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad.] At his advancement, and at the fall of Haman, who designed the ruin of such an excellent person.

Ver. 16. *The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy.*] All these words signify the same thing, expressing the highest joy and satisfaction.

And honour.] They were much respected by the people.

Ver. 17. *In every province,—whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came.*] His commandment was, that the decree should be published with all speed; and both of them were known together: what decree the king had made, and how he pressed the delivery of it (ver. 14).

The Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day.] Not only in Shushan, but everywhere else, they entertained one another, and their neighbours, with good cheer, being full of joy at this unexpected alteration of their affairs. For they doubted not this new decree of the king's would be observed by his people; and they were resolved to defend themselves against

withersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many

of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them.

those that did not observe it, and destroy them.

Many of the people of the land became Jews;] Many of the Persians became proselytes to the Jewish religion, as both the Targums explain it; but that they were circumcised is not probable. Such persons there were in all times, especially in the days of David and Solomon, when the affairs of the Jews were very prosperous. But the Jews say they did not admit them presently, until the court of judgment approved them as sincere converts. See Selden, *De Jure Nat. et Gent.* lib. ii. cap. 2, 4, where he observes, that such persons ever after went by the name of Jews (as Dio himself takes notice), and were not reckoned gentiles if they fell to idolatry, but called apostates (see p. 149, &c. 160).

For the fear of the Jews fell upon them.] The liberty granted them by the king's edict, and the power of the queen and Mordecai, made the Persians stand in awe of them and of their God, who had so marvelously disposed things in their favour (see the next chapter, ver. 2, 3).

But this hath made some admire that such a marvellous and memorable thing should not be related, nor so much as touched, by any exotic writer whatsoever. Of which Jacobus Capellus hath given a plain reason, that the history of Oechus is described by no writer, but only Diodorus Siculus: and he meddles with the affairs of Persia no farther than as they cohere with the affairs of Greece.

CHAPTER IX.

- 1 *The Jews (the rulers, for fear of Mordecai, helping them) slay their enemies, with the ten sons of Haman.*
 12 *Ahasuerus, at the request of Esther, granteth another day of slaughter, and Haman's sons to be hanged.*
 20 *The two days of Purim are made festival.*

1 Now in the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar, on the thirteenth day of the same, when the king's commandment and his decree drew near to be put in execution, in the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to have power over them, (though it was turned to the contrary, that the Jews had rule over them that hated them;)

2 The Jews gathered themselves together in their cities throughout all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, to lay hand on such as sought

their hurt: and no man could withstand them; for the fear of them fell upon all people.

3 And all the rulers of the provinces, and the lieutenants, and the deputies, and officers of the king, helped the Jews; because the fear of Mordecai fell upon them.

4 For Mordecai was great in the king's house and his fame went out throughout all the provinces: for this man Mordecai waxed greater and greater.

5 Thus the Jews smote all their enemies with

CHAP. IX.

Ver. 1. *In the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to have power over them;]* As they often boasted (it is likely) and threatened, since the decree, which Haman sent, came to them, for they had gotten start of the other, and put the Jews into great terror and confusion, and their enemies into high expectation of their ruin.

Though it was turned to the contrary, that the Jews had rule over them that hated them;] As it appeared presently when the time was come for the executing both the decrees.

Ver. 2. *The Jews gathered themselves together in their cities—to lay hand on such as sought their hurt:]* As some did, being possessed with hatred to them, and being combined, it is likely, upon the receipt of Haman's decree, to endeavour to destroy them. It cannot be imagined, that when Haman perished, all his friends and potentates perished with him; but he had a great party everywhere, some of which were so furiously enraged at his fall, that they could not contain themselves from showing their indignation at those who were the occasion of it.

No man could withstand them;] But they fled before them.

For the fear of them fell upon all people.] When they heard that Haman had lost all his authority and his life, and that his family was destroyed, and how Mordecai was in great power (as it here follows), and the queen herself was a Jew, no doubt it daunted all those who were disposed to execute the first decree. And

though some were so desperately envenomed against the Jews, that they did rise up to assault them, yet they had not such courage as the Jews had to oppose them.

Ver. 3. *All the rulers of the provinces, &c., helped the Jews;]* Which was a great advantage to them, and disheartened their enemies, who hoped for their assistance.

Because the fear of Mordecai fell upon them.] They were men of the times (as we speak), and would have been as ready to execute Haman's decree, if he had continued in power, as to aid the Jews in this: which it was their interest to do, being afraid to be turned out of their places by Mordecai, who was the chief minister, if they did otherwise.

Ver. 4. *For Mordecai was great in the king's house,]* Having the management of all the queen's affairs in the court, where she was beloved of the king; who also (it appears by the foregoing chapter, ver. 15) gave him the highest authority in the kingdom.

His fame went out throughout all the provinces:] It is soon known everywhere who is the favourite at court, which makes all addresses to be paid to him.

Mordecai waxed greater and greater.] In the esteem of the people, who not only stood in awe of his power, but highly applauded his wisdom and justice in the management of all affairs: for one cannot but think he was very eminent in those noble qualities.

Ver. 5. *Thus the Jews smote all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, and slaughter, and destruction,]* That is, they that had no swords slew them with clubs and staves, and such like weapons as they

the stroke of the sword, and slaughter, and destruction, and did what they would unto those that hated them.

6 And in Shushan the palace the Jews slew and destroyed five hundred men.

7 And Parshandatha, and Dalphon, and Aspatha,

8 And Poratha, and Adalia, and Aridatha, 9 And Parmashta, and Arisai, and Aridai, and Vajezatha,

10 The ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews, slew they; but on the spoil laid they not their hand.

11 On that day the number of those that were slain in Shushan the palace was brought before the king.

12 ¶ And the king said unto Esther the queen, The Jews have slain and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the palace, and the ten sons of

could procure; as the former Targum understands it.

Did what they would unto those that hated them.] Had them perfectly at their mercy.

Ver. 6. In Shushan the palace.] That is, in the city where the king's palace was.

The Jews slew and destroyed five hundred men.] It is commonly thought that these and the rest mentioned, ver. 15, 16, were such as they knew were confederate with Haman, and perhaps Amalekites (as the latter Targum saith); for Mordecai, they think it is likely, required them to kill none but those who declared themselves forward to execute Haman's decree. But I see no ground for this: if men were quiet, and did not rise up against them, they had no authority to hurt them, much less to kill them. Therefore these five hundred, and the rest killed in other places, were men who could not conceal their wicked inclinations, but openly assaulted them; and such Ahasuerus gave them power to destroy (viii. 11). And Dr. Alix thinks the conjecture of the Targum is right; that these five hundred men were Amalekites, who followed the fortune of Haman: and by their slaughter were accomplished the prophecies against Amalek. Some others, it is likely, joined with them; but they were the most enraged against the Jews, and the readiest to attempt their destruction.

Ver. 9. Vajezatha,] It is too curious an observation of the Jews, that the letter *vau* before the last of these names is larger than ordinary, to show, that though this was the youngest son of Haman, yet he was the most violent against the Jews of all the rest. Or, as others will have it (for such conceits are endless), this being the numeral letter for the number six, it signifies this was the sixth son of Haman, but placed last, out of contempt, as the vilest of them all.

Ver. 10. The ten sons of Haman—slew they;] It is likely they were at the head of the rest, who were so bold as to attempt the destruction of the Jews in this city; being mad with rage, and resolved to revenge their father's death; and rather perish than not execute his design as far as they were able.

But on the spoil laid they not their hand,] The king had granted them leave to take it (viii. 11,) but they would not meddle with it, that they might not seem to desire any thing but their own safety, and that the king might have the greater kindness for them, into whose exchequer these goods were to come, if he pleased.

Ver. 11.] Who required an account, that he might know how people stood affected towards the Jews.

Haman; what have they done in the rest of the king's provinces? now what is thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: or what is thy request further? and it shall be done.

13 Then said Esther, If it please the king, let it be granted to the Jews which are in Shushan to do to-morrow also according unto this day's decree, and let Haman's ten sons be hanged upon the gallows.

14 And the king commanded it so to be done: and the decree was given at Shushan; and they hanged Haman's ten sons.

15 For the Jews that were in Shushan gathered themselves together on the fourteenth day also of the month Adar, and slew three hundred men at Shushan; but on the prey they laid not their hand.

16 But the other Jews that were in the king's provinces gathered themselves together, and stood

Ver. 12. What have they done in the rest of the king's provinces?] That was not yet known, but he thought in all likelihood they must have killed a great many more.

Now what is thy petition? and it shall be granted thee:] If this did not satisfy her, he asks her what she had to desire farther, and he would not deny her.

Ver. 13. Let it be granted to the Jews which are in Shushan to do to-morrow also according unto this day's decree.] That is, kill as many of their enemies as they could find; for some that appeared against them, perhaps, escaped their hands, whom they might meet withal the next day.

Let Haman's ten sons be hanged upon the gallows,] By their father, I suppose.

Ver. 14. And the king commanded it so to be done:] That both her petition and request should be granted. This was a new decree, authorizing them to do on the fourteenth day as they had on the thirteenth.

They hanged Haman's ten sons,] For their great infamy, that they might be exposed to public reproach, and their bodies remain unburied, being left to rot upon the gallows, or to be devoured by crows and vultures, and suchlike ravenous creatures. For, though the Jews suffered none to hang on a tree (so they called a gallows) longer than till the evening of the day, whereon they were hanged, yet other nations let them hang till they were there consumed; as appears from the story of the Gibeonites (2 Sam. xxi. 9, 10), and from the vulgar saying among the Romans, *passere in cruce corvos*, "to feed ravens on a gibbet."

Ver. 15.] The former Targum saith still, these three hundred men were of the family of Amalek. But whosoever they were, I take them to have been such as the day before rose up against them, but in the conflict escaped by flight, and now were found out and killed.

Ver. 16. But the other Jews that were in the king's provinces—stood for their lives,] This they did upon the thirteenth day, when they defended themselves from those that rose up against them to destroy them.

And had rest from their enemies,] Who could not stand before them; but ceased to molest them.

And slew of their foes seventy and five thousand,] There is some reason to think these were Amalekites, as the former Targum saith; for it is likely, many of that nation might be dispersed throughout the king's provinces as well as the Jews; and being the old enemies of the Jews, might be very forward to help to destroy them. But whosoever they were, the Jews prevailed against them, and slew so many thou-

for their lives, and had rest from their enemies, and slew of their foes seventy and five thousand, but they laid not their hands on the prey,

17 On the thirteenth day of the month Adar; and on the fourteenth day of the same rested they, and made it a day of feasting and gladness.

18 But the Jews that were at Shushan assembled together on the thirteenth day thereof, and on the fourteenth thereof; and on the fifteenth day of the same they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness.

19 Therefore the Jews of the villages, that dwelt in the unwalled towns, made the fourteenth day of the month Adar a day of gladness and feasting, and a good day, and of sending portions one to another.

20 ¶ And Mordecai wrote these things, and sent letters unto all the Jews that were in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, both nigh and far,

21 To stablish this among them, that they

sands, that thereby we may judge what a great number of Jews still remained in other countries, and did not return to their own.

[But they laid not their hands on the prey,] It is likely Mordecai, in his letters, had charged them not to make use of the liberty the king had given them to take the spoil (viii. 11), because they universally avoided it.

Ver. 17. On the thirteenth day of the month Adar;] This is to be referred to the foregoing words; the slaughter was made in the provinces on the thirteenth day of this month, when they should have been destroyed themselves.

And on the fourteenth day of the same rested they, and made it a day of feasting and gladness,] And so the Jews in the provinces made the next day a festival of rejoicing for their great deliverance. For there never was any day of joy and gladness for any blessing, without feasting and liberal entertainment of each other, and of the poor.

Ver. 18.] The Jews, indeed, in the city of Shushan, made the fifteenth day a festival, because they had liberty to avenge themselves of their enemies, not only on the thirteenth, but on the fourteenth, which were both days of slaughter; and therefore they rested not till the fifteenth day.

Ver. 19.] This verse gives an account of the reason of the different observation of the festival in Shushan, and in the country towns throughout the king's provinces. There they had leave only on one day to slay their enemies, which was the thirteenth of Adar; therefore the fourteenth was a day of gladness to them: whereas in Shushan the fifteenth was the day of gladness, the fourteenth being, by the king's leave, made like the thirteenth, another day of slaughter. But this was at the first done thus, only of their own free accord; afterward the law established it otherwise.

A day of gladness and feasting, and a good day,] A day of thanksgiving and praise to God, as well as of feasting one with another, and of sending portions to their neighbours out of their own good cheer, that the meaner sort might feast and rejoice also. And as, to add to their joy, they sent them meat from their tables; so the Jews have made a constitution, that they should make a collection of money to send to the poor at this time of the year, that they may provide themselves things necessary to make a feast. Which money it is unlawful (as Guilielmus Schieckar-

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should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same, yearly,

22 As the days wherein the Jews rested from their enemies, and the month which was turned unto them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a good day: that they should make them days of feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor.

23 And the Jews undertook to do as they had begun, and as Mordecai had written unto them;

24 Because Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had devised against the Jews to destroy them, and had cast Pur, that is, the lot, to consume them, and to destroy them;

25 But when Esther came before the king, he commanded by letters that his wicked device, which he devised against the Jews, should return upon his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows.

26 Wherefore they called these days Purim

duſ observes) to apply to any other use, but only the making themselves merry at this time (see Neh. viii. 10).

Ver. 20.] That which they had done at the first voluntarily, he thought good to turn into a law, and sent it into the whole realm.

Ver. 21.] But, to make these more solemn times, they now keep a fast before the feast (after the example of Esther) on the thirteenth day of the month Adar.

Ver. 22.] For in the provinces they had done their work before the fourteenth day, and then rested and rejoiced: but in Shushan not before the fifteenth; and then they rejoiced there.

Ver. 23.] That is, to keep these days as festivals everywhere throughout all generations.

Ver. 25.] These two verses give an account why this festival was ordained, which they took care should be understood by all posterity: who observe it at this day; and tell us it consists in these three things; in reading, in rest from labour, and in feasting. The reading begins in the evening, as soon as the stars appear; when the history of Haman is read from the beginning to the end, out of a Hebrew manuscript written on parchment: for it is not lawful to read it out of a printed Bible, no more than they do the law itself, as Schieckar observes out of their writers, who say, three prayers go before this reading. In the first of which they praise God for counting them worthy to attend this divine service: in the second, they thank him for the miraculous preservation of their ancestors: and in the third, that they have lived to observe another festival in memory of it. After this they go to supper upon spoon-meats; and next morning to the synagogue, where the history is read over again with the same ceremonies. After which they have done with religion and piety, and spend the two days in idleness, and eating, and drinking. Surenhuysius hath given a full account of this reading, and the benedictions, in his notes upon the Megillah, p. 387. And for their rest and feasting, they say in their books, that the first is kept so sacredly, that they will not so much as set or sow any thing in their garden on these days; but play at chess, and suchlike games, or spend the time in music and dancing, till it be time to feast. And then they indulge themselves so far, that they think it not unlawful to drink so much, as not to be able to distinguish between the blessing of Mordecai and the curse of Haman, as they themselves speak. Inasmuch

after the name of Pur. Therefore for all the words of this letter, and of that which they had seen concerning this matter, and which had come unto them,

27 The Jews ordained, and took upon them, and upon their seed, and upon all such as joined themselves unto them, so as it should not fail, that they would keep these two days according to their writing, and according to their appointed time every year;

28 And that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city; and that these days of Purim should not fail from among the Jews, nor the memorial of them perish from their seed.

that our learned primate Usher calls this feast, "The Bacchanals of the Jews."

Ver. 26. *Purim, after the name of Pur.*] A Persian word, signifying a lot.

Therefore for all the words of this letter, and of that which they had seen concerning this matter, and which had come unto them,] This seems to refer to the foregoing words; "wherefore they called these days Purim," because of what was contained in the letters of Mordecai, and because of what they had seen when these things fell out, and what they heard reported of them in the places where they could not see them. But we take them to be the reason of what follows; viz. of the keeping these days.

Ver. 27. *Upon all such as joined themselves unto them,*] All that should become proselytes to their religion.

That they would keep these two days according to their writing,—every year;] According as Mordecai had written, so they engaged without fail to keep these two days in the time appointed; viz. on the fourteenth day they kept the festival in the country all over the king's dominions, and on the fifteenth they kept it in Shushan. The former of these the Jews now call in their calendar the lesser feast of Purim, and the latter the greater feast.

Ver. 28. *That these days should be remembered and kept*] Accordingly at this day they kept this festival, as they did in more ancient times: for in the second book of Maccabees, xv. 37, we find, that Judas having obtained a great victory over Nicanor, they ordained it should be commemorated upon the thirteenth of Adar, "the day before the feast of Mordecai," which was this of Purim. This shows, that in those days they kept this deliverance in memory by celebrating this feast, and that the thirteenth of Adar was not then a fast.

That these days of Purim should not fail from among the Jews,] This is but a repetition of what was said before, to make them more seriously attend to their obligation; which was laid upon them all throughout all generations. Accordingly now, as they tell us in their books, the little children, the women, they that are base born, and servants, &c., are bound to keep this feast.

Ver. 29.] These days were first recommended to their observation by the authority of Mordecai, ver. 20. But either they were neglected, or sometime intermitted, or were thought not to be sufficiently established; therefore the first order was confirmed and ratified by a second, which was backed by the authority of the queen. And the opinion of Maimonides is not improbable, that this was also an ordinance of the prophets; viz. Haggai, Zechariah, and others, that lived in the days of Esther. But this cannot be true; for they were dead long before this time.

Ver. 30. *He sent the letters unto all the Jews, to the*

29 Then Esther the queen, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew, wrote with all authority, to confirm this second letter of Purim.

30 And he sent the letters unto all the Jews, to the hundred twenty and seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, with words of peace and truth,

31 To confirm these days of Purim in their times appointed, according as Mordecai the Jew and Esther the queen had enjoined them, and as they had decreed for themselves and for their seed, the matters of the fastings and their cry.

32 And the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim; and it was written in the book.

hundred twenty and seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus,] And consequently as far as Jerusalem; for Syria and Judea were among his provinces, and the Jews should have been killed there, as well as in the rest of his dominions: and were bound to thank God for their preservation throughout all ages; for otherwise they had not been any longer a people.

With words of peace and truth,] Full of sincere love and affectionate desires of their happiness. "Verbis amicis et sinceris." Or, as others will have it, wishing their prosperity, and exhorting them to live in love and peace, and to be faithful in their religion; and particularly in keeping their promise of observing these days. But after all, Conradus Pellicanus seems to me to have guessed the best at the meaning of these words *peace and truth*; which he thinks were the salutation at the top of the letter.

Ver. 31.] Some learned men understand these words, as if they meant, that these days of Purim were therefore appointed, that they might be a memorial of that deliverance, which was obtained of God by fastings and prayers unto him; which, if it be admitted, gives no ground to conclude from thence, that they observed a fast upon this occasion, as well as a feast. The Jews, indeed, think quite otherwise; and, if we may believe their calendar, have ever since kept a fast on the thirteenth of Adar, which was the day appointed for their extirpation. Upon the hearing of which decree, all places were filled with doleful lamentations, there being no help for them if God did not deliver them; unto whom therefore they cried with fasting and prayer. In memory of which, they undertook to keep a yearly fast, as well as days of feasting and gladness, which immediately ensued. But their calendar is a new piece, and of no credit at all; nor do we find the least indication that Esther or Mordecai enjoined any thing but a feast, no mention being made of a fast in their decree: and therefore it was voluntarily undertaken by the Jews themselves in after-ages, as this verse seems to import. Which the former Targum thus paraphrases (and the latter to the same purpose): "To confirm these days of Purim, as Mordecai the Jew, and Esther the queen, appointed concerning them; and as the Jews ordained for themselves, and for their posterity, to keep in memory the matter of their fastings and their prayers."

Ver. 32.] Either she made a new decree by her sole authority to enforce the former; or the meaning is, that she commanded the forementioned decree, which confirmed the days of Purim, to be recorded and made a public act, in a book where, perhaps, this whole history was contained. Which record testified in time to come what passed in her days; viz. their danger, and their wonderful deliverance, and the decree of Esther concerning the observation of these days.

CHAPTER X.

1 *Ahasuerus's greatness.* 3 *Mordecai's advancement.*

1 AND the king Ahasuerus laid a tribute upon the land, and upon the isles of the sea.

2 And all the acts of his power and of his might, and the declaration of the greatness of Mordecai, whereunto the king advanced him, are they not written in the book of the

CHAP. X.

Ver. 1.] Having great occasion for money, he laid a new tax upon all his provinces, both in the continent (as we speak) and in the isles of the sea, belonging to his dominions. Some think, that the imposts which he released to his people at the marriage of Esther (ii. 18), which continued for some years, were now revived; and that this is all which is meant by these words. But this doth not well agree with this phrase of *laying a tribute on them*. Our primate Usher understands by the *isles* here mentioned, those in the Ægean Sea, which were conquered by Darius Hystaspes, who was the first that laid a tribute on his subjects: for Cyrus, and Cambyses before him laid none; but being begun, they continued it to the reign of this king, *ad Annum Per. Julian.* 4219. Strabo saith (lib. xv. p. 735), that the tribute exacted on the sea-coast was paid in silver; but that from the land, in such commodities as every country afforded, in wool, drugs, cattle, &c.

Ver. 2. *All the acts of his power and of his might,*] Which was so great, that the Egyptians in their hieroglyphics represented Ochus by a sword. And Plutarch (as Jacobus Capellus observes) calls him the most terrible of all the Persian kings.

And the declaration of the greatness of Mordecai,—are they not written in the book of the chronicles] These words signify, that as this king did great things, so they were to be ascribed very much to the management of Mordecai, after he was advanced to the highest authority in the kingdom. But it was not the design of the author of this history to relate such things; for which he refers to the public records of the kingdom, which were kept in some part of the king's house (it appears from vi. 1), and were extant in those days when this book was written.

Ver. 3. *For Mordecai the Jew was next unto king Ahasuerus,*] I cannot but observe here, in the conclusion of this book, that Mordecai is so often called

chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia?

3 For Mordecai the Jew was next unto king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed.

the Jew by this author (see ix. 29, 31), that it hath inclined me to think it was not written by one of that nation, but by some proselyte of Persia who was converted, as many were at this time (viii. 17), to the Jewish religion. Some of which might be in these times divinely inspired, as Nicholas, a proselyte of Antioch, was in the apostles' days (Acts vi. 5). But I have no authority for this, which I mention as a mere conjecture.

And great among the Jews,] His greatness did not make him forget his brethren; by whom he was highly esteemed, and much honoured by every one of them.

Seeking the wealth of his people,] And no wonder he was so acceptable, for his study was how to do them good.

And speaking peace to all his seed,] Advising and promoting whatsoever was for their advantage; and speaking still to the king for that which might tend to the happiness and prosperity of his nation, which he advanced to the utmost of his power. Unto which a most earnest desire of the coming of the Messiah contributed exceedingly; and the serious study of the law, which he recommended to them, as the only means of living happily. Thus Conradus Peliacus concludes his commentary on this book; but where he found this I cannot tell. It is only highly probable, that so good a man as Mordecai was very solicitous they should be obedient to the law of Moses (as Malachi was), and live in expectation of the Messiah, concerning whom Moses prophesied. For, as Epiphanius and Seder Olam, and others, observe, this book of Esther is the last canonical book of the Old Testament; and the nearer they approached to the coming of Christ, the more desirous holy men were to see him. Others, indeed, think Malachi is the last divine writer; but, on the other side, it seems probable, that he, having taken no notice of the deliverance under Esther, prophesied some time before it.

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A

PARAPHRASE

ON

THE BOOK OF JOB.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

WILLIAM, EARL OF BEDFORD,

Knight of the most noble Order of the Garter, &c.

MY VERY GOOD LORD AND PATRON.

MY LORD,

THOUGH I have not pursued the design, which I have long had in my thoughts, of making some public acknowledgment of my obligations to your Lordship, for placing me, when I thought not of it, in this station which I hold in Covent-Garden; yet I have only deferred it, till the most proper opportunity, as it seems to me, for this small expression of my gratitude. For I could not have prefixed your Lordship's name to any work of mine, which I believe would have been so acceptable, as this wherewith I now present you; desiring it may remain as a lasting testimony of the sense I have of the favours I have received from your Lordship. In whom, as I have always observed a particular veneration and affection for the Holy Scriptures; so I know to be a constant reader of them: and therefore humbly offer this assistance to your Lordship, for the understanding of the oldest book (as I have shown) of that sacred volume, which, I am confident, you esteem above all earthly treasures.

There have been many large volumes written for its explication: which will cost abundance of time and pains to peruse; and after all the design and scope of the whole may not be understood, while the reader's mind stays so long in the several parts. I have therefore taken quite another course, and only given the sense of it in a compendious but perspicuous Paraphrase (or Metaphrase rather, as the ancients would have called it), which is not much longer than the text, put into other words. It would have been more easy to have enlarged it, than it was to make it thus short; which I the rather chose to do, not merely because it will be more useful for those who have little leisure, or less money, but because thereby I have preserved, I persuade myself, the majesty of the book; and made it still look, not like the word of a man, but, as it is indeed, the word of God.

Which I could never have presented to your Lordship and the world more seasonably than now; when the state of our affairs is so dangerously perplexed, that we cannot stand upright, nor preserve our souls from sinking into the saddest fears or discontents, or some such trouble-

some passion, without a strong confidence in the most wise, just, and merciful providence of the Almighty; which orders things, in unsearchable ways, to the good of those that steadfastly adhere unto him in faithful obedience. Which is so admirably represented in this holy book, that one cannot read it seriously, and not be moved to resign the conduct of ourselves, and all that concerns us, unto God's most blessed will and pleasure; to wait patiently for him, as the Psalmist speaks, and keep his way; not to be disheartened by any trouble that befalls us, much less forsake our integrity; but still expect "the end of the Lord," as St. James speaks, i. e. the issue to which he will bring our troubles; persuading ourselves that he is very pitiful, and of tender mercy; and therefore, as he doth not love to grieve us by laying afflictions on us, so is wont many times to bring the greatest good out of the greatest evil; and to produce it by such unexpected means, as shall surprise us with the greater admiration of his wisdom and goodness.

For a great reader of ancient writers tells us, "He hath observed, in the histories of all ages, that the great events which determine the fate of great affairs do happen less frequently according to design, than by accident and occasion. Our enterprises here below are derived from above; and we but engines and actors of pieces that are composed in heaven. *Homo histrio, Deus vero poeta est*: 'God is the sovereign poet; and we cannot refuse the part which he appoints us to bear in the scene. All our business is to act it well; cheerfully complying with his orders concerning us, and submitting ourselves to the direction of his providence.'

To which, and all other religious courses, did we more heartily apply ourselves, there is no doubt but that in this book we might read God's gracious intentions towards this church and kingdom. Which his most merciful providence would bring, as he did his servant Job, through all these clouds which now encompass us, into a splendour incomparably beyond all that wherein hitherto we have appeared. Why should we despair of it, when he shows by the unexpected discovery which he hath made of the designs of our enemies against us, that he hath no mind to cast us off, if we will not carelessly cast away ourselves, by the continual neglect of our duty to him?

God of his infinite goodness awaken all our hearts, to make such a good use both of that de-

liverance, and of our present distress (which is so great that we see no way out of it, but by his power alone to whom Job owed his resurrection), that we may, in the issue, be the more happy, and the better established, for having been so miserably unsettled. In which prayer, I am sure your Lordship will cordially join with,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most humble
and affectionate servant,
SY. PATRICK.

April 19, 1679.

PREFACE.

THE study of the Holy Scriptures is much recommended to us by the Scriptures themselves, and hath been judged so necessary by the holy doctors of the church, that St. Chrysostom (who was wont to press this duty with great earnestness, not only in his sermons, but in his private discourses with his people) adventures to say (Hom. 3, in Lazar. tom. v. 243), that "a man cannot, he cannot be saved, unless he be convertant in this spiritual reading." But, as the neglect of them is very dangerous when men are able to read them: so the reading them without understanding must needs be unprofitable. Though a Christian (as the forenamed great person speaks) can no more be without the Scriptures, than an artificer without his tools; yet we must acknowledge, that he will make but ill work with them in many places, unless he be instructed how to use and apply them to the purpose for which they were designed. Whosoever, therefore, shall assist the minds of Christians, by giving a clear meaning of them (in which that holy father employed much of his time), it is certain, doth great service to God, and to their souls. For this contributes much to the honour of the Holy Scriptures (which want nothing to make them revered by considering men, but to be understood), and it invites men to the reading them, and it conveys the heavenly truth easily and delightfully into their minds.

Which hath moved me to attempt the explaining of the most ancient book in the whole Bible, by way of a short paraphrase. In which, if I have not always tied myself to our English translation (which ever gives an excellent sense of the original words), it was because I thought another meaning sometimes more agreeable to the whole discourse; which I have endeavour'd to carry on coherently, from first to last. But if the matter would bear it, I have, when I met with a word of two senses, expressed them both. And where I found any difficulty, I consulted with such interpreters as are of best note in the church; being unwilling to do any thing without the warrant of some or other of them. I was forced, indeed, here and there to follow only my own judgment;

but not without the appearance of very urgent reasons; of which, if I should give an account, by adding notes to those places, it would make this, which I intend for common use, swell into too big a volume. I have only, therefore (in the argument prefixed to each chapter), pointed to such histories in the Bible as may help to illustrate some passages; and shown how the dispute is managed, till God himself determine it.

But there are two things of which I think myself bound to give a larger account, to avoid the imputation of such novelty as may be justly censured. The one is that I have interpreted those three known verses in the nineteenth chapter, 25—27, not of Job's resurrection from the dead at the last day, but of his restoration to a happy estate in this world; after he had been so sorely afflicted. There are many, of no mean esteem (Mr. Calvin among the rest), who have done so before me; in following whom, I do not forsake the sense of the ancient doctors. For though I take that to be the literal sense of the words, yet I doubt not there is another more secret and hidden, which lies covered under them; and that we ought to look upon Job's restoration (and so I have always explained it) as a notable type of the future resurrection of our bodies out of the grave. And accordingly our church hath very fitly applied the words (as many of the fathers do) to this purpose, in the office for the burial of the dead.

St. Jerome (or the author of the Commentaries upon Job under his name) is my guide in this business; who saith no more than this, that Job, in these words, resurrectionem futuram prophetat in Spiritu, "prophesied in the Spirit the future resurrection." Now the words of the prophets had commonly an immediate respect to something which was then doing, or shortly to be done, besides that sense which the Holy Ghost directed them to signify in the latter days. And so had these words of Job, of which that father, indeed, gives us only the mystical sense; but he doth so in many other places of that book, where it is certain and acknowledged the holy man had another meaning, in which he was more nearly concerned. I shall refer the reader only to one place in the first chapter; where he saith, that Job did "ferre typum Christi" (and so he saith in his preface, "Figuram Christi portavit;" and in his conclusion, xli. 14, "Figuram manifeste habuit salvatoris"); and therefore expounds those words, ver. 20, 21, in this manner: "He fell on the ground when he emptied himself of the form of God, to take on him the form of a servant; and came naked out of his mother's womb, being not aspersed with the least spot of original sin." He that will may read what follows, and see how he only sets down a mystical sense, when it is certain another (upon which that is built) is first intended. And so we are to take his exposition upon these words which secundum mysticos intellectus (as he speaks, xxxviii. 16), "according to the hidden interpretations," are to be understood of the resurrection of the

dead at the second coming of Christ; but relate, in the first place, to Job's resurrection out of that miserable condition wherein he lay, which was a figure of the other. "They, therefore, who interpret these words otherways (to speak with that father in his commentaries upon Ezekiel, xxxvii. 1, &c.), ought not to make me ill thought of, as if, by expounding them in the literal sense only, I took away a proof of the resurrection from the dead. For I know there are far stronger testimonies (of which there can be no doubt nor dispute) to be found for the confirmation of that truth. On those let us rely, on the plain words of Him who is the truth (and of whom Job was but a figure), which are abundantly sufficient to support our faith; and let none imagine that we give occasion to heretics (as he speaks presently after) if we deny these words to be meant of the general resurrection."

The second thing of which I am to give an account is, that I have not expounded *behemoth* to signify the *elephant*, nor *leviathan* to signify the *whale*; because many of their characters do not agree to them; but every one of them to the description which the writers of natural history have given of two other creatures. And therefore I have herein followed the guidance of that excellent critic Bochartus, who takes the former for the *river-horse*, and the latter for the *crocodile*; as I have expressed it in the margin, but put neither of them in the text: for I leave every one, as our translators have done, to apply the words to any other creatures, if they can find any besides those now mentioned, which have all the qualities that are here ascribed to them.

I have adventured also in the beginning to add a few words, as the manner of paraphrasts is, to give an account of the time when Job lived, which seems to have been before the children of Israel came out of Egypt. For though there be plain mention of the drowning of the old world, and the burning of Sodom, in this book, yet there is no allusion to the drowning of Pharaoh, and other miraculous works which attended their deliverance. Nor is there any notice taken of that revelation of God's will to Moses, when Elihu reckons up those ways whereby God was wont to discover himself to men. Suchlike reasons moved Origen to say (lib. i. contra Celsum, p. 305), that Job was ἀρχαιότερος καὶ Μωϋσῆως αὐτοῦ, "more ancient than even Moses himself;" and Eusebius (lib. i. Demonstr. Evangel. cap. 6), to pronounce that he was before Moses two whole ages. Which is conformable to the opinion of many of the Hebrew writers, who, as Mr. Selden observes (lib. vii. De Jure Nat. &c., cap. 11), think Job lived in the days of Isaac and Jacob. The judgment of other eastern people is not much different from this, as may be seen in Hottinger's *Smegma Orientale* (p. 381, 452, 453).

And therefore one use we may make of this book is, to inform ourselves what are the true natural dictates of human reason, which teaches greater chastity than many Christians are now willing to observe; strict justice, both private and

public; compassionate charity to those who are in need; together with a pious care to please God, and to worship and confide in him alone; as we may learn here better than from any other book in the world. For in the twenty-first chapter, Job gives such a character of his life, with respect to all these, as declares both that there is a law written in our hearts, and what instructions it gives us if we will attend to it. There is not the least syllable that we read concerning his being circumcised, or observing the sabbath, or suchlike parts of the Mosaical discipline, which assures us he was neither a natural Israelite, nor a proselyte, as St. Austin speaks (lib. xviii. cap. 47, De Civit. Dei); and yet he found such a rule of life in himself, that, by the assistance of the divine grace, he ordered not only his outward actions, but the inward motions of his mind, after such a manner, as is "not unsuitable to the evangelical doctrine of our Saviour." They are the words of Eusebius in the place forenamed; where he doth not fear to add, that the "word of Christ hath published to all nations that most ancient manner of godliness which was among the first fathers; so that the new covenant is no other than that old godly polity which was before the times of Moses." I may add, before the time that Abraham was circumcised; when, as St. Chrysostom speaks very significantly (upon Rom. ii. 14), ἀρχὴ ἂν τοῦ νόμου τὸ συνείδητος καὶ λογισμὸς, "their conscience and the use of reason sufficed instead of the law."

The Hebrew books, indeed, are full of discourses concerning certain precepts, which all mankind after the flood observed, but cannot all of them be deduced from the principles of reason. They call them the seven precepts of the sons of Noah; who delivered them, they say, to all his children, by whom the world was peopled; and therefore the Israelites ever exacted the observance of them from all those gentiles whom they admitted as proselytes at large to their religion. Two of these precepts concerned their duty towards the blessed Creator; the next four respected their duty towards their neighbours; the last forbade cruelty towards other creatures. They are reckoned up commonly in this order; 1. Concerning strange worship, or idolatry. 2. About blaspheming the name of God. 3. About murder. 4. About the uncovering of nakedness, or all filthy mixtures. 5. About theft and rapine. 6. About judicatures and civil government; to make the other precepts more carefully observed. 7. About not eating of any flesh which is cut off from any animal alive. The authors that treat of these are innumerable: among whom I shall only mention Maimonides, who thus delivers his opinion of them in his treatise of Kings, ch. ix.—

"Adam, the first man, received commands about six (things which are those first above mentioned); from whence it is, that the mind of man inclines more pronely to them, than to the rest of the commands which we have received from our master Moses. Besides these, it is manifest, Noah

received another, according to what we read Gen. ix. 4, 'Flesh with the life thereof you shall not eat.' And thus things stood throughout the whole world until the days of Abraham; to whom there was superadded the precept of circumcision."

But, as there is not the least sign that circumcision was part of Job's religion, so there is no footsteps at all remaining of his observance of the last of those seven precepts, which they say all the sons of Noah, who were pious, carefully obeyed. A great man of our own nation (Mr. Selden, lib. ult. De Jure Naturali, &c. cap. 2), hath sifted this business with as much diligence as is possible; but after all this search, he is fain to stop at those first six precepts delivered to Adam. For though this general character be given by Job in the beginning of the book, that he was a perfect, or simple and upright man, fearing God, and eschewing evil; and in the thirty-first chapter, and other places, there are particular instances given of his abhorring strange worship (ver. 26), blasphemy (i. 5), murder (xxxi. 29, 31), adultery, and other filthiness (ver. 1, 9), theft, rapine, and deceit (ver. 5—7), for the punishment of which he mentions judges in his days (ver. 11, 25), and was himself one of the chief (xxix. 11), yet here is not so much as one word to be found, that I can discern, concerning the seventh precept: whether we understand thereby eating flesh with the blood in it; or, which is more likely (because other nations, that were not Jews, might lawfully eat that which died of itself, Deut. xiv. 21), eating that which was cut alive from any living creature.

Which makes me think that it was not so generally known as the Jews now pretend; till the memory of it was revived by Moses, among whose ancestors the tradition was more carefully preserved than in other nations. For Job, and such-like pious persons, seem to have been governed by those precepts only which the first man received; that is, dictates of natural reason. According to those words of Tertullian, in his book against the Jews: where he contends (ch. 2), that "before the law of Moses, written in tables of stone, there was a law not written, which was naturally understood, and observed by the fathers:" which he elsewhere calls the "common law, which we meet withal in publico mundi 'in the streets and highways of the world,' in the natural tables;" which mankind having broken, our Saviour came to repair and renew; abrogating the law of Moses, in which the Jews had placed too much confidence, while they neglected these natural precepts. Or rather, he hath not only engaged us by his holy sacraments to observe those more strictly, but raised them also to a greater height of purity; according to that of St. Chrysostom in his book of virginity; "We are to show greater virtue, because now there is an abundant grace poured out; and great is the gift of the coming of Christ."

But the principal benefit (to omit the naming of many other whereby I might recommend this work) which I hope pious souls, especially the afflicted, will reap by this book, is, to be persuaded

thereby, that all things are ordered and disposed by almighty God; without whose command or permission, neither good angels, nor the devil, nor men, nor any other creature, can do any thing. And that, as his power is infinite, so is his wisdom and goodness; which is able to bring good out of evil. And therefore we ought not to complain of him in any condition, as if he neglected us, or dealt hardly with us; but rather cheerfully submit ourselves to his blessed will; which never doth any thing without reason, though we cannot always comprehend it. To that issue God himself at last brings all the dispute between Job and his friends; representing his works throughout the world to be so wonderful and unaccountable, that it is fit for us to acknowledge our ignorance, but never accuse his providence; if we cannot see the cause why he sends any affliction, or continues it long upon us; instead of murmuring and complaining, in such a case, this book effectually teaches us to resign ourselves absolutely to him; silently to adore and reverence the unsearchable depth of his wise counsels; contentedly to bear what he inflicts upon us: still to assert his righteousness, in the midst of the calamities which befall the good, and in the most prosperous successes of the wicked; and steadfastly to believe that all at last shall turn to our advantage, if, like his servant Job, we persevere in faith, and hope, and patience.

To which this book gives so high an encouragement, and contains such powerful comforts for the afflicted; that the old tradition is, Moses could not find any thing like it for the support and satisfaction of the Israelites in their Egyptian bondage; and therefore took the pains to translate it into their language, out of the Syriac, wherein it was first written. Thus he who writes the commentaries upon this book under the name of Origen tells us, "That he found in antiquorum dictis, 'in the sayings of the ancients,' that when the great Moses was sent by God into Egypt, and beheld the affliction of the children of Israel to be so grievous, that nothing he could say was able to comfort them in that lamentable condition; he declared to them the terrible sufferings of Job, with his happy deliverance; and setting them down in writing also, gave this book to that distressed people. That reading these things in their several tribes and families and hearing how sorely this blessed man suffered, they might comfort and exhort one another to endure with patience and thanksgiving the evils which encompassed them; and hearing withal how bountifully God rewarded Job for his patience, they might hope for deliverance, and expect the benefit of a blessed reward of their labours.

"Be ye constant, O children of Israel (said Moses, with a pleasing countenance, when he delivered this book into their hands), do not faint in your minds, O ye posterity of Abraham; but suffer grief, and bear these evils patiently, as that man in the land of Uz did, whose name was Job; who though he was a righteous and faithful person, in whom was no fault, yet suffered the sorest torments by the malice of the devil; as you

do now most unjustly from Pharaoh and the Egyptians. They treat you indeed very basely, and have enslaved you without any fault of yours, &c. But do not despair of a better condition; you shall be delivered as Job was, and have a reward of your tribulations, like that which God gave to him."

There follows a great deal more to the same purpose in that writer, which I shall not transcribe. But only add, that the church of Christ, as he observes, was wont, after this example, to read this passion of Job publicly in all their assemblies; upon holydays (when they commemorated the martyrs), and upon fasting-days, and days of abstinence; and upon the days of our Saviour's passion; of which they thought they saw a figure in the sufferings of Job; as of our Saviour's resurrection and exaltation, in Job's wonderful recovery and advancement to a greater height of prosperity. And, as they read this history in the church publicly; so, when they went to visit any one privately that was in grief, mourning, or sorrow, they read a lesson of the patience of Job for their comfort or support under their troubles; and to take away the distress and anguish of their heart.

I pray God it may have that effect upon all afflicted persons, who shall read it; and that others also, considering the instability of all worldly things (which is here also lively represented), may use their prosperity with such moderation, that they may bear a change of their condition, if it come, with an equal mind.

I am sure there is no man, of whatsoever rank, or in whatsoever condition he be, but may learn very much, if he please, from this admirable pattern. Which is the very first that is left us upon record, of a virtuous life, both in prosperity and adversity, and that not only as a private man, but as a prince, "In whom it is the greater commendation to obey the will of God; because he hath more means and temptations to fulfil his own."

That therefore shall conclude the character of Job; who, when he had no superior to control him (as you may read ch. xxix. xxxi.), gave such an example of piety and devotion, humility and moderation, chastity and purity, justice and equity, charity and compassion, as few have done in a private condition. This is as admirable, and will be praised as much to all generations, as his generous patience. Which was so much famed in ancient times, that (from a passage, which some editions of the LXX. have added to the conclusion of this book) it went as a common tradition *οὐδὲν ἀπίστον ἴζωρ* (as Theophanes speaks), "having nothing incredible in it," that Job was one of those who had the honour to rise out of his grave at our Saviour's resurrection; when, as St. Matthew assures us, xxvii. 51, "many bodies of saints which slept arose, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."

"Behold, we count them happy which endure. Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord" (James v. 7, 11).

CHAPTER I.

ARGUMENT.—*This chapter is a plain narration of the flourishing condition wherein Job lived, before the envy and malice of the devil brought upon him the sorest calamities; which are particularly described, with the occasion of them, and his admirable constancy under them; whereby he became as eminent an example of patience in adversity, as he had been of piety and all manner of virtue in his prosperity.*

1 THERE was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.

2 And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters.

3 His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hun-

dred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.

4 And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them.

5 And it was so, when the days of their feast-

CHAP. I.

Ver. 1.] In the time of the ancient patriarchs, before the giving of the law of Moses, there lived in Arabia a person of great eminence whose name was Job: a man not more illustrious for his birth or place, than for the height of his virtue, which appeared in a most unblamable life, void of all hypocrisy, both in his piety towards God, and in his dealings with men, and all other ways.

Ver. 2.] Whom God therefore had so wonderfully blessed, that his outward prosperity was equal to the perfections of his mind. For, first, he had given him the sweet fruits of marriage, in a numerous issue of seven sons and three daughters:

Ver. 3.] And then enriched him abundantly with the wealth of that country; which consisted in seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, as many she-asses; with such a very great tillage, and so many servants, that in those eastern parts he had neither superior nor equal.

Ver. 4.] And together with all this happiness, he had the pleasure to see his children live in love and unity. For it was the custom of his sons to meet at each other's houses, and to make a feast every one upon his birth-day (iii. 1): and he whose turn it was to treat the rest, always invited their three sisters to come and be merry with them.

Ver. 5.] This feast was wont to last seven days; at

ing were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.

6 ¶ Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.

7 And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

8 And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

9 Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?

10 Hast not thou made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.

11 But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.

12 And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.

13 ¶ And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house:

14 And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them:

15 And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

16 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

17 While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out

the end of which their good father never failed to send a messenger to them, to call upon them to prepare themselves, by fasting and prayer, for the sacrifice he meant to offer for them: and when they were assembled, he rose up early in the morning (the fittest time for devotion), and prayed to God, by offering burnt-offerings for every one of them, because he was afraid they might have done or spoken something that was profane, and misbecoming their religion, when their minds, loosened by mirth, were less upon their guard. And thus he did constantly after every feast.

Ver. 6.] But this great piety was not sufficient to preserve him from false accusations. For as Job set a time for his children to examine themselves, so there are certain seasons when the angels come and stand in the divine presence, to give an account of their ministry, and to receive commands from God, the judge and governor of the world: and Satan, that subtle adversary of mankind, came one day, and thrust in himself among them.

Ver. 7.] And the Lord (to make him sensible he was not an absolute prince, but his subject) called to him, and demanded an account of him, where he had been, and from whence he came? To which he gave an answer, which expressed, as the great restlessness of his mind, and his unwearied diligence, so the limitation of his power, which extends only to this lower world; for he told him he came from going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

Ver. 8.] Then the Lord said to him again; After all thy inquisitiveness and busy search, thou hast nothing to object against the integrity of my servant Job; a man that excels in piety and justice, and all other virtues, which he practises exactly and sincerely.

Ver. 9.] Yes, said Satan; he serves himself rather than thee: it is not thy pleasure which he regards, but his own profit.

Ver. 10.] Hast thou not paid him well for his pains? and so environed him and his family, and all belonging to him in every place, that no harm can come to them? Whereby all his business prospers, and his flocks and his herds are so increased that the country can scarce hold them.

Ver. 11.] But I am confident, if thou wilt employ

that power to plague him, which hath so long preserved him, he will not only in his heart, but openly, deny thy providence.

Ver. 12.] Then the Lord (who was willing to prove the virtue of his servant in an afflicted estate, as he had done in a prosperous) withdrew the protection he had given him, and granted Satan a commission to dispose of all belonging to Job according as he pleased excepting only his person, which he commanded him not to touch. This was joyful news to that malicious spirit, who went immediately to do what he had long desired.

Ver. 13.] And within a short time found an opportunity to try the constancy of Job, by doing him all the mischief possible, in one and the same day: which was the birth-day of his eldest son, when all his children (far from fearing any evil) were met, according to their custom, at his house, to feast and rejoice together.

Ver. 14.] Then it was that Satan put in execution what he had designed; and first of all stirred up a thievish sort of people in Arabia, to fall upon that part of his land which was next to them. Of which tidings were presently brought to Job by a messenger saying,

Ver. 15.] As the oxen were at plough, and the asses in a pasture hard by them, the Sabeans made an inroad into thy country, and carried them all away: having slain, by an unexpected assault, all those who should have preserved them, except myself alone, who made an escape to acquaint thee with it.

Ver. 16.] He had not quite delivered his message before another of his servants arrived (as evils seldom come single), to tell him that there had been a very great lightning in those parts, where his sheep were feeding, which had consumed both them and the shepherds, and left none surviving, but himself alone, to give him notice of this disaster.

Ver. 17.] He had not finished his narration before another messenger was at the door, saying, Our neighbours the Chaldeans, seeking for booty, divided themselves into three parties, who set upon us all at once; and they have carried away the camels, and killed all the servants that looked after them, except myself, who made a shift to save myself by flight to bring the news of this invasion.

three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

18 While he *was* yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters *were* eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house:

19 And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men,

Ver. 18.] Before he had concluded, came in another, the most doleful messenger of all, saying, Thy children, as thou knowest, were feasting with their elder brother:

Ver. 19.] And, behold, on a sudden there arose a violent wind, which coming from the desert, and whirling about the house, took away the four corners of it, and buried them all in its ruins; and there is not one of the guests escaped, that I know of, but only myself, to be the messenger of this great calamity.

Ver. 20.] Then Job (who had heard all the rest without disturbance) was overcome with grief at this last word, and laying aside all other thoughts, gave up himself to the most lamentable sorrow: for he rent his upper garment, cut off the hair of his head,

and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

20 Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped,

21 And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.

22 In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

and threw himself upon the ground. Where he deceived the devil's expectation; for he most reverently adored, as became his piety, the divine majesty, and submitted himself to his will, saying,

Ver. 21.] I am but what I was at first, and what I must have been again at last; and he that hath stripped me of all before I die, hath taken away nothing but what he gave. Let him therefore be praised who is the donor of all good things, and the disposer of all events.

Ver. 22.] This was the worst word that he spake, when all these evils came upon him so unexpectedly, and so thick together: all the rest was like this; and nothing dropped from his mouth which in the least accused or questioned the providence of God.

CHAPTER II.

ARGUMENT.—*The first part of this chapter is a continuation of the narration, which was begun in the foregoing, of the calamities which befell this good man; whom God suffered the devil to afflict in his body, as he had already done in his goods and children. And then follows a farther testimony of his constancy, notwithstanding his wife's angry and profane accusation of the divine providence: though, it is true, he was so much dejected to see himself reduced to this extremity of misery, that neither he, nor his friends that came to visit him, were able for several days to speak a word.*

1 AGAIN there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD.

2 And the LORD said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

3 And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that *there is* none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.

4 And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.

5 But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.

6 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he *is* in thine hand; but save his life.

7 ¶ So went Satan forth from the presence

CHAP. II.

Ver. 1.] After these things the angels going again to attend the pleasure of the divine majesty, and to give an account of their several charges, Satan also openly appeared among them, and presented himself as ready and desirous to be examined about his management.

Ver. 2.] But not daring to speak before he was called, he waited till the divine majesty asked where he had been, and what he had done. To which he answered, as he had done before, that he had not lost his time, but had fetched a circuit round about the earth, to find opportunity for the exercise of his power.

Ver. 3.] Well then, said the Lord, art not thou convinced how true a character I gave of my servant

Job, and how much thou hast calumniated him? for he still resolutely continues as perfectly virtuous as he was in his prosperity, though I have consented to these miserable calamities which he suffers undeservedly.

Ver. 4.] To which Satan answered again and said, that his constancy was not so wonderful, since a man hath reason to think himself rich who is in health. Who is there that will not give another's skin to save his own; nay, part with his children, as well as his goods, to save his life?

Ver. 5.] But enlarge now my commission a little farther, and let me afflict his body, so that it touch him to the very quick, and he will openly renounce thee, and deny thy providence.

Ver. 6.] To which the divine majesty (knowing the fidelity of Job, which hereby would become more

of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.

8 And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.

9 ¶ Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.

10 But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

11 ¶ Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they

came every one from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar, the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him.

12 And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven.

13 So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great.

illustrious) was pleased to yield; and said, Behold, I give thee the same power over his person which thou hadst over his family and goods: inflict what diseases thou wilt upon him, so they do not kill him.

Ver. 7.] No sooner had Satan obtained this new grant, but, withdrawing himself from the presence of the divine majesty, he went to pursue his mischievous desires; and smote Job from top to toe with a fiery ulcer, whose sharp humour was extremely grievous and painful, and pricked him (according to his wish) to the very bone.

Ver. 8.] The filthiness of the disease also increased that sorrow and heaviness which before had seized on him, and made him sit down in the ashes; where he laid hold on what came next to hand, a piece of a broken pot, to wipe away the foul matter which issued out of his tiles.

Ver. 9.] And it was a further addition to his grief, to hear his dear consort (whom the divine goodness he thought had still left to help him to bear his affliction) utter this profane speech, What a folly it is still to persist in the service of God, when all thou gettest by it is to give him thanks and perish.

Ver. 10.] These words struck him to the very heart: but instead of being angry with God, he only severely reproved her, telling her that she talked like one of the wicked women; and then piously represented to her, that we ought to take nothing ill which comes from the hand of God (as all evil things do as well as good), and the more good we have received from

him, the less reason we have to complain when we suffer any evil. No discourse but such as this was heard to come from his mouth.

Ver. 11.] Now there dwelt in the neighbouring provinces three great men, with whom Job had long maintained a particular friendship, who, hearing the sad tidings of his sufferings, came every one from his country to visit him. Their names were Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite; who all three met at his house on the same day, according to an appointment they had made, to come and condole with him, and comfort him.

Ver. 12.] But as soon as ever they entered into the place where he lay, they were surprised with so miserable a spectacle of deformity, that they shrieked aloud, as men affrighted, and burst out into tears, and rent their garments, and threw dust into the air, which, falling on their heads, expressed the confusion they were in, to find him so covered over with ulcers that they could not know him.

Ver. 13.] And when they approached nearer him, they only sat down upon the earth, in the same mournful posture wherein they found him, but were not able (so much were they astonished) for seven days and nights to say one word of the business about which they were come to him. And indeed his grief was so exceedingly great, that they did not well know what to say, till time, which alters all things, had assuaged a little both his grief and theirs.

CHAPTER III.

ARGUMENT.—*Here begin the discourses which Job and his friends had about his affliction; which are all represented, by the author of this book, poetically; not as hitherto, in a plain simple narration, but in most elegant verse. And being overcharged with grief (without the least word of comfort from his friends), he that had for some time borne the weight of his afflictions with an admirable constancy, could not contain himself any longer, but bursts out (to such a degree was the anguish of his spirit increased) into the most passionate complaints of the miseries of human life. The consideration of which made him prefer death much before it, and wish that either he had never come into the world, or gone presently out of it again, or at least might now forthwith be dismissed.*

1 AFTER this opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day.

2 And Job spake, and said,

3 Let the day perish wherein I was born,

and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived.

4 Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it.

CHAP. III.

Ver. 1.] And at the end of seven days Job himself began by complaints to give some vent to his grief, which had stupefied him thus long; but he burst out into such bitter lamentations, that he wished a thousand times he had never been born.

Ver. 2.] That which he said was to this effect:

Ver. 3.] Let the day and the night of my birth be never more mentioned, but be quite forgotten, as if it had never been.

Ver. 4.] Let that day be turned into night, and not be counted among the days: let the sun then withdraw its light, and never shine upon it.

5 Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it.

6 As for that night, let darkness seize upon it; let it not be joined unto the days of the year, let it not come into the number of the months.

7 Lo, let that night be solitary, let no joyful voice come therein.

8 Let them curse it that curse the day, who are ready to raise up their mourning.

9 Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark; let it look for light, but have none; neither let it see the dawning of the day:

10 Because it shut not up the doors of my mother's womb, nor hid sorrow from mine eyes.

11 Why died I not from the womb? why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?

12 Why did the knees prevent me? or why the breast that I should suck?

13 For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest,

14 With kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves;

Ver. 5.] Let the most dismal darkness and the thickest clouds wholly possess it, and render it terrible to men.

Ver. 6.] And let the night be of the same sort, and both of them quite blotted out of the calendar.

Ver. 7.] Let nobody meet together on that night, to feast or make merry.

Ver. 8.] Let it be as a day wherein men bewail the greatest misfortune, or the time wherein they see the most dreadful apparitions.

Ver. 9.] Let there not so much as a star appear in that night, nor so much light as we see at peep of day.

Ver. 10.] Because it did not bury me in my mother's womb, and thereby secure me from all these miseries.

Ver. 11.] What a misfortune was it, that I did not die before I was born, or at least as soon as I came into the world.

Ver. 12.] That they who received me from the womb did not let me fall on the ground, or my nurse refuse to give me suck.

Ver. 13.] Then should I have felt none of these miseries which I now endure, but lain quiet and undisturbed.

Ver. 14.] Equal to kings and the greatest persons, who lie alone in the tombs which they built themselves.

Ver. 15.] Having gold and silver in abundance, whereof now they are bereaved.

15 Or with princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver:

16 Or as a hidden untimely birth I had not been; as infants which never saw light.

17 There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest.

18 There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor.

19 The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master.

20 Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul;

21 Which long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures;

22 Which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad, when they can find the grave?

23 Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in?

24 For my sighing cometh before I eat, and my roarings are poured out like the waters.

25 For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me.

26 I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came.

Ver. 16.] Or like an abortive, which was never numbered among men.

Ver. 17.] There are none can hurt us in the grave, though they be never so malicious, nor shall we toil any more when we come thither.

Ver. 18.] The captives, and they who are condemned to hard servitude, take no pains there, and do not dread the voice of the exactor of their labours.

Ver. 19.] There none are greater than other; but the servant in that place is as free as his master.

Ver. 20.] Is it not strange, that a man should be forced to live when he hath no mind to it?

Ver. 21.] But wishes for death though in vain, and seeks it more eagerly than the greatest riches?

Ver. 22.] Leaping for joy when he can meet with his grave, as far more welcome to him than a mine of silver?

Ver. 23.] Not knowing which way to turn himself, but only thither?

Ver. 24.] This is my condition, whose meat merely sustains a miserable life, which is all sighs and sobs, as loud as the roarings of the lion.

Ver. 25.] For the very thing which I dreaded is fallen upon me, notwithstanding all my care to prevent it.

Ver. 26.] I did not confide in my riches, nor in the least lull myself in security (ch. i. 5), and yet that did not preserve me from being miserable.

CHAPTER IV.

ARGUMENT.—*Eliphaz, incensed at this complaint of Job, instead of condoling with him, and pitying the miseries which had put him into this agony, and applying fitting lenitives to his anguish, bluntly rebukes him for not following the good advice that he used to give to others in their adversity: and tells him he had reason to suspect his piety, because the innocent were not wont to suffer such things, but only wicked oppressors, whom, though never so mighty, God had always humbled. Witness the Horims, who dwell in Seir (Deut. ii. 12), whom the ancestors of Eliphaz (Gen xxxvi. 11) had overcome, though they were as fierce as lions. To those beasts of prey, of all sorts, he compares the tyrants whom he speaks of in this chapter (ver. 10, 11), intending, it is likely, to remember him also of the destruction of the Emims by the children of Moab (Deut. ii. 10, 11), and of the Zamzummins (ver. 20, 21), who were rooted out by the children of Ammon, as the Horims by the children of Esau: from whose grandchild Eliphaz seems to have been descended, and called by the name of the eldest son of Esau. He tells Job also of a vision he had to confirm the same truth, that man's wickedness is the cause of his destruction.*

1 THEN Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said,

2 *If* we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved? but who can withhold himself from speaking?

3 Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands.

4 Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees.

5 But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.

6 *Is not this* thy fear, thy confidence, thy hope, and the uprightness of thy ways?

7 Remember, I pray thee, who *ever* perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?

8 Even as I have seen, they that plough iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.

9 By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed.

10 The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the fierce lion, and the teeth of the young lions, are broken.

11 The old lion perisheth for lack of prey,

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 1.] Then Eliphaz (one of his most ancient friends, descended from Teman), replied to him and said;

Ver. 2.] We must either still keep silence, or speak what will not please thee. But truth surely is more to be regarded than friendship: and therefore I must remember thee.

Ver. 3.] That thou, it is well known, hast given good counsel unto others (and perhaps reproved their impatience): thou hast encouraged those who were dispirited.

Ver. 4.] And by thy discourse hast supported those whose hearts were ready to sink, and settled those who trembled under their burthen.

Ver. 5.] And now that thou art fallen into the same condition, thou canst not practise thy own lessons; but faintest, and art struck with consternation.

Ver. 6.] *Is not this* the time to exercise thy piety (so much famed), thy confidence in God, thy hope, thine integrity?

Ver. 7.] Consult thine own observation, and tell me when thou ever sawest a righteous man forsaken by God.

Ver. 8.] Quite contrary, I have seen the wicked reaping the fruit of their doings.

Ver. 9.] God blasts and consumes them, as the nipping wind, or the fire doth the corn in the field.

Ver. 10.] Though they be as fierce as the lions, and as strong, their power is broken.

Ver. 11.] The greatest tyrants and their posterity, after they have long enjoyed their power, are deprived

and the stout lion's whelps are scattered abroad.

12 Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received a little thereof.

13 In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men,

14 Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake.

15 Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up:

16 It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image *was* before mine eyes, *there was* silence, and I heard a voice, *saying*,

17 Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his maker?

18 Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly:

19 How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation *is* in the dust, *which* are crushed before the moth?

20 They are destroyed from morning to evening: they perish for ever without any regarding it.

21 Doth not their excellency *which is* in them go away? they die, even without wisdom.

of all their riches gotten by oppression, and come to nothing.

Ver. 12.] If these observations be not sufficient to convince thee, hear what God himself secretly whispered to me.

Ver. 13.] As I was ruminating one night, when all were asleep, of some visions which I had had.

Ver. 14.] I was on a sudden seized with such a fear, that it made every joint in my body tremble.

Ver. 15.] Whereupon I saw a spirit pass by me, which made my hair stand on end.

Ver. 16.] I am not able to describe what it was like; for though it stood still, and I saw an image of something, yet I can only tell what I heard in a still voice, *saying*,

Ver. 17.] Can any one think that a miserable man is more righteous than God his judge? or that it is possible for any body to be more unreprouvable than he that made him?

Ver. 18.] The heavenly ministers themselves may fail; for they are not perfectly wise, though they have no flesh and blood as we have.

Ver. 19.] How can we then pretend to perfection who dwell in bodies of dirt; which stand upon no firm foundation, but are as subject to be destroyed as a garment to be fretted with moths?

Ver. 20.] We see continual examples of those that are cut off: they are quite taken away when nobody thinks of it.

Ver. 21.] Though their dignities be never so great, and their posterity never so numerous, all go away with them, and they die like so many beasts, who have no understanding of their latter end.

CHAPTER V.

ARGUMENT.—*Eliphaz still prosecutes the very same argument; endeavouring to confirm it from the opinion and observation of other men, as well as from his own. And thereupon exhorts him to repentance, as the surest way to find mercy with God: and to be not only restored to his former prosperity, but to be preserved hereafter from the incursions of savage people, or of wild beasts, and from all the rest of the disasters which had befallen him. Of this he bids him, in the conclusion, be assured, for it was a point he had studied.*

1 CALL NOW, if there be any that will answer thee; and to which of the saints wilt thou turn?

2 For wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one.

3 I have seen the foolish taking root: but suddenly I cursed his habitation.

4 His children are far from safety, and they are crushed in the gate, neither is there any to deliver them.

5 Whose harvest the hungry eateth up, and taketh it even out of the thorns, and the robber swalloweth up their substance.

6 Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground;

7 Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.

8 I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause:

9 Which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number:

10 Who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields:

11 To set up on high those that be low; that those which mourn may be exalted to safety.

12 He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise.

13 He taketh the wise in their own craftiness:

CHAP. V.

Ver. 1.] If thou dost not believe me, thou mayest inquire of others. There is no good man but is of this opinion: and if an angel should appear to thee (as there did to me), thou wouldst have no other information but this:

Ver. 2.] That God in his anger and indignation destroys the wicked, and him that errs from his precepts.

Ver. 3.] This is so certain, that I have predicted his downfall, when he seemed most firmly settled in his prosperity.

Ver. 4.] His children also fell with him; justice took hold of them, and would not let them escape.

Ver. 5.] The hungry soldier devoured their harvest, there was no fence could secure it; but the rest of their riches became a prey to the robber.

Ver. 6.] For we are not to ascribe the trouble and misery of mankind merely to earthly causes, which are but the instruments of God's justice.

Ver. 7.] Who hath made it as natural to man to suffer (having offended him), as it is for the sparks to fly upward.

Ver. 8.] Wherefore, if I were in thy case, I would humbly address myself to God, and desire him to order all things as he pleases.

Ver. 9.] For he is the author of all those wonderful things, whose causes we can no more find out than we can count their number.

Ver. 10.] Of the rain, for instance, in its season: and of the springs which run in the fields:

Ver. 11.] Whereby men of low condition are enriched and grow great; as the plants and corn shoot out of the earth, after they are moistened with showers.

Ver. 12.] And, on the contrary, he defeats the craftiest designs of subtle men to raise themselves; and it is not in their power to effect that which they have most wisely contrived.

and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong.

14 They meet with darkness in the day time, and grope in the noonday as in the night.

15 But he saveth the poor from the sword, from their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty.

16 So the poor hath hope, and iniquity stoppeth her mouth.

17 Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty:

18 For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole.

19 He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.

20 In famine he shall redeem thee from death: and in war from the power of the sword.

21 Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue: neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh.

22 At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh: neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth.

23 For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field: and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee.

24 And thou shalt know that thy tabernacle shall be in peace; and thou shalt visit thy habitation, and shall not sin.

Ver. 13.] Nay, they produce that which they studied to avoid; and when they think themselves sure, make too much haste to their ruin.

Ver. 14.] They trip in the plainest way, and see not their danger, when it is visible to every body but themselves.

Ver. 15.] Whereby many a helpless man is delivered, both from the open force, and from the treacherous flatteries or calumnies of those that are too strong for them.

Ver. 16.] And therefore he that is oppressed should not despair, nor should the oppressors boast themselves; for there is hope that God will save the one to the utter destruction of the other.

Ver. 17.] Behold then, how little reason there is to complain of God's chastisements, which if thou dost not refuse he is able to turn to thy good.

Ver. 18.] For he doth not merely wound, but, like a wise chirurgeon, by that very means he cures and heals.

Ver. 19.] Thy troubles cannot be so many, but, if thou submissively accept them, he will free thee from them.

Ver. 20.] He will feed thee in the best barren years, and defend thee in the day of battle.

Ver. 21.] False accusers shall not be able to hurt thee; and when whole countries are depopulated, thou shalt be secure.

Ver. 22.] When nothing is to be seen but wild beasts, whom famine forces from their dens, thou shalt be cheerful and undaunted.

Ver. 23.] For the stony parts of the country shall not fail to bring forth its fruits plentifully; and the beasts of the field shall not devour them.

Ver. 24.] Wheresoever thou pitchest thy tent, thou shalt find it in safety: and when thou takest an account of thine estate, all things shall answer thine expectation.

25 Thou shalt know also that thy seed *shall* be great, and thine offspring as the grass of the earth.

26 Thou shalt come to *thy* grave in a

Ver. 25.] Thou shalt find thy posterity also very great and numerous, like the grass; though now thou art as bare as the earth in winter.

Ver. 26.] Thou shalt not die a violent and untimely death; but be carried to thy grave as corn

full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season.

27 Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know thou *it* for thy good.

is to the barn when it is full ripe and fit to be gathered.

Ver. 27.] Doubt not of this, for we have thoroughly considered it, and find it so: receive it therefore, and keep it in memory.

CHAPTER VI.

ARGUMENT.—*Job, not at all convinced by these discourses, justifies the complaint he had made (chap. iii.), which Eliphaz had now accused, maintaining that his grief was not equal to the cause of it. And therefore he renews his wishes of death: at which, though they might wonder who felt nothing to make them weary of life, yet he had reason, he shows, for what he did; and one more than before, which was their unkindness, who pretended to be friends, but by this rude reproof of him at the very first, without so much as one compassionate word, or the least syllable of consolation, showed how little sympathy they had with him in his sufferings. These things he desires them to consider, and weigh the cause of his complaint a little better before they passed any farther judgment on it.*

1 BUT Job answered and said,
2 Oh that my grief were thoroughly weighed and my calamity laid in the balances together!

3 For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea: therefore my words are swallowed up.

4 For the arrows of the Almighty *are* within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.

5 Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass? or loweth the ox over his fodder?

6 Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt? or is there *any* taste in the white of an egg?

7 The things *that* my soul refused to touch *are* as my sorrowful meat.

8 O that I might have my request; and that God would grant *me* the thing that I long for!

9 Even that it would please God to destroy me; that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off!

10 Then should I yet have comfort; yea, I would harden myself in sorrow: let him not spare; for I have not concealed the words of the Holy One.

11 What is my strength, that I should hope? and what is mine end, that I should prolong my life?

12 *Is* my strength the strength of stones? or is my flesh of brass?

13 *Is* not my help in me? and is wisdom driven quite from me?

14 To him that is afflicted pity *should* be shewed from his friend; but he forsaketh the fear of the Almighty.

15 My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, and as the stream of brooks they pass away;

CHAP. VI.

Ver. 1.] Here Job replied to Eliphaz, and spake in these terms to him.

Ver. 2.] Would to God some more equal person than you would lay my complaint and my sufferings one against the other, and judge sincerely which is the heaviest!

Ver. 3.] He would soon find, that the sand of the sea is not so heavy as my misery; and that I am not able to complain enough.

Ver. 4.] The Almighty himself hath given me such a wound, that I am dispirited: for nothing but dreadful spectacles present themselves ready armed against me.

Ver. 5.] It is easy for you who feel no pain nor want to forbear complaints; which is no more than the very ass and other brute creatures do.

Ver. 6.] But may not he who eats insipid things call for a little salt to make them go down better? (How much more then may we call for something to qualify that which is bitter?)

Ver. 7.] As I do now, who have nothing afforded me for my support, but such discourses as yours, which my very soul loathes.

Ver. 8.] I cannot but cry unto God, and beseech him to grant me my heart's desire.

Ver. 9.] Which is, that he would be pleased not to let me languish in this miserable condition, but with one stroke more quite cut me off.

Ver. 10.] It would be a great comfort to me to hope for this, and would strengthen me to endure the severest pains: for I would receive the sentence of death with acclamations of praise, if God would pronounce it against me.

Ver. 11.] For I have not strength enough to endure any longer, nor any hope of better days in the conclusion, which should make me willing to have my life prolonged.

Ver. 12.] God hath not made me insensible, and therefore do not wonder that I desire to be released from the sharpest pains.

Ver. 13.] Do not think my reason hath forsaken me, and that I do not understand myself.

Ver. 14.] Were it so, a friend should show me the more pity: as you would do, but that you fear not God, nor remember that he can afflict you as he doth me.

Ver. 15.] My dearest friends prove as deceitful as the torrents, which make a great noise, and run with a violent stream.

16 Which are blackish by reason of the ice, and wherein the snow is hid :

17 What time they wax warm, they vanish : when it is hot, they are consumed out of their place.

18 The paths of their way are turned aside ; they go to nothing, and perish.

19 The troops of Tema looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them.

20 They were confounded because they had hoped ; they came thither, and were ashamed.

21 For now ye are nothing ; ye see my casting down, and are afraid.

22 Did I say, Bring unto me, or, Give a reward for me of your substance ?

23 Or, Deliver me from the enemy's hand ? or, Redeem me from the hand of the mighty ?

Ver. 16.] When the melted ice and snow fall thick into them.

Ver. 17.] They promise water, but in the summer-time are dried up.

Ver. 18.] So that you can scarce find any mark of the course wherein they ran, they are so perfectly vanished.

Ver. 19.] They that travel into our neighbouring countries expected to quench thirst there, where they had sometimes seen so much water.

Ver. 20.] But were shamefully disappointed, and blushed to think they should seek relief from such uncertain streams.

Ver. 21.] Just such are you, good for nothing ; who, seeing my calamity, shrink from me.

Ver. 22.] And yet I never sent for you, nor do I ask, now you are come, any relief from you.

Ver. 23.] I do not expect you should deliver me from these calamities, which as so many mighty enemies, oppress me.

24 Teach me, and I will hold my tongue : and cause me to understand wherein I have erred.

25 How forcible are right words ! but what doth your arguing reprove ?

26 Do ye imagine to reprove words, and the speeches of one that is desperate, *which are* as wind ?

27 Yea, ye overwhelm the fatherless, and ye dig a pit for your friend.

28 Now therefore be content, look upon me ; for it is evident unto you if I lie.

29 Return, I pray you, let it not be iniquity ; yea, return again, my righteousness is in it.

30 Is there iniquity in my tongue ? cannot my taste discern perverse things ?

Ver. 24.] Do not mistake me, nor think that I despise the assistance of your counsel and advice : no, I am ready to receive your reproofs, and humbly to submit to them, if you can better inform me.

Ver. 25.] Oh what power is there in truth ! but your reprehensions are ineffectual.

Ver. 26.] You only study to show your eloquence, and in vain use words to drive me to desperation.

Ver. 27.] You fall upon him who is already depressed, and without defence, and in a barbarous manner devise counsel against your friend.

Ver. 28.] But let it please you to consider my case a little better, and then judge if I be in the wrong.

Ver. 29.] Discuss things over again, I beseech you, and do it fairly. I say, let me have a second hearing, it will but the more show my innocence.

Ver. 30.] Have I said anything hitherto that is faulty ? I do not think my judgment is so corrupted, but that I can discern what is bad, though spoken by myself.

CHAPTER VII.

ARGUMENT.—*Job proceeds still in the defence of his complaint, and of his wishes to see an end of so miserable a life, which at the best is full of toil and trouble. And, since his friends had so little consideration of him, he addresses himself to God, and hopes he will not be angry, if he ease his grief by representing to him the dolfulness of his condition, and expostulating a little with him about the continuance of it, and his release from it.*

1 Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth ? are not his days also like days of a hireling ?

2 As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow, and as a hireling looketh for the reward of his work :

3 So am I made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me.

CHAPTER VII.

Ver. 1.] Is not the whole life of miserable man a perpetual conflict with various troubles ? And must he not at best undergo much toil, labour, and weariness ?

Ver. 2.] Why may I not then as passionately wish to see an end of it, as the slave in a hot day gasps for the refreshment of the shade ? or the labourer longs for the evening, when he may rest, and be paid for his pains ?

Ver. 3.] I am sure my days are no less void of contentment than theirs ; and in the night, when men

4 When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone ? and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day.

5 My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust ; my skin is broken, and become loathsome.

6 My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope.

are wont to forget their sorrows, I can do nothing but restlessly increase them.

Ver. 4.] I no sooner am laid down but I wish to be up again ; and the night seems very tedious while I toss up and down, in unquiet and tormenting thoughts calling for the morning.

Ver. 5.] How can I do otherways, when my body is nothing but ulcers, full of worms, and crusted over with scabs ; which have made such clefts in my skin, that I am loathsome to myself.

Ver. 6.] All my happy days are run away in a moment, and there is no hope I should recover them.

7 O remember that my life is wind : mine eye shall no more see good.

8 The eye of him that hath seen me shall see me no more : thine eyes are upon me, and I am not.

9 As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away : so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more.

10 He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more.

11 Therefore I will not refrain my mouth ; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit ; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.

12 Am I a sea, or a whale, that thou settest a watch over me ?

13 When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint ;

14 Then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions :

Ver. 7.] O my God, remember how short the most pleasant life is, which when it is gone I cannot live over again.

Ver. 8.] I can never return to my friends after I have left them : thou dost but frown upon me, and I vanish quite out of the world.

Ver. 9.] Just as a cloud dissolves on a sudden before the sun, so doth man sink down into his grave, and appear no more.

Ver. 10.] He shall make his habitation there, for hither he cannot return ; but others shall take his place, which will no longer acknowledge him the owner of it.

Ver. 11.] Suffer me then to speak freely, and to give vent to my grief, by complaining a little of the inexpressible miseries which oppress me.

Ver. 12.] Am I like a sea, or a whale (or wild beast), that must be shut up and confined under these insupportable sufferings, and by no means break through them ?

Ver. 13.] If death may not come and put an end to them, one would have hoped at least to have found some intermission of them by sleep.

Ver. 14.] But then I am haunted with such frightful dreams, and such horrid apparitions.

15 So that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than my life.

16 I loathe it ; I would not live alway : let me alone ; for my days are vanity.

17 What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him ? and that thou shouldest set thy heart upon him ?

18 And that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment ?

19 How long wilt thou not depart from me, nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle ?

20 I have sinned ; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men ? why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself ?

21 And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity ? for now shall I sleep in the dust ; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be.

Ver. 15.] That I had much rather die the most violent death, than carry this carcass any longer about with me.

Ver. 16.] It is loathsome to me : I would not, if I might, live always in it. Dismiss me, therefore, since I have no pleasure in life, which of itself will end shortly.

Ver. 17.] Is mortal man so considerable, that thou shouldest honour him so much as to contend with him, and set thyself against him.

Ver. 18.] That thou shouldest send new afflictions on him every morning ; nay, try his strength and courage every moment ?

Ver. 19.] It is time to turn away thy displeasure from me ; at least for so short a space, as to give me leave to breathe.

Ver. 20.] I am not able to give thee satisfaction for my offences against thee, O thou Observer of men. But why dost thou not remove me quite out of thy sight, if I be a burden to thee ?

Ver. 21.] Or else forgive my sin, and so far release me from its punishment, as to let me die ; which I shall do presently, and not be found to-morrow to endure these afflictions, if thou dost not still hold me under them.

CHAPTER VIII.

ARGUMENT.—The foregoing apologies of Job, it seems, made little impression on his friends : for he had no sooner done, but another of them, called Bildad, continued the dispute, with as little intermission as there was between the messengers that brought him (ch. i.) the sad tidings of his calamities. And it doth not appear by his discourse, that he differed at all in his principles from Eliphaz. For, though he give him very good counsel, yet he still presses this as the sense of all antiquity (ver. 8), that God ever prospers the just, and roots out the wicked, be they never so flourishing for a season. And he being descended from Shuah, one of Abraham's sons by Keturah (Gen. xxv. 2), seems to me to have a particular respect, in this appeal to history, unto the records which then remained of God's blessing upon that faithful man's posterity, who hitherto, and long after, continued in his religion ; and of the extirpation of those eastern people (neighbours to Job) in whose country they were settled, because of their wickedness.

1 THEN answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said,
2 How long wilt thou speak these things, and

how long shall the words of thy mouth be like a strong wind ?

CHAP. VIII.

Ver. 1.] When Job had made an end of this discourse, Bildad (another great friend of his, descended from Shuah, one of Abraham's sons by Keturah), re-

prehended him in the same manner as Eliphaz had done, saying ;

Ver. 2.] Why doth thou persist to talk on this fashion, and with such vehemence expostulate with God ?

3 Doth God pervert judgment? or doth the Almighty pervert justice?

4 If thy children have sinned against him, and he have east them away for their transgression;

5 If thou wouldest seek unto God betimes, and make thy supplication to the Almighty;

6 If thou *wert* pure and upright; surely now he would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous.

7 Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase.

8 For inquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers:

9 (For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow.)

10 Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart?

11 Can the rush grow up without mire? can the flag grow without water?

12 Whilst it is yet in his greenness, and not cut down, it withereth before any other herb.

13 So are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite's hope shall perish:

14 Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web.

15 He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand: he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure.

16 He is green before the sun, and his branch shooteth forth in his garden.

17 His roots are wrapped about the heap, and seeth the place of stones.

18 If he destroy him from his place, then it shall deny him, saying, I have not seen thee.

19 Behold this is the joy of his way, and out of the earth shall others grow.

20 Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will he help the evil doer:

21 Till he fill thy mouth with laughing, and thy lips with rejoicing.

22 They that hate thee shall be clothed with shame; and the dwelling place of the wicked shall come to nought.

Ver. 3.] Dost thou imagine the supreme judge will not do thee right? or that he who needs nothing will swerve from the rules of equity?

Ver. 4.] Is it not now reasonable to think that thy children had highly offended him; for which cause he took a sudden and hasty vengeance on them?

Ver. 5.] And that if thou didst now (instead of complaining) implore his grace and favour with humble supplication;

Ver. 6.] And wert thyself sincere in heart and upright in thine actions, he would certainly have a regard to thee, and restore thy family to its former splendour.

Ver. 7.] I am confident, thou art not now so low, but in time he would make thee as high, nay, far more eminent, than thou wast before.

Ver. 8.] I do not desire thee to take my word for it; but let those who are gone before us instruct thee, and search diligently into the histories of the most ancient times.

Ver. 9.] (For, alas! we are not old enough to understand much: being able to make but few observations, by reason of the exceeding shortness of our lives).

Ver. 10.] They will not fail to inform thee aright; and out of their long experience, and the prudent observations of many ages, justify the truth of my words.

Ver. 11.] The rushes and flags we see can shoot up no higher, when they want their mud and moisture.

Ver. 12.] There is no need to stop their growth by cutting them down; for they will wither of themselves, even while they are fresh and green; while smaller herbs, which want not water, continue their beauty.

Ver. 13.] Just such is the condition of all those who neglect God (without whose blessing none can flourish): who knows him also that counterfeits piety, and will defeat him of the happiness he expects.

Ver. 14.] He may flatter himself with vain hopes, and be so much the more miserable; for the things wherein he trusts are as weak as a spider's web.

Ver. 15.] He may fancy his family to be so great and potent that it will support him; but it shall fall as well as himself: he may endeavour to keep it up by strong alliances, but to no purpose.

Ver. 16.] Nay, he may seem to all the world, as well as to himself, to be like a flourishing tree, which spreads its branches in a fair garden.

Ver. 17.] Whose roots have wreathed themselves thick about the earth, and whose head lifts up itself above the highest edifices.

Ver. 18.] But when God blasts him, and plucks him up by the roots, there shall remain no remembrance that such a man ever lived in that place.

Ver. 19.] Believe it, the pleasure such men take in their prosperous estate is no better than this; and out of the dust shall others spring up, and flourish in their stead.

Ver. 20.] It is a certain truth, that God will not desert the upright, nor will he uphold the wicked.

Ver. 21.] Thou thyself (if thou art upright) shalt still be so blessed by him, that thou shalt not be able to contain thy joy within thy heart; but it shall appear in thy countenance, and burst out into joyful songs.

Ver. 22.] They that rejoiced at thy fall shall be perfectly confounded at thy happy restoration, and never recover themselves, but utterly perish.

CHAPTER IX.

ARGUMENT.—*Job allows what Bildad had well spoken in the beginning of his speech: and very religiously adores the justice, wisdom, and sovereignty of the Almighty, with whom he protests he had no intention to quarrel or dispute, but only to assert the contrary maxim to that which they maintained, that piety will not secure us from all calamities, which do not ever fall upon those that deserve them. Witness, on one hand, the prosperous estate of wicked princes, ver. 24 (particularly of one great prince, who then somewhere reigned in their neighbouring countries); and, on the other hand, his own infelicity, notwithstanding his known integrity, ver. 25. About this he confesses he was very much unsatisfied; though he knew it was in vain to argue with God about it, nor would his affliction suffer him to do it.*

1 THEN Job answered and said,
 2 I know *it* is so of a truth : but how should man be just with God ?
 3 If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand.
 4 *He* is wise in heart, and mighty in strength : who hath hardened *himself* against him, and hath prospered ?
 5 Which removeth the mountains, and they know not : which overturneth them in his anger.
 6 Which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble.
 7 Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not ; and sealeth up the stars.
 8 Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea.
 9 Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south.
 10 Which doeth great things past finding out ; yea, and wonders without number.
 11 Lo, he goeth by me, and I see *him* not : he passeth on also, but I perceive him not.
 12 Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him ? who will say unto him, What doest thou ?
 13 *If* God will not withdraw his anger, the proud helpers do stoop under him.
 14 How much less shall I answer him, and choose out my words to reason with him ?

CHAP. IX.

Ver. 1.] When he had done, Job began again, and replied in this manner ;

Ver. 2.] There need not so many words to prove what thou saidst in the entrance of thy speech ; for I know very well that God never perverts judgment, and that frail man cannot justify himself before him.

Ver. 3.] If he should go about to answer to a thousand things which may be objected to him, he would hardly clear himself in one.

Ver. 4.] I adore also his wisdom and power as well as his justice : and am sensible that no men can be safe who obstinately oppose him.

Ver. 5.] Though they were as big and as strong as the mountains, he can hastily overturn them in a moment before they think of it.

Ver. 6.] For he is able to remove the whole earth out of its place, and shatter the very foundations of it.

Ver. 7.] Nor are the heavens less subject to his power : for neither sun nor stars can shine if he forbid them.

Ver. 8.] He alone commands the clouds to cover them, and makes the sea swell and lift up its waves.

Ver. 9.] All the constellations of heaven obey him in their several seasons : both those which we see, and those in the other hemisphere.

Ver. 10.] In short, I agree with Eliphaz (v. 9), that the wonders he doeth are innumerable, and past my comprehension.

Ver. 11.] He sets them before my eyes continually, and yet I am not able to understand them.

Ver. 12.] If he snatch away anything suddenly, who can make him restore it, or cause him to give an account why he did it ?

Ver. 13.] If he will continue his displeasure, there is no remedy ; but the proudest undertakers must confess their inability to relieve us.

Ver. 14.] What am I then, poor wretch, that I should contend with his anger ? or where shall I find out words choice enough to plead with him ?

15 Whom, though I were righteous, *yet* would I not answer, *but* I would make supplication to my judge.

16 If I had called, and he had answered me : *yet* would I not believe that he had hearkened unto my voice.

17 For he breaketh me with a tempest, and multiplieth my wounds without cause.

18 He will not suffer me to take my breath, but filleteth me with bitterness.

19 *If I speak* of strength, lo, *he* is strong : and if of judgment, who shall set me a time to plead ?

20 If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me : *if I say*, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse.

21 *Though I were* perfect, *yet* would I not know my soul : I would despise my life.

22 This is one thing, therefore I said it, He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked.

23 If the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the trial of the innocent.

24 The earth is given into the hand of the wicked : he covereth the faces of the judges thereof ; if not, where, and who is he ?

25 Now my days are swifter than a post : they flee away, they see no good.

26 They are passed away as the swift ships : as the eagle that hasteth to the prey.

Ver. 15.] It is not fit for me to open my mouth before him in the justest cause, unless it be to supplicate his favour when he judges me.

Ver. 16.] And if I had made supplication, and he had granted my desire, I would not think my prayer had done the business (or believe myself to be out of all danger).

Ver. 17.] For I am not conscious of any guilt ; and yet you see with what violent blasts he hath shattered me and my family in pieces, and given me one wound after another.

Ver. 18.] No sooner was one past, but another immediately followed ; which have left me not the least pleasure in life.

Ver. 19.] If I stand upon my might, alas ! it is not to be named with his : if upon my right ; what judge is there above him to appoint us a day of hearing ?

Ver. 20.] If I should justify myself, there would be something in my very plea to condemn me : it will render my cause worse to pretend I am innocent.

Ver. 21.] Though I were so, yet I would not be mine own judge in the case ; I do not value my life so much as to contend about it.

Ver. 22.] All that I affirm is this, and I persist in that opinion, that he lets the innocent suffer sad things as well as the guilty.

Ver. 23.] When a plague comes which kills in a moment, he regards not though it fall on the innocent.

Ver. 24.] And, on the other side (so false is your discourse), we see the government of the earth given into the hands of a wicked prince, who blinds the eyes of his judges. If you deny this, tell me, where is the man, and what is his name, who administers things uprightly ?

Ver. 25.] I myself was in prosperity, but it is fled away swifter than a post, and there is not the least footstep of it remaining.

Ver. 26.] The ships that are carried with the most rapid stream, or the hungry eagle in chase of her prey, do not make more haste away.

27 If I say, I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my heaviness, and comfort myself :

28 I am afraid of all my sorrows, I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent.

29 If I be wicked, why then labour I in vain ?

30 If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean ;

31 Yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me.

Ver. 27.] I think sometime with myself, that I will forget the miseries of which I complain, and be more cheerful and courageous :

Ver. 28.] But then my grief frights away that resolution ; knowing thou wilt not release me, but make me still groan under them.

Ver. 29.] I am wicked in thine account, and therefore it is to no purpose to vindicate mine innocence.

Ver. 30.] Were I never so pure and clean from all filthiness in heart and life ;

Ver. 31.] Thou wouldest notwithstanding cover me

32 For *he* is not a man, as *I am*, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment.

33 Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both.

34 Let him take his rod away from me, and let not his fear terrify me :

35 *Then* would I speak, and not fear him ; but *it is* not so with me.

with filthy ulcers, and make my nearest relations abhor to approach me.

Ver. 32.] For God is not like me, that we should dispute upon even terms.

Ver. 33.] Nor is there any body above us both to compose our differences and command silence, when either of us exceeds our bounds.

Ver. 34.] As for myself, his rod, which is upon me, keeps me in such awe, that I cannot speak freely.

Ver. 35.] Let him remove that, and then I shall utter my mind with less dread ; for I am not so bad as you imagine.

CHAPTER X.

ARGUMENT.—*In this chapter the passionate complaints and expostulations with God, from which Job tells us (in the foregoing chapter) he intended hereafter to refrain, break out afresh ; and he earnestly desires to know what his guilt is : which God who made him, he was sure, could not but perfectly understand, if there was any, and needed not for the discovery of it, to expose him to these severe torments. Which, he still is of the opinion, may justify his wishes of never being born, or of dying presently after. Though, those wishes being vain, he acknowledges it is more rational to desire that God would be pleased to intermit his pain awhile, if he did not think fit quite to remove it.*

1 My soul is weary of my life ; I will leave my complaint upon myself ; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.

2 I will say unto God, do not condemn me ; shew me wherefore thou contendest with me.

3 *Is it* good unto thee that thou shouldst oppress, that thou shouldst despise the work of thy hands, and shine upon the counsel of the wicked ?

4 Hast thou eyes of flesh ? or seest thou as man seeth ?

5 *Are* thy days as the days of man ? *are* thy years as man's days,

6 That thou inquirest after my iniquity, and searchest after my sin ?

7 Thou knowest that I am not wicked ; and *there is* none that can deliver out of thy hand.

8 Thy hands have made me and fashioned me together round about ; yet thou dost destroy me.

9 Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay ; and wilt thou bring me into dust again ?

10 Hast thou not poured me out as milk, and curdled me like cheese ?

11 Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews.

12 Thou hast granted me life and favour, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.

CHAP. X.

Ver. 1.] And since life is a burden to me, which can find no ease but only in complaining, I will take that liberty (for it is in vain to contend against it, ix. 27), though no words can express my anguish and misery.

Ver. 2.] O thou supreme judge of all, do not pronounce thy final sentence against me, till thou hast first shown me what the crimes are for which I suffer.

Ver. 3.] What benefit wilt thou receive by my spoils ? or is it agreeable to thee to slight thine own workmanship, and to countenance the reasonings and designs of evil men ?

Ver. 4.] Dost thou judge of things as men do, who can see no farther than the outside, or are led by their affections ?

Ver. 5.] Must thou take time as we do to find out the truth, and understand the bottom of a business ?

Ver. 6.] Is that the reason thou usest me thus se-

verely, and hast laid me upon a rack, and as it were examinest what I have done amiss ?

Ver. 7.] Surely thou (whose vengeance none can escape) knowest, without the help of such torments, that I am not guilty.

Ver. 8.] There is no part of me but was most elaborately made and fashioned by thee (and therefore thou canst not be ignorant of me) ; though now thou art about to ruin me.

Ver. 9.] Need I put thee in mind that I was formed by thee, as the potter works the clay into what shape he pleases, and now thou art crumbling me into pieces again ?

Ver. 10.] Didst not thou gather all the scattered parts together, and compact them in my mother's womb ?

Ver. 11.] And first cover them with skin, and then with flesh, and at last strengthen them with bones and sinews ;

Ver. 12.] And in due time bring me into the world,

13 And these *things* hast thou hid in thy heart: I know that this *is* with thee.

14 If I sin, then thou markest me, and thou wilt not acquit me from mine iniquity.

15 If I be wicked, wo unto me; and if I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head. I am full of confusion; therefore see thou mine affliction;

16 For it increaseth. Thou huntest me as a fierce lion: and again thou shewest thyself marvellous upon me.

17 Thou renewest thy witnesses against me, and increasest thine indignation upon me; changes and war are against me.

and give me all the comforts of life, and by thy constant care preserve both it and them!

Ver. 13.] Thou canst not have forgotten these things; and I am sure that this misery I now endure is not without thy order.

Ver. 14.] I cannot offend thee in the least, but thou (by whom I was thus formed) must needs know and observe it, and I cannot avoid thy punishment for it.

Ver. 15.] If I be wicked, I am undone; and if I be righteous, I am so oppressed that I cannot look upon what a lamentable confusion I am in, beholding nothing but misery which way soever I cast mine eyes.

Ver. 16.] For it grows greater and greater, while thou pursuest me as a lion doth his prey; and when I hope there is an end of my troubles, sendest more to fill me with new astonishment and horror.

Ver. 17.] Fresh witnesses of thine anger rise up

18 Wherefore then hast thou brought me forth out of the womb? O that I had given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me!

19 I should have been as though I had not been; I should have been carried from the womb to the grave.

20 Are not my days few? cease then, and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little,

21 Before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death;

22 A land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness.

against me: thou multipliest thy plagues upon me so that there is no end but only a change of my conflicts.

Ver. 18.] And therefore I cannot but wish, as I did at the first, that my mother's womb had been my grave: happy had it been for me if I had died there, and never come into this miserable world:

Ver. 19.] Or that I had died as soon as I was born, and been carried from the womb to the grave;

Ver. 20.] To which I am now very near. May I beg therefore but this one favour, that since thou wilt not quite remove thy hand, thou wilt forbear awhile to strike, and let me breathe and refresh myself a little;

Ver. 21.] Before I depart thither from whence I shall not return (to ask any more favours); be laid, I mean, in my grave, the place of dismal darkness:

Ver. 22.] Where it is as dark as dark can be; and there is no succession of day and night, as we have here, but one perpetual night.

CHAPTER XI.

ARGUMENT.—*This chapter gives an account of the sense of Zophar about the business in dispute. It is uncertain whence he was descended; but probably he dwelt upon the borders of Idumea, for there we find an ancient city called Naamah (Josh. xv. 41), and from thence came to visit Job in his affliction. But instead of joining with him in his prayer for a little respite from his pain (with which Job had concluded his discourse), he calls him an idle talker, and accuses him of irreverence towards God. Concerning whose incomprehensible counsels, and irresistible power, &c. he discourses with great sense, and gives Job exceeding good advice; but still follows the opinion of the other two friends, that he would not have been so miserable if he had not been wicked.*

1 THEN answered Zophar the Naamathite, and said,

2 Should not the multitude of words be answered? and should a man full of talk be justified?

3 Should thy lies make men hold their peace? and when thou mockest, shall no man make thee ashamed?

4 For thou hast said, My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in thine eyes.

CHAP. XI.

Ver. 1.] Here a third friend of Job's (Zophar of Naamah) began to speak, with no small passion;

Ver. 2.] Dost thou think to stop our mouths with abundance of words; and by thy talkativeness to persuade us thou art innocent?

Ver. 3.] Must we not confute thy false allegations, but suffer thee to be insolent, because thou art miserable.

Ver. 4.] For thou pretendest not to have offended either in word or deed, and that God himself can find no reason to condemn thee.

5 But oh that God would speak, and open his lips against thee;

6 And that he would show thee the secrets of wisdom, that they are double to that which is! Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity *deserveth*.

7 Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?

8 It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?

Ver. 5.] Oh that he would vouchsafe to show thee thine error, and with his own mouth confute thee!

Ver. 6.] That he would show thee the secret reasons of his wise counsels (which far surpass thine) in this affliction; and make thee know that he would be just, if he should punish thy sin more severely.

Ver. 7.] Art thou able, after all thy busy inquiries, to give an account of God's judgments, and perfectly comprehend the reasons of his providence!

Ver. 8.] Thou mayest as well take a measure of the height of heaven, or of the depth of hell.

9 The measure thereof *is* longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.

10 If he eut off, and shut up, or gather together, then who can hinder him?

11 For he knoweth vain men: he seeth wickedness also; will he not then consider *it*?

12 For vain man would be wise, though man be born *like* a wild ass's colt.

13 If thou prepare thy heart, and stretch out thy hands toward him;

14 If iniquity *be* in thy hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles.

15 For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot; yea, thou shalt be steadfast, and shalt not fear:

Ver. 9.] The earth and the sea, as long and as broad as they are, have their bounds; but that hath none.

Ver. 10.] If he seize upon anything, and shut it up (as a hunter doth his prey in a net), he will gather it, and who shall force him to restore it?

Ver. 11.] For he knows vain men (who mind not what they say or do), he sees their most hidden wickedness, and will not he punish it?

Ver. 12.] Shall man, void of understanding, take the confidence to dispute with God? man, who is naturally as rude and blockish as a wild ass's colt?

Ver. 13.] If thou art truly wise, cease disputing, and fall to prayer.

Ver. 14.] If thou art guilty of any sin, banish it quite away, and reform thyself and thy family.

Ver. 15.] For then shalt thou look cheerfully again, and be perfectly freed from this loathsome condition; yea, thou shalt be settled without any fear of losing thy happiness.

16 Because thou shalt forget *thy* misery, and remember *it* as waters that pass away:

17 And *thy* age shall be clearer than the noonday; thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning.

18 And thou shalt be secure, because there is hope; yea, thou shalt dig *about thee*, and thou shalt take thy rest in safety.

19 Also thou shalt lie down, and none shall make *thee* afraid; yea, many shall make suit unto thee.

20 But the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their hope *shall be* as the giving up of the ghost.

Ver. 16.] Which shall be so great, that it shall blot out the remembrance of thy past miseries; or thou shalt think of them as of waters that are run away, and will return no more.

Ver. 17.] The rest of thy life shall be more glorious than the sun at noon: even thy darkness shall be like the morning-light.

Ver. 18.] Thou shalt be confident, though any evil threaten thee, because there is hope God will deliver thee: thou shalt dig wells of water, and none shall disturb thy tents or thy flocks.

Ver. 19.] Thou shalt be in perfect peace, and none shall disquiet thee: yea, the multitude shall sue to thee for thy favour, and the greatest persons shall desire thy friendship.

Ver. 20.] But the wicked shall in vain look for happiness: they shall not escape their deserved punishment, but their hope of deliverance shall faint away.

CHAPTER XII.

ARGUMENT.—*In this chapter Job taxes all his three friends with too great a conceit of their own wisdom, which had not, as yet, taught them common humanity to the miserable. And lets them understand, that he needs not come to them to learn, but might rather teach them the falseness of that proposition, where-with Zophar had concluded his speech, concerning the infelicity of the wicked. For the contrary, he tells them, was obvious to sense, ver. 7, 8, &c. And as for what Zophar had discoursed of the wisdom and power of God, he would have them know, that he was as well skilled in those points as the best of them, and understood as much of the history of ancient times; particularly of the vain attempt at the tower of Babel, unto which it is probable he hath respect in the fourteenth verse; as, in all the following, he seems to have to what you read in Gen. xiv. 5—8, of the rooting out of those fierce giants the Rephaim, and other such-like barbarous and rapacious people, of the particulars of which we have now no records remaining.*

1 AND Job answered and said,

2 No doubt but ye *are* the people, and wisdom shall die with you.

3 But I have understanding as well as you; I *am* not inferior to you: yea, who knoweth not such things as these?

4 I *am* as one mocked of his neighbour, who

calleth upon God, and he answereth him: the just upright *man is* laughed to scorn.

5 He that is ready to slip with *his* feet *is* as a lamp despised in the thought of him that is at ease.

6 The tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure; into whose hand God bringeth *abundantly*.

CHAP. XII.

Ver. 1.] To this Job replied in such words as these:

Ver. 2.] You believe then there are no men of sense in the world besides yourselves: so that if you were dead, there would be no wisdom left among us.

Ver. 3.] Let not your vanity abuse you; I have understanding as well and as much as you: and so hath every body else: for I see nothing singular in all you have said.

Ver. 4.] I am not so simple but I see how you

deride your friend, when you bid him call upon God that he may answer him. But this is no new thing, the best of men have been mocked at on this fashion.

Ver. 5.] Though he be as a lamp, yet they who are dazzled with the splendour of worldly prosperity despise him: the upright is never acceptable to him who is not steadfast in his goings.

Ver. 6.] For they thrive and flourish, though they rob the just; and even such men live without disturbance, as provoke God with those very things which he bestows upon them with his own hand.

7 But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee:

8 Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.

9 Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the LORD hath wrought this?

10 In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.

11 Doth not the ear try words? and the mouth taste his meat?

12 With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding.

13 With him is wisdom and strength, he hath counsel and understanding.

14 Behold, he breaketh down, and it cannot be built again: he shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening.

15 Behold, he withholdeth the waters, and they dry up: also he sendeth them out, and they overturn the earth.

Ver. 7.] Thou needest not go any farther than to the beasts or birds, to learn how well the wicked fare.

Ver. 8.] The earth brings forth her fruit to them abundantly; and the fishes of the sea deny them not their service.

Ver. 9.] Who is so stupid as not to understand by all these that God hath ordered it should be thus?

Ver. 10.] Whose right it is to dispose of all creatures, as well as of mankind.

Ver. 11.] Cannot the mind distinguish truth from falsehood, as exactly as the palate sweet from bitter?

Ver. 12.] And the older we grow, the wiser one would think we should be.

Ver. 13.] But what is all our wisdom to God's? who (as he knows, so) can do all things; and he never errs in his understanding, or mis-carries in his designs.

Ver. 14.] It is not in the power of any creature to repair that which he throws down; nor to extricate that man whom he casts into difficulties and straits.

Ver. 15.] If he deny us rain, the waters themselves dry up: and he sends such floods as break the strongest banks.

Ver. 16.] Nor is his wisdom, as I said, inferior to his power: but the subtlety of those who deceive is as well known to him as the silliness of those who are deceived.

16 With him is strength and wisdom: the deceived and the deceiver are his.

17 He leaeth counsellors away spoiled, and maketh the judges fools.

18 He looseth the bond of kings, and girdeth their loins with a girdle.

19 He leaeth princes away spoiled, and overthroweth the mighty.

20 He removeth away the speech of the trusty, and taketh away the understanding of the aged.

21 He poureth contempt upon princes, and weakeneth the strength of the mighty.

22 He discovereth deep things out of darkness, and bringeth out to light the shadow of death.

23 He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them: he enlargeth the nations, and straiteneth them again.

24 He taketh away the heart of the chief of the people of the earth, and causeth them to wander in a wilderness where there is no way.

25 They grope in the dark without light, and he maketh them to stagger like a drunken man.

Ver. 17.] He defeats the wisest statesmen, and infatuates the ablest senators.

Ver. 18.] So that they are not able to keep the crown on the head of their kings; but they are stripped of their royal ornaments, and bound in chains.

Ver. 19.] Their great ministers are carried captives with them; nor are the most powerful forces they can raise able to defend them.

Ver. 20.] Eloquence, fidelity, and the prudence which hath been gained by long experience, signify as little for their preservation.

Ver. 21.] The nobleness of their birth or their munificence is not at all regarded: and he dissolves the strongest confederacies, into which their friends enter for their support.

Ver. 22.] No plot can be so secretly carried but he discovers it; and brings to light that which hath been contrived in the greatest obscurity.

Ver. 23.] Whole nations (as well as their princes) are perfectly under his power; whom he sometimes multiplies, and again diminishes by war, famine, or pestilence. He enlarges their bounds, and, when he pleases, reduces them into narrower limits.

Ver. 24.] He deprives their leaders both of courage and judgment; and brings them into such confusion, that they know not which way to turn themselves.

Ver. 25.] Blind men see as much as they; and their counsels and motions are as uncertain as those of a man in drink.

CHAPTER XIII.

ARGUMENT.—From the foregoing observations, Job still continues to assert, first, his own understanding to be equal, or rather superior, to theirs: who had better therefore learn of him, and know that God was not pleased to have his providence defended by untruths, nor to see men partial, though it was in his behalf; and, secondly, his own integrity to be such, that he would ever defend it against all accusers, even before God himself: whom he desires to take cognizance of the cause, and to let him understand what the crimes were for which he was thus severely handled. For he protests that he was ignorant of them: though the punishments he had endured were more than sufficient to awaken the sense of his guilt, he being almost consumed by them.

1 Lo, mine eye hath seen all this, mine ear hath heard and understood it.

CHAP. XIII.

Ver. 1.] I have said nothing, I would have you know, but what I myself have observed; or received

2 What ye know, the same do I know also: I am not inferior unto you.

from credible reports, which I have found to be certainly true.

Ver. 2.] Whereby you may see I had reason to

3 Surely I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God.

4 But ye *are* forgers of lies, ye *are* all physicians of no value.

5 O that ye would altogether hold your peace! and it should be your wisdom.

6 Hear now my reasoning, and hearken to the pleading of my lips.

7 Will ye speak wickedly for God? and talk deceitfully for him?

8 Will ye accept his person? will ye contend for God?

9 Is it good that he should search you out? or as one man mocketh another, do ye so mock him?

10 He will surely reprove you, if ye do secretly accept persons.

11 Shall not his excellency make you afraid? and his dread fall upon you?

12 Your remembrances *are* like unto ashes, your bodies to bodies of clay.

13 Hold your peace, let me alone, that I may speak, and let come on me what *will*.

14 Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth, and put my life in my hand?

15 Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him.

say, that I know as much as you, and am not to learn of you.

Ver. 3.] Would to God I might speak with him, and lay my reasons open before him; and be troubled with your discourses no longer.

Ver. 4.] For your conclusions *are* false; and, like unskilful physicians, you exasperate the diseases which you cannot cure.

Ver. 5.] The best proof of your wisdom would be to say never a word more of these matters.

Ver. 6.] But, listen a little to me, I beseech you, and hear by what reasons I will defend myself.

Ver. 7.] Doth God stand in need of untruths to justify his proceedings? cannot he be righteous unless I be wicked?

Ver. 8.] Hath he so little right on his side, that you must show him favour? or do you think to oblige his majesty by doing me wrong?

Ver. 9.] Will it be to your advantage, think you, that God should strictly examine all you have said? or can he be deceived with your flatteries, as frail men may be?

Ver. 10.] No; he will severely chastise you, for designing to gratify him by condemning me.

Ver. 11.] The incomparable excellence of God, one would think, should have frightened away such a thought; and his dreadful majesty made you not presume to imagine he wanted your patronage.

Ver. 12.] Whose remonstrances, on his behalf, are no better than dust; and the arguments you accumulate but like so many heaps of dirt.

Ver. 13.] Keep silence, therefore, and do not disturb me in my speech; for I will omit nothing.

Ver. 14.] And I am so conscious to myself of my innocence, that I must still wonder why I suffer such enraging miseries, and am exposed to so many dangers.

Ver. 15.] Assure yourselves I will never forego this plea; but still maintain mine innocence, though I were at the last gasp, and had no hope of life.

Ver. 16.] And I am confident God himself would

16 He also *shall be* my salvation: for a hypocrite shall not come before him.

17 Hear diligently my speech, and my declaration with your ears.

18 Behold now, I have ordered *my* cause; I know that I shall be justified.

19 Who *is* he that will plead with me? for now, if I hold my tongue, I shall give up the ghost.

20 Only do not two *things* unto me: then will I not hide myself from thee.

21 Withdraw thy hand far from me: and let not thy dread make me afraid.

22 Then call thou, and I will answer: or let me speak, and answer thou me.

23 How many *are* mine iniquities and sins? make me to know my transgression and my sin.

24 Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdst me for thy enemy?

25 Wilt thou break a loaf driven to and fro? and wilt thou pursue the dry stubble?

26 For thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth.

27 Thou puttest my feet also in the stocks, and lookest narrowly unto all my paths; thou settest a print upon the heels of my feet.

28 And he, as a rotten thing, consumeth, as a garment that is moth eaten.

vindicate it; for I am no hypocrite, nor shall false accusations be admitted at his tribunal.

Ver. 17.] Do not interrupt me, but give due attention to what I am about to say.

Ver. 18.] See, I beseech you, I refuse not to be tried, but have framed a process against myself; and am so sure of the goodness of my cause, that I know I shall be acquitted.

Ver. 19.] Let who will come and accuse me, I am ready to answer: for to hold my peace, on so just an occasion, is death to me.

Ver. 20.] Let me only beg, O great judge of all, that thou wilt forbear to make use of two things against me; and then I will appear confidently, to plead my cause before thee.

Ver. 21.] Do not continue my pain: and let not the sight of thy majesty put me in disorder.

Ver. 22.] Then summon me to thy bar, and charge me, and I will defend myself; or let me question thee, and do thou clear thy proceedings against me.

Ver. 23.] Tell me what, and how many, are mine iniquities and sins, for I am ignorant of them: I desire to know them all, great and small, against thee, or against my neighbour.

Ver. 24.] For what cause am I thus afflicted, and used as if I was thine enemy?

Ver. 25.] What honour wilt thou get by employing thy power against one, who is no more able to stand before thee, than the leaf to resist the wind which sports with it, or the dry stubble the fire which instantly consumes it?

Ver. 26.] For thou hast passed severe decrees against me, and punishest me for the crimes which were committed before I well knew what I did.

Ver. 27.] And thou dost execute them as severely; for I can no more escape than a malefactor whose feet are in the stocks, who is encompassed with a vigilant guard, and cannot stir a foot from the place where he is.

Ver. 28.] But there he rots and wastes away, as I do, like a garment that is eaten by the moths.

CHAPTER XIV.

ARGUMENT.—*The good man proceeds to plead with God for some mitigation of his miseries, from the consideration of the shortness of life, and the trouble that naturally belongs to it; which he thought might move him not to add any greater burden of suffering; especially considering, that when he is dead he cannot come into the world again (as the plants do) to receive the marks of his favour. Which he hopes therefore he will bestow upon him here, notwithstanding the depth of his misery (which tempted him to the borders of impatience, ver. 13); it being very easy for him to remove his affliction, though never so heavy, whose power is so great, that he removed mountains out of their place, and brought a deluge, as we may say, of sand (as they saw sometimes in their neighbouring countries) to overflow the most fruitful regions.*

1 MAN that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.

2 He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.

3 And dost thou open thine eyes upon such a one, and bringest me into judgment with thee?

4 Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.

5 Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass;

6 Turn from him, that he may rest, till he shall accomplish as a hireling, his day.

7 For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease.

8 Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground;

9 Yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant.

10 But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?

11 As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up:

12 So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.

13 O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!

14 If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.

15 Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thy hands.

16 For now thou numberest my steps, dost thou not watch over my sin?

16 My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou sewest up mine iniquity.

18 And surely the mountain falling cometh to nought, and the rock is removed out of his place.

19 The waters wear the stones: thou wastest away the things which grow out of the dust of the earth; and thou destroyest the hope of man.

CHAP. XIV.

Ver. 1.] Man is born to die: and as he cannot live long, so his short life is subject to many cares.

Ver. 2.] He may be compared to a flower, which is beautiful indeed, but suddenly cropped; or to the shadow on a dial, which never stands still, but is hastening away apace.

Ver. 3.] And dost thou concern thyself so far about such a wretch, as to summon him before thy tribunal, and there pass dreadful sentences against him, as thou dost against me?

Ver. 4.] The common frailty of humanity might make thee overlook him; for nothing, thou knowest, can be better than the original from whence it comes.

Ver. 5.] Or if he were more considerable than he is, yet, since he can live but to such a time as thou hast prefixed, beyond which he cannot prolong his days one moment:

Ver. 6.] That I should think might move thee not to torment him in this manner; but to let him alone till that appointed time come, which will be as welcome to him as the end of his labour is to the hireling.

Ver. 7.] And after that, there is more hope of a tree than of him; for if it be cut down to the very ground, the body of it will grow again, and thrust out new branches:

Ver. 8.] Nay, though it hath been so long cut down that the roots of it are grown old, and the trunk seems quite dead;

Ver. 9.] Yet when it is well moistened it will shoot up again, and bring forth boughs, as if it were but newly planted.

Ver. 10.] But when man dies, he crumbles into dust; and none can set it together to make him live again.

Ver. 11.] As lakes and great rivers are dried up, when their waters find a new channel:

Ver. 12.] So man laid down in his grave shall come no more hither; but in that bed of dust shall sleep perpetually.

Ver. 13.] I wish I were buried alive, rather than suffer such things; or that I could take sanctuary somewhere till this storm be over; or at least thou wouldest set me a certain time when thou wilt deliver me.

Ver. 14.] Then (though there be no hope of living here again after I am dead) thou shalt see I will patiently wait all the days of that appointed time, till that happy change come.

Ver. 15.] Do thou speak the word, and it shall be done; show thou hast some love to thy own workmanship.

Ver. 16.] Though now thou seemest to number every step I have trod in all my life, and dost not spare to punish every fault;

Ver. 17.] Having taken as great care the memory of them should not be lost, as if they had been sealed up in a bag, and added one punishment to another:

Ver. 18.] Yet notwithstanding the highest mountains may fall like a leaf, and the rock be removed from his place.

Ver. 19.] The waters, though soft, wear away the hard stones, and the very dust or sand sometimes overflows the fruitful fields: why, therefore (since such strange and unexpected things come to pass), may there not be some hope for miserable man?

20 Thou prevailest for ever against him, and he passeth: thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away.

21 His sons come to honour, and he knoweth

Ver. 20.] Who is not able to stand before thee; but must yield and be gone for ever when thou requirest; thou spoilest his beauty, and sendest him away into another world.

Ver. 21.] And then, whether his children, whom he leaves behind, be rich, or whether they be poor, it

it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them.

22 But his flesh upon him shall have pain, and his soul within him shall mourn.

is indifferent to him; for he knows not what passes here.

Ver. 22.] But while he is in flesh he cannot but be in pain for them, and his soul is inwardly grieved to see their misery.

CHAPTER XV.

ARGUMENT.—*In this chapter Eliphaz renews the dispute with more eagerness and fierceness than before; being very angry that Job slighted them so much, and thought himself so wise (as he interpreted it), that he disdain'd their exhortations, and would not follow the counsel they had given him, of confessing his sins, and praying to God for forgiveness (ver. 8. viii. 4—6): but except this one argument (that he need not be ashamed to confess his guilt, when he considered how prone all men are to sin), there is nothing new in his discourse; but he merely urges what he had asserted at first, from his own and the wisest men's observations, that they are not the good, but the wicked, whom God punishes with such calamities as now were fallen upon Job. And with great ornaments of speech, he most admirably describes the vengeance which God is wont to take upon impious tyrants: having his eye, I suppose, upon Nimrod, or some such mighty oppressor.*

1 THEN answered Eliphaz the Temanite, and said,

2 Should a wise man utter vain knowledge, and fill his belly with the east wind?

3 Should he reason with unprofitable talk? or with speeches wherewith he can do no good?

4 Yea, thou castest off fear, and restrainest prayer before God.

5 For thy mouth uttereth thine iniquity, and thou chooseth the tongue of the crafty.

6 Thine own mouth condemneth thee, and not I: yea, thine own lips testify against thee.

7 Art thou the first man that was born? or wast thou made before the hills?

8 Hast thou heard the secret of God? and dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself?

CHAP. XV.

Ver. 1.] Then Eliphaz, incensed with these reproaches, rose up again, and said;

Ver. 2.] Dost thou pretend to be wise, who answerest us with such empty discourses; and whose heart is swollen with such pernicious opinions, and vents them with so much vehemence?

Ver. 3.] Is this thy wisdom, which teaches thee to wrangle to no purpose, and to pour out words for which one is never the better?

Ver. 4.] The better did I say? They destroy all religion, and discourage men from pouring out their complaint in prayer to God.

Ver. 5.] Thou rather teachest them to dispute with him; whereby thou hast proclaimed thine iniquity, while with fallacious words thou seekest to dissemble it.

Ver. 6.] I need produce no farther testimony against thee; for thy own mouth hath done the business, and condemn'd thee of impiety.

Ver. 7.] Thou art but a man, why dost thou talk as if thou wert God, or at least wert made before the world?

Ver. 8.] Wast thou admitted into God's secret counsels, and thereby engrossedst all wisdom to thyself?

9 What knowest thou, that we know not? what understandest thou, which is not in us?

10 With us are both the grayheaded and very aged men, much elder than thy father.

11 Are the consolations of God small with thee? is there any secret thing with thee?

12 Why doth thy heart carry thee away? and what do thy eyes wink at,

13 That thou turnest thy spirit against God, and lettest such words go out of thy mouth?

14 What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?

15 Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight.

16 How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?

Ver. 9.] Wherein (to retort thy own words upon thee) doth thy knowledge exceed ours? Let us hear what secret thou hast learnt, which we do not understand.

Ver. 10.] If by age and long experience men acquire wisdom, there are some of us who are much elder than thy father.

Ver. 11.] Why dost thou slight then those divine consolations which we have given thee? Hast thou some secret ones which nobody else knows of?

Ver. 12.] What makes thee have such a high opinion of thyself, and in this manner contemn us?

Ver. 13.] Nay, oppose thyself to God, and take the boldness to argue with him!

Ver. 14.] Thou wilt maintain thy innocence, thou sayest; but thou forgettest, sure, what thou art and whence thou comest; else thou wouldest not stand upon thy justification, nor complain that thou art wronged.

Ver. 15.] Remember what I told thee before (iv. 18), that the angels are not immutably good; the heavenly inhabitants, I say, are not without their spots.

Ver. 16.] What a loathsome and filthy creature then is man, who is as prone to sin, as he is to drink when he is dry.

17 I will shew thee, hear me ; and that *which* I have seen I will declare ;

18 Which wise men have told from their fathers, and have not hid it :

19 Unto whom alone the earth was given, and no stranger passed among them.

20 The wicked man travaileth with pain all his days, and the number of years is hidden to the oppressor.

21 A dreadful sound *is* in his ears : in prosperity the destroyer shall come upon him.

22 He believeth not that he shall return out of darkness, and he is waited for of the sword.

23 He wandereth abroad for bread, *saying*, Where *is it* ? he knoweth that the day of darkness is ready at his hand.

24 Trouble and anguish shall make him afraid ; they shall prevail against him, as a king ready to the battle.

25 For he stretcheth out his hand against God, and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty.

26 He runneth upon him, *even on his neck*, upon the thick bosses of his bucklers :

27 Because he covereth his face with his fatness, and maketh collups of fat on his flanks.

28 And he dwelleth in desolate cities, and in houses which no man inhabiteth, which are ready to become heaps.

29 He shall not be rich, neither shall his substance continue, neither shall he prolong the perfection thereof upon the earth.

30 He shall not depart out of darkness ; the flame shall dry up his branches, and by the breath of his mouth shall he go away.

31 Let not him that is deceived trust in vanity : for vanity shall be his recompence.

32 It shall be accomplished before his time, and his branch shall not be green.

33 He shall shake off his unripe grape as the vine, and shall cast off his flower as the olive.

34 For the congregation of hypocrites *shall be* desolate, and fire shall consume the tabernacles of bribery.

35 They conceive mischief, and bring forth vanity, and their belly prepareth deceit.

Ver. 17.] Do not stop thine ears whilst I show thee thine error, and I will say nothing but what mine own eyes have seen.

Ver. 18.] And which wise men have observed, and their fathers before them, who have reported it to their children :

Ver. 19.] And they no mean persons neither, but such as were alone thought worthy to be entrusted with the government of whole countries, which no foreign power could enter (as they have done thine) while they ruled.

Ver. 20.] The wicked tyrant (this is their and my observation) is never free from inward torment ; all his life long he is in dread of some greater oppressor than himself.

Ver. 21.] His guilt so pursues him, that it makes him fear some mischief or other is still falling on him ; and in the most peaceable time he doth not think himself in safety.

Ver. 22.] When he lies down he is afraid he shall be killed before the morning ; and he fancies nothing but naked swords round about him.

Ver. 23.] He shall wander to get a morsel of bread where he can find it ; and when he hath it, he shall imagine it will prove his poison.

Ver. 24.] The distress and anguish wherein he sees himself shall affright him ; they shall press upon him and overcome him, as a king doth his enemies whom he hath surrounded with his forces.

Ver. 25.] Which will be a just punishment of his audacious impiety ; because he defied God and resolutely set himself in opposition to the Almighty.

Ver. 26.] Who will suddenly lay fast hold on him and kill him, though he be never so well armed :

Ver. 27.] Because he minds nothing but his belly ; and, casting away all fear of God, nourishes up himself in luxury, pride, and haughtiness.

Ver. 28.] Possessing cities which he hath laid desolate ; and houses out of which he hath driven the owners, and which are running to ruin.

Ver. 29.] But the riches he hath gotten by such violence and oppression shall come to nothing : he may design great things, but shall leave them imperfect.

Ver. 30.] When his troubles begin, they shall not end till they have destroyed both him and his children : one word of God's mouth (so mad a thing it is to set himself against Heaven) will utterly consume him.

Ver. 31.] Let such examples teach him that is seduced into evil ways, not to trust to such uncertain greatness ; for vexatious disappointments shall be all that he will get by it.

Ver. 32.] He shall meet with them when he little thinks of it ; and see his children wither away as well as himself.

Ver. 33.] They shall die before their time, as the unripe grape, or the blossom of the vine or olive, are struck with hail, or bitten off by the frost.

Ver. 34.] The most numerous families of such ungodly men shall have none in them left : the divine vengeance shall destroy the house which was built with ill-gotten goods.

Ver. 35.] And they justly deserve to be thus punished, because all they design and do is nothing but the oppression and ruin of their subjects : against whom when one design miscarries, they conceive new arts to undo them.

CHAPTER XVI.

ARGUMENT.—*Job reproves the vanity and obstinacy of Eliphaz, in repeating the same things over again, and still persisting in his inhumanity, though he saw his case so pitiable : which he again describes, to make him sensible how unworthily he was treated by him and the rest of his friends ; who, in effect, joined with his enemies, who took this opportunity to rail at him. Whereas there was no crime of his appeared to justify their accusations, and to make good Eliphaz's argument : which signified nothing, unless he meant to say, that Job was like that wicked tyrant of whom he had discoursed. Which was so far from any show of truth, that he protests he never hurt any body, and was always a sincere lover of God, &c. (ver. 17, 18). The truth of which God knew, to whose bar he appeals from their unjust sentence.*

1 THEN Job answered and said,
2 I have heard many such things : miserable comforters are ye all.

3 Shall vain words have an end ? or what emboldeneth thee that thou answerest ?

4 I also could speak as ye do : if your soul were in my soul's stead, I could heap up words against you, and shake my head at you.

5 But I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the moving of my lips should assuage your grief.

6 Though I speak, my grief is not assuaged ; and though I forbear, what am I eased ?

7 But now he hath made me weary : thou hast made desolate all my company.

8 And thou hast filled me with wrinkles, which is a witness against me : and my leanness rising up in me beareth witness to my face.

9 He teareth me in his wrath, who hateth me : he gnasheth upon me with his teeth ; mine enemy sharpeneth his eyes upon me.

10 They have gaped upon me with their mouth ; they have smitten me upon the cheek reproach-

fully ; they have gathered themselves together against me.

11 God hath delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked.

12 I was at ease, but he hath broken me asunder : he hath also taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces, and set me up for his mark.

13 His archers compass me round about, he cleaveth my reins asunder, and doth not spare ; he poureth out my gall upon the ground.

14 He breaketh me with breach upon breach, he runneth upon me like a giant.

15 I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin, and defiled my horn in the dust.

16 My face is foul with weeping, and on my eyelids is the shadow of death ;

17 Not for any injustice in my hands : also my prayer is pure.

18 O earth, cover not thou my blood, and let my cry have no place.

19 Also now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high.

20 My friends scorn me : but mine eye poureth out tears unto God.

CHAP. XVI.

Ver. 1. Here Job interrupted him, and said,

Ver. 2.] Thou dost but repeat what hath been often said already : such comforters as you are as troublesome as my sufferings.

Ver. 3.] May not one endlessly pour out such empty discourses ? (as I may with more reason call thine than thou didst mine, xv. 3). I wonder at thy confidence, that, having so little to say, thou shouldst take upon thee to answer.

Ver. 4.] I could insult as well as you ; and, if we could change conditions, let you see how easy it would be to oppress you with such words as these, in a grave fashion to mock at your calamities.

Ver. 5.] But I abhor the thought of such a guilt : I would not fail to fortify you, in that ease, with the best arguments I could invent ; and carefully abstain from the least word that should augment your grief.

Ver. 6.] Though as for myself, I find my misery admits of no consolation : for whether I defend my innocence, or silently suffer you to condemn me, it makes no difference.

Ver. 7.] God hath long since quite tired me with one trouble upon another. Thou hast not ceased, O God, till thou hast left me neither goods, nor children, nor a friend to comfort me.

Ver. 8.] The furrows in my face (which is not old) show the greatness of my affliction : which is extremely augmented by him, who rises up with false accusations to take away mine honour, as this consumption will do my life.

Ver. 9.] He rends my good name in pieces with a passion equal to his hatred : my enemy is enraged against me, and cruelly sets himself to spy out the least occasion to calumniate me.

Ver. 10.] There is no small number of such as these, who look like so many wild beasts coming to devour me ; having already most shamefully abused me, and joined themselves together to give full satisfaction to their wrath, wherewith they are filled against me.

Ver. 11.] So God will have it ; who hath aban-

doned the protection of me, and delivered me bound into the hands of the ungodly, to use me at their pleasure.

Ver. 12.] How happy was I heretofore ! and now I am crushed in pieces : from an eminent condition he hath thrown me down into the most despicable : and there I am exposed (as a butt to the arrow) to all manner of indignities and miseries.

Ver. 13.] He is not content to take away all my goods, and destroy my family, but, to the reproach of friends (which strike like so many darts to my very heart,) he hath added ulcers in every part of my body, with inward pains, which rack me without intermission ; and, in one word, hath so mortally wounded me, as if my bowels were already shed upon the ground.

Ver. 14.] Before one wound he closed he makes another, and in such violent a manner, that I can make no more resistance than a dwarf can do against a giant.

Ver. 15.] The sackcloth which I put on at the first now cleaves so fast to me, as if I had sewed it to my skin ; and all my authority and honour is changed into contempt.

Ver. 16.] My face is dirty, and mine eyes in a manner quite put out by the very tears which have fallen from thence.

Ver. 17.] And yet I must still say, I never offered such a violence as this to any man, and was always (so false is Eliphaz's accusation, xv. 14), a sincere worshipper of God.

Ver. 18.] If this be not true, let my blood be left to the dogs to lick, when I am dead, and let neither God nor man regard my complaint while I am alive.

Ver. 19.] But what need these imprecations ? The great God who rules over all is my witness, and can testify how just I have been towards my neighbours, and how pious towards himself.

Ver. 20.] From your judgment therefore (who instead of comforting my innocence, scornfully set yourselves to defame me) I appeal to his ; and beseech him with perpetual tears to vindicate me.

21 O that one might plead for a man with God, as a man *pleadeth* for his neighbour!

Ver. 21.] I am so assured of the goodness of my cause (as well as of his justice), that I wish for nothing more than to have it speedily heard and tried by him, in the same manner that pleas are held before earthly judges.

22 When a few years are come, then I shall go the way *whence* I shall not return.

Ver. 22.] For my life cannot last long; and I know that when I am gone I cannot return hither again, for him to do me justice.

CHAPTER XVII.

ARGUMENT.—Here Job desires that he may be tried presently before God's tribunal, his life being just upon the point to expire, as he had said in the end of the former chapter, and continues to urge again in this, because his friends were very unfit judges in this case, and had passed such a sentence upon him as upright men would never approve of. Whereby they had given him a new vocation, to hear them talk so idly, and put him in hope of recovering his happiness, if he would follow their admonitions, when they saw him just dropping into the grave, which, was the only thing, he saith, that he could hope for.

1 My breath is corrupt, my days are extinct, the graves are ready for me.

2 Are there not mockers with me? and doth not mine eye continue in their provocation?

3 Lay down now, put me in a surety with thee; who is he that will strike hands with me?

4 For thou hast hid thine heart from understanding: therefore shalt thou not exalt them.

5 He that speaketh flattery to his friends, even the eyes of his children shall fail.

6 He hath made me also a byword of the people; and aforetime I was as a tabret.

7 Mine eye also is dim by reason of sorrow, and all my members are as a shadow.

8 Upright men shall be astonished at this, and the innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite.

9 The righteous also shall hold on his way, and

he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.

10 But as for you all, do ye return and come now: for I cannot find one wise man among you.

11 My days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart.

12 They change the night into day: the light is short because of darkness.

13 If I wait, the grave is my house: I have made my bed in the darkness.

14 I have said to corruption, Thou art my father: to the worm, Thou art my mother, and my sister.

15 And where is now my hope? as for my hope, who shall see it?

16 They shall go down to the bars of the pit, when our rest together is in the dust.

CHAP. XVII.

Ver. 1.] My vital spirits are spent, they give but a glimmering and dying light, whereby I can see nothing but graves on every side prepared for me.

Ver. 2.] How can I support my spirits, when my friends, who should comfort me, mock at all I say for myself? This so bitterly exasperates me, that I cannot take a wink of sleep, nor of anything else.

Ver. 3.] Once more therefore I beseech thee, O God, to assure me that thou wilt judge my cause thyself: let somebody undertake for thee: who is it that on thy behalf will engage to do me right?

Ver. 4.] Not these friends of mine: for they comprehend nothing of the way of thy judgments: therefore, thou shalt not confer this honour on them who talk so absurdly.

Ver. 5.] I must speak the truth of them (though it displease them), and not soothe them up in their errors: for he that flatters his friends, when he should reprove them, may look long enough before either he or his children find one that will deal sincerely with them.

Ver. 6.] This very person who spake last, hath made me a proverb in every body's mouth: and it is the vulgar pastime to talk of my calamities.

Ver. 7.] No wonder then that excessive sorrow hath darkened mine eyes; and that all the flesh of my body is so consumed, that I am but the shadow of a man.

Ver. 8.] Upright men hereafter will be astonished at the cruel sentence which my friends pass upon me; and the innocent will resolutely oppose the wicked, when he judges the worse of piety, because of my afflictions.

Ver. 9. The righteous will not be moved by such arguments to change his purpose of well-doing; much less will he do any evil action, but grow rather the better by adversity, and add perseverance to his piety.

Ver. 10.] And truly I wish that all you, who have charged me so heavily, would consider things better, and hearken to what I have said: for I must tell you again, there is not a man of you that judges truly of my case.

Ver. 11.] Repent of your harsh censures before I die, as I must speedily, my joys being quite gone, and all the hopeful designs, which had possessed my heart, being utterly subverted.

Ver. 12.] Instead whereof other thoughts are come to torment me; which will not let me sleep in the night, nor enjoy any pleasure in the day.

Ver. 13.] If I hope for anything now (as you would have me), it is for a grave: that is the only house I can promise myself; there I am going to rest in a bed where I shall not be disturbed.

Ver. 14.] I have already made so near an alliance with death, that my father and mother and nearest kindred are nothing so near me as worms and rottenness.

Ver. 15.] How vain then are all the hopes you would have me feed myself withal? (xi. 15, 16, &c.) Who shall see, when I am sure I shall not, the happiness you would have me look for here?

Ver. 16.] All these hopes you speak of shall sink down into the bottom of the grave; when you, my friends, as well as I, shall take up your lodging in the dust.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ARGUMENT.—*In this chapter Bildad again takes up the dispute, and pretends to reply to what Job had said. But I do not see anything new, saving the description he makes (as Eliphaz had done before him) of the ruin which shall inevitably fall, according to the fixed rules of providence (so he fancied), upon the wicked and his family, notwithstanding all the assistance that his friends and allies can lend him for his preservation. And this he seems to imply was the fate of Job; whom he doth not so much as exhort to repentance (as he had done in his former discourse, ch. viii.), being very angry with him that he had no higher esteem of their wisdom.*

1 THEN answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said,

2 How long will it be ere ye make an end of words? mark, and afterwards we will speak.

3 Wherefore are we counted as beasts, and reputed vile in your sight?

4 He tearth himself in his anger: shall the earth be forsaken for thee? and shall the rock be removed out of his place?

5 Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine.

6 The light shall be dark in his tabernacle, and his candle shall be put out with him.

7 The steps of his strength shall be straitened, and his own counsel shall cast him down.

8 For he is cast into a net by his own feet, and he walketh upon a snare.

9 The gin shall take him by the heel, and the robber shall prevail against him.

10 The snare is laid for him in the ground, and a trap for him in the way.

11 Terrors shall make him afraid on every side, and shall drive him to his feet.

12 His strength shall be hungerbitten, and destruction shall be ready at his side.

13 It shall devour the strength of his skin: even the firstborn of death shall devour his strength.

14 His confidence shall be rooted out of his tabernacle, and it shall bring him to the king of terrors.

15 It shall dwell in his tabernacle, because it is none of his: brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation.

16 His roots shall be dried up beneath, and above shall his branch be cut off.

17 His remembrance shall perish from the earth, and he shall have no name in the street.

18 He shall be driven from light into darkness, and chased out of the world.

19 He shall neither have son nor nephew among his people, nor any remaining in his dwellings.

CHAP. XVIII.

Ver. 1.] Then Bildad the Shuhite, seeing Job continue in his first opinion, rose up, and said,

Ver. 2.] How long shall we continue this dispute? Let us make an end of it, unless he will attend better to our reasons; then we will go on to argue with him.

Ver. 3.] To what purpose is it to talk with one who tells us we understand nothing (xvii. 4. 10), but looks upon us as a company of dull beasts, into whom nothing of wisdom will enter.

Ver. 4.] Such is his passion, which will not let him see how he himself, like a wild beast, tears his own soul in pieces with impatient anger. What art thou, that God for thy sake should cease to govern the world by his known laws, which are fixed and immutable?

Ver. 5.] Say what thou wilt, it is an everlasting truth, that the wicked shall not continue in the splendour wherein we sometimes see him: but though he seem to sit as by a great fire (warm in his wealth, and honour, and power), there shall not remain so much as a spark to comfort him.

Ver. 6.] The glory of his family shall be turned into contempt, and all their joy shall end in sorrow.

Ver. 7.] The attempts which his power makes to preserve his greatness shall but more perplex him: and his own devices shall prove his overthrow.

Ver. 8.] He shall entangle himself by his own wiles: and having contrived himself into danger, every step he takes in pursuance of his designs shall farther ensnare him.

Ver. 9.] Before he is aware he shall find it so im-

possible to disengage himself; that they who thirst after his blood, or wealth, or place, shall easily lay hold on him.

Ver. 10.] He shall not foresee his danger; but be caught as a bird or a beast in a snare or a trap, when he thinks himself secure in his proceedings.

Ver. 11.] Then he shall be surrounded with a thousand terrors; and which way soever he runs to save himself, he shall meet with them.

Ver. 12.] He shall pine away till he hath no strength remaining: for nothing but mischief shall attend and accompany him in every place.

Ver. 13.] Rottenness shall eat up his bones; I say, his very bones shall rot and be consumed.

Ver. 14.] Whatsoever he relies upon for the support of himself and family, it shall utterly fail him, nay, help to hasten his death, the most dreadful of all his enemies.

Ver. 15.] That man had best take heed, who shall have a mind to dwell in his house when he hath left it; for thunder and lightning shall destroy it.

Ver. 16.] And it shall never be built up again, nor shall his family be restored; but be like a tree, whose roots are so dried up in the earth that it shall never shoot forth any more branches.

Ver. 17.] His very memory shall perish, as well as himself; and his name never be mentioned among men, unless it be to make him infamous.

Ver. 18.] He shall be cast out of his splendid greatness into some obscure grave; and removed out of the world as some unclean thing.

Ver. 19.] None of his descendants shall survive him; nor any of his kindred remain to keep up his name.

20 They that come after *him* shall be astonished at his day, as they that went before were afflicted.

Ver. 20.] Future times shall read of this severe vengeance of God upon him with astonishment, as they who see it shall be seized with horror.

21 Surely such *are* the dwellings of the wicked, and this *is* the place of *him* that knoweth not God.

Ver. 21.] Certain it is, that this is a just description of the miserable condition of the wicked: they that do not honour God shall thus be abased.

CHAPTER XIX.

ARGUMENT.—*The purpose of this chapter (in which Job replies to Bildad) is to show, that it would be sufficient for him also merely to repeat the same things as they had done in ten discourses; but the more to aggravate their want of compassion, or rather cruelly, towards him, he represents several new things, which made his condition more deplorable than he had hitherto said. One of which was, that he could not tell the reason why God dealt thus with him; who notwithstanding was so gracious, that, in the depth of this misery and anguish, he affords him a glimmering of a comfortable hope (which began now to appear in his soul, and which he had hitherto wanted), that God would at last take pity upon him, and show his friends their error, by restoring him to his former health and splendour. That seems to be the literal meaning of the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth verses, and of the next two that follow; where, among other things, he says, he doubted not but his Redeemer should stand at last upon the earth (so it is in the Hebrew, the word day not being there), that is, quite overcome the devil, and deliver him from these distresses; like a mighty conqueror, who keeps the field, when all his opposers are routed and fled away. But in this he was, as St. Austin calls him, "eximius prophetarum," and prophesied of the resurrection of the body at the last day.*

1 THEN Job answered and said,
2 How long will ye vex my soul, and break me in pieces with words?

3 These ten times have ye reproached me: ye are not ashamed that ye make yourselves strange to me.

4 And be it indeed that I have erred, mine error remaineth with myself.

5 If indeed ye will magnify yourselves against me, and plead against me my reproach:

6 Know now that God hath overthrown me, and hath compassed me with his net.

7 Behold, I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard: I cry aloud, but there is no judgment.

8 He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass, and he hath set darkness in my paths.

9 He hath stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head.

10 He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone: and my hope hath he removed like a tree.

11 He hath also kindled his wrath against me, and he counteth me unto him as one of his enemies.

12 His troops come together, and raise up their way against me, and encamp round about my tabernacle.

13 He hath put my brethren far from me, and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me.

14 My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me.

CHAP. XIX.

Ver. 1.] Then Job hearing him also repeat his former discourse (ch. viii.), wherein he reflected on him as a wicked man, burst out again into these words:

Ver. 2.] Will you never cease to torment me, and to break my very heart with your words, which grate upon me as sorely as all the miseries I endure?

Ver. 3.] You have reproached me often enough, one would think, and yet you are not ashamed to continue your hard-hearted censures, as if I were a perfect stranger, and my manner of life utterly unknown to you.

Ver. 4.] Suppose that I have done amiss (which is more than you know), I suffer sufficiently for it; and it doth not become you to increase my sufferings by your reproaches.

Ver. 5.] But if you will still proceed to lift up your voice to declaim against me, and allege my calamities, which have made me contemptible, as an argument to condemn me;

Ver. 6.] Let this answer suffice you, that I am sensible it is God's doing; who, having laid me thus low, and environed me with unavoidable miseries, calls upon you to compassionate, rather than reproach me.

Ver. 7.] And my case is the more pitiable, because I know not the cause of all this; nor can have any

audience or redress, though I appeal to God with the loudest cries, and protest to him that I am innocent.

Ver. 8.] There is no way open for my escape; but his plagues surround me so on every side, that I am at my wit's end, and know not which way to turn myself.

Ver. 9.] He hath not merely stripped me of my ornaments, and taken that dignity and authority from me wherewith I was invested;

Ver. 10.] But brought me to such utter ruin, that, like a tree plucked up by the very roots, I have not so much as hope remaining, which is the only comfort of the miserable.

Ver. 11.] For he hath done all this with such violence, as if he were extremely incensed against me, and looked upon me as his enemy.

Ver. 12.] Whole armies of evils, by his order, have at the same time invaded me, and laid such a strait siege to me, that not the smallest comfort I had could escape their fury.

Ver. 13.] I looked for some relief from my brethren, but they were so astonished at the number and dreadfulfulness of my calamities, that they durst not approach me; and as for my neighbours, who formerly so much courted my acquaintance, they truly creep aloof off, as if they had never known me.

Ver. 14.] They whom nature inclined to it have failed to perform the duties of humanity towards me;

15 They that dwell in my house, and my maids, count me for a stranger: I am an alien in their sight.

16 I called my servant, and he gave me no answer; I intreated him with my mouth.

17 My breath is strange to my wife, though I intreated for the children's sake of mine own body.

18 Yea, young children despised me; I arose, and they spake against me.

19 All my inward friends abhorred me; and they whom I loved are turned against me.

20 My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh, and I am escaped with the skin of my teeth.

21 Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me.

22 Why do ye persecute me as God, and are not satisfied with my flesh?

23 Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book!

24 That they were graven with an iron pen, and lead in the rock for ever!

25 For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:

26 And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:

27 Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.

28 But ye should say, Why persecute we him, seeing the root of the matter is found in me?

29 Be ye afraid of the sword: for wrath bringeth the punishments of the sword, that ye may know there is a judgment.

and they to whom I was tied by a stronger bond than nature, have forgotten the friendship there was between us.

Ver. 15.] They that have been kindly entertained at my house, nay, the people of my family, have forgot the respect they were wont to give me, and look upon me as if they had no relation to me.

Ver. 16.] I called to my slave, and he regarded not what I said: no, not when I besought him, as if he had been my master.

Ver. 17.] Which is the less wonder, since I am become so loathsome, that my wife will not come near me, though I have conjured her to do it by the dear memory of our children, those common pledges of our mutual love.

Ver. 18.] After these examples young children and fools despise me; and when I rise up to invite them to me, abusive language is all the return they make to my courtesy.

Ver. 19.] And, which is worst of all, the men whom I entrusted with my greatest secrets, cannot endure me; and they who have received so many tokens of my love are become mine enemies.

Ver. 20.] All these afflictions have so wasted me, that I am little more than skin and bone: a mouth to complain withal is all the flesh that is left me.

Ver. 21.] O ye my friends (if you still deserve that name), who are the only persons that undertake to comfort me, have pity, have pity, I beseech you, upon a miserable wretch, and consider what wounds the hand of God hath given me.

Ver. 22.] Will you assume the same prerogative, and think you have the same right to afflict me? and doth it not suffice you to see my body all consumed, but you will vex my very soul also with your perverse reasonings?

Ver. 23.] Oh that the protestations and appeals I have so often made might remain upon record, and be registered in the public acts and monuments!

Ver. 24.] May they be graven upon a plate of lead with an iron pen; nay, cut into a rock or marble pillar, to continue to all posterity!

Ver. 25.] For my hope, which was as dead as myself (xvii. 13. xv. xix. 10), begins to revive; because, though I seem for the present to be forsaken of God, yet I know that he can hereafter deliver me out of this miserable condition, since he lives for ever; and will, I doubt not, at last appear victorious over all the enemies which now oppress me.

Ver. 26.] And though the worms which have eaten my skin should proceed to consume the rest of this wretched body, yet I feel my soul inspired with a comfortable belief, that before I die I shall see myself restored by the mercy of God, to a happy state.

Ver. 27.] He will not let me always lie under these reproaches; but I begin to assure myself, that with these very eyes I shall see him vindicate my innocence; not only others, but I myself shall live to see it: and I even faint away with vehement desire to behold that happy day.

Ver. 28.] Which will make you repent that you have thus persecuted me, who have not without ground thus long disputed this matter with you, but am sure the right lies on my side, and not on yours.

Ver. 29.] Take my advice therefore in good time, and dread the just displeasure of God against you for your perverse reasonings (for his wrath punishes men's iniquities with the sword, or some such sore vengeance), whereby you will know to your cost, that there is a more righteous judgment than yours.

CHAPTER XX.

ARGUMENT.—The abrupt beginning of this speech of Zophar shows that he was in a passion; which, though he pretends to bridle it, would not let him calmly consider the protestation which Job had made of his innocence. But he goes on in the old common place of the certain downfall of the wicked, be he never so powerful and well supported. Which he illustrates, indeed, after an excellent fashion, with great variety of figures and remarks upon histories as old as the world. In some of which he had observed, that the wicked after their fall had made notable attempts to get up again; but by the hand of God were so crushed that they could never rise more. All the flaw in his discourse is this (which was common to him with the rest), that he imagined God never varied from this method; and therefore Job, without doubt, was a very bad man, though it did not appear he was so any other way, but by his infelicity.

1 THEN answered Zophar the Naamathite, and said,

2 Therefore do my thoughts cause me to answer, and for *this* I make haste.

3 I have heard the check of my reproach, and the spirit of my understanding causeth me to answer.

4 Knowest thou *not* this of old, since man was placed upon earth.

5 That the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite *but* for a moment ?

6 Though his excellency mount up to the heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds ;

7 Yet he shall perish for ever like his own dung : they which have seen him shall say, Where is he ?

8 He shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found : yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night.

9 The eye also *which* saw him shall see him no more ; neither shall his place any more behold him.

10 His children shall seek to please the poor, and his hands shall restore their goods.

11 His bones are full of the sin of his youth, which shall lie down with him in the dust.

12 Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth, *though* he hide it under his tongue ;

13 *Though* he spare it, and forsake it not ; but keep it still within his mouth :

14 *Yet* his meat in his bowels is turned, *it* is the gall of asps within him.

15 He hath swallowed down riches, and he shall vomit them up again : God shall cast them out of his belly.

16 He shall suck the poison of asps : the viper's tongue shall slay him.

17 He shall not see the rivers, the floods, the brooks of honey and butter.

18 That which he laboured for shall he restore, and shall not swallow *it* down : according to his substance *shall* the restitution *be*, and he shall not rejoice *therein*.

19 Because he hath oppressed *and* hath forsaken the poor ; *because* he hath violently taken away a house which he builded not ;

20 Surely he shall not feel quietness in his belly, he shall not save of that which he desired.

21 There shall none of his meat be left ; therefore shall no man look for his goods.

22 In the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be

CHAP. XX.

Ver. 1.] Here Zophar, though he had no new thing to produce, hastily interrupted Job, and said,

Ver. 2.] These words of thine make my former thoughts return again ; and do so provoke me, that I am not able to forbear speaking any longer.

Ver. 3.] While thou pretendest to correct my errors, I have heard myself rather shamefully reproached ; yet I will not suffer my passion to reply, but the clear light of my understanding shall answer for me.

Ver. 4.] It seems thou dost not yet understand, though it be a truth as old as the world,

Ver. 5.] That the happiness which the wicked, and he that counterfeits piety, so much boasts of, is of no long standing, and will continue but for a few moments.

Ver. 6.] Though he should be advanced to the highest pitch of human greatness, and overtop all mankind as much as the highest trees do the lowest shrubs :

Ver. 7.] Yet he shall fall as low as his dunghill ; and, like it, be cast out for ever with contempt : they who saw him so flourishing shall be astonished at his ruin, and ask, with amazement, what is become of him ?

Ver. 8.] For his happiness hath no firmer foundation than a dream, of which we have no remembrance in the morning ; or, if we have, all the rich furniture and feasts which appear to us in our sleep vanish in an instant as soon as we awake.

Ver. 9.] Just so shall he pass away, and all his glory with him : those eyes that were wont to gaze upon it with envy shall lose the sight of it, and never behold it more.

Ver. 10.] His children shall have enough to do to pacify the rage of the poor, whom he hath oppressed ; and he shall be forced with shame to restore with his own hands the goods he hath extorted from them.

Ver. 11.] His very bones are full of pain and anguish. All which punishments of his secret sins shall stick to him till they bring him to his grave.

Ver. 12.] Though wickedness, like some dangerous meats, be pleasant in the acting, as they are in the chewing ; so that a man is as desirous to continue it, as a glutton is to keep a long relish of those sweet morsels upon his palate :

Ver. 13.] Though he will by no means part with it, when he is told the danger ; but still retains it, as the other doth that meat in his mouth, which he is told is no better than poison :

Ver. 14.] Yet, after it is committed, it wrings and gripes the conscience, as those dainty bits, when they are swallowed, do the bowels : the pleasure is turned into pain, the sweetness into such bitterness as brings the most sudden destruction.

Ver. 15.] His ill-gotten goods, for instance, which he devoured with so much greediness and insatiable desire, shall never thrive with him ; but he shall be forced to refund them with a torment far exceeding the pleasure wherewith he got them : God himself shall violently force them from him, and all his other riches together with them.

Ver. 16.] Which shall prove as great and as deadly a torture to him, as if, when he squeezed the poor, he had sucked the poison of asps, or been bitten with a viper.

Ver. 17.] This shall be his portion, instead of the pleasures of nature and art ; which he flattered himself would flow in several streams to him perpetually.

Ver. 18.] He may endeavour again with new labour to repair his broken fortune ; but it shall be in vain : though he should get as much riches as he had before his change, he shall have no joy in them.

Ver. 19.] When he hath with new oppressions ground the poor, and left them destitute, when he hath violently seized on a house, he shall not be able to build it.

Ver. 20.] When he hath turned, as we say, every stone, and been as restless as a woman in travail ; all his pains shall bring forth nothing of that which he desired.

Ver. 21.] He shall have no more left him to eat, than he was wont to leave for others, which shall put him out of all hope of mending his condition.

in straits: every hand of the wicked shall come upon him.

23 When he is about to fill his belly, *God* shall cast the fury of his wrath upon him, and shall rain it upon him while he is eating.

24 He shall flee from the iron weapon, and the bow of steel shall strike him through.

25 It is drawn, and cometh out of the body; yea, the glittering sword cometh out of his gall: terrors are upon him.

Ver. 22.] The greater fulness you can suppose him to regain of worldly goods, the more he shall be distressed; for the hand of every man whom he hath afflicted shall lay hold on him to demand satisfaction.

Ver. 23.] God himself also shall disturb him in his enjoyments, with the sorest effects of his divine vengeance, which shall come pouring down from heaven, when he thinks himself most secure.

Ver. 24.] He shall run from a lesser danger to fall into a greater; as if one, avoiding the weapon in a man's hand, should be shot through with a bow of steel.

Ver. 25.] And though he should draw the shaft out of his body, and the wound in his bowels should be healed, he shall not escape so, for terrors shall perpetually accompany him.

26 All darkness shall be hid in his secret places: a fire not blown shall consume him; it shall go ill with him that is left in his tabernacle.

27 The heaven shall reveal his iniquity; and the earth shall rise up against him.

28 The increase of his house shall depart, and his goods shall flow away in the day of his wrath.

29 This is the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed unto him by God.

Ver. 26.] Nothing but dreadful dangers shall wait for him in those places where he hoped for safety: a fire not kindled by man shall devour him, and the same pestilence or burning fever shall take hold of the rest of his family.

Ver. 27.] The heaven by thunder, lightning, or tempests, shall declare itself his enemy; and the earth, by wild beasts or serpents, or some other way, shall make war against him.

Ver. 28.] His whole revenue shall melt away as waters poured out, in the day when God intends to punish him.

Ver. 29.] This is the portion which God the righteous judge will allot to the wicked: thus will the Almighty reward his blasphemies, or his other proud and insolent works.

CHAPTER XXI.

ARGUMENT.—*To bring the dispute to a speedier issue, Job (after a short preface, reproving their incivility) comes close to the business: and doth not content himself merely with denying what they had said, but shows them where the fallacy in their discourse lay: viz. in concluding an universal from some particulars. For he maintains from as good history and observations as they could produce, that though God do make some wicked men such examples of his vengeance, as they had said, yet he lets others, and they of the vilest sort, atheists and deriders of divine providence, live prosperously, and die peaceably, and have stately monuments built to perpetuate their memory. In brief, he shows there is great variety in God's proceedings about the punishment of the wicked; which makes them so bold as they are in their impiety. And seems to have respect to the history of Ishmael, who was a wild or barbarous man, grasping at all that he could lay his hands on, and persecuting Isaac: and yet had twelve princes descended from him, settled in their several fortresses, as we read Gen. xvi. 12. xvii. 20. xxv. 16. And it is possible, to the history of Eliphaz's own country; Esau's ancestors being very rich (Gen xxxvi. 6, 7) and having many dukes, whose posterity afterward advanced themselves to the title of kings, that sprang from him, before there was any king over the children of Israel (Gen. xxxvi. 15. 31).*

1 BUT Job answered and said,

2 Hear diligently my speech, and let this be your consolations.

3 Suffer me that I may speak: and after that I have spoken, mock on.

4 As for me, is my complaint to man? and if it were so, why should not my spirit be troubled?

CHAP. XXI.

Ver. 1.] But Job, who knew the falseness of this assertion (in which Zophar secretly struck at him), that God always punishes sinners in this manner, would not let it pass without answer, and therefore said again unto them;

Ver. 2.] Let me prevail with you to attend better than you have done hitherto to my discourse: do me this kindness, and it shall serve instead of all the consolations I promised myself from you.

Ver. 3.] Hear me patiently, and do not so hastily interrupt me as Zophar just now did (xx. 2); who, after I have done, may begin, if he please, to deride me again.

Ver. 4.] Have I not all this while made my appeal to God? why then do you interrupt me, and take upon you to pronounce that sentence which I expect from him alone? but if my complaint had been to

5 Mark me, and be astonished, and lay your hand upon your mouth.

6 Even when I remember I am afraid, and trembling taketh hold on my flesh.

7 Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power?

8 Their seed is established in their sight

you, yet, seeing there is a just cause for it, can I choose but be vexed to see you will not hear me patiently?

Ver. 5.] Consider well my misery, and being astonished at the greatness of it, and of your rudeness, be so civil now as to impose silence on yourselves, while I am speaking to you.

Ver. 6.] I am sure I myself am astonished at the very remembrance of it: were I free from it, yet the thought of what is past makes every joint of my body tremble.

Ver. 7.] Let me therefore again desire you to answer me this question more leisurely; if what you have said be true, how come we to see so many wicked men, not only enjoy all the good things of this life, but grow old in their enjoyment, and want no honour nor power to which riches can advance them?

with them, and their offspring before their eyes.

9 Their houses *are* safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them.

10 Their bull gendereth, and faileth not; their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf.

11 They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance.

12 They take the trimbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ.

13 They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave.

14 Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.

15 What *is* the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?

16 Lo, their good *is* not in their hand: the counsel of the wicked is far from me.

17 How oft is the candle of the wicked put out? and *how oft* cometh their destruction upon them? *God* distributeth sorrows in his anger.

18 They are as stubble before the wind, and as chaff that the storm carrieth away.

19 God layeth up his iniquity for his children: he rewardeth him, and he shall know *it*.

20 His eyes shall see his destruction, and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty.

21 For what pleasure *hath* he in his house after him, when the number of his months is cut off in the midst.

22 Shall *any* teach God knowledge? seeing he judgeth those that are high.

23 One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet.

24 His breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow.

25 And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure.

26 They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them.

27 Behold, I know your thoughts, and the devices *which* ye wrongfully imagine against me.

28 For ye say, Where *is* the house of the prince? and where *are* the dwelling places of the wicked?

29 Have ye not asked them that go by the way? and do ye not know their tokens,

30 That the wicked is reserved to the day of

Ver. 8.] Nay, live to see their children settled in the world; yea, their children's children grow up like young plants before their eyes.

Ver. 9.] There is nobody disturbs their tranquillity in any of their habitations; nor doth God inflict any punishment on them for their sins.

Ver. 10.] But extends his care even to the herds of cattle; where the kine never fail to conceive, and in due time bring forth their calves, and do not miscarry.

Ver. 11.] And so do their flocks of sheep, with whom their wives may be compared: who bring forth their little ones as easily and as numerously: and their children dance about their houses, like the little lambs which skip about their fields.

Ver. 12.] They lift up their voice and sing to the trimbrel and harp: they dance for joy at the sound of the pipe.

Ver. 13.] In a word, they prolong their days to a great old age, in all manner of pleasure; and then do not lie long languishing on a bed of sickness or pain, but go easily and suddenly to their grave.

Ver. 14.] And yet these are the men that never think of God; or if they do, presently bid those thoughts be gone; for they desire to have nothing to do with him or with his laws.

Ver. 15.] They know no such being, they say, as the Almighty; nor do they owe him any service: and if they should worship and serve him, they do not believe they shall be a whit the better for it.

Ver. 16.] Do not imagine that I am of their opinion; I know very well that they cannot make themselves rich and prosperous without God; and therefore, far be it from me to join with them in their impiety.

Ver. 17.] But yet, I say, how oft is it that we see the joy of these wicked men extinguished? Sometimes, indeed, God takes a speedy vengeance on them; but it is not his usual course to destroy them, and to give them such plagues and torments (as you speak of) for their portion.

Ver. 18.] We do not see them so frequently as you say, driven away like stubble before the wind, and all

their estates scattered like the chaff which is blown away with a storm.

Ver. 19.] And when doth God punish the iniquity of the wicked in his children (as you pretend he always doth, xx. 10), and that while he lives, and beholds it himself?

Ver. 20.] It is not such a common thing as you make it, for him to see his own ruin, and to feel the effects of the dreadful wrath of the Almighty.

Ver. 21.] As for what befalls his children when he is dead, he concerns not himself; it is nothing to him though they be cut off in their most flourishing estate.

Ver. 22.] Shall we be so bold as to instruct God how to govern the world? and tell him he is not just, unless he punish the wicked when we expect it? He judges the highest beings, and therefore knows sure how to govern us.

Ver. 23.] Who must not think to tie him to our rules. For one man dies in the highest and firmest worldly prosperity, meeting with nothing all his days to disturb his quiet and tranquillity.

Ver. 24.] Health as well as riches accompany him to his grave; his ribs are fat, and his bones full of marrow, even in his old age.

Ver. 25.] When another man (who perhaps is better than he) dies in great pain and anguish; after a miserable life, in which he never enjoyed any pleasure.

Ver. 26.] They shall both alike have the dust for their bed, and worms for their covering; and no distinction, that we can see, be made between them.

Ver. 27.] I am sensible that in all this I very much contradict your thoughts; which are as well known to me as to yourselves: I see by what arguments you are studying to oppress me.

Ver. 28.] I hear you say within yourselves, What is become of the house of Job, who lived like a prince? what difference is there between him and those wicked men, whose dwelling places are destroyed?

Ver. 29.] But let me answer you; or rather go and ask the first passengers you meet with (for it is a thing vulgarly known), and they are not interested in our disputes, let them tell you their observations about God's providence:

destruction? they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath.

31 Who shall declare his way to his face? and who shall repay him *what* he hath done?

32 Yet shall he be brought to the grave and shall remain in the tomb.

Ver. 30.] Which all agree in this, that the wicked is spared very often in a common calamity; though it be very general as well as terrible, yet many of them escape it.

Ver. 31.] Which makes the wicked so bold, that none dare reprove him: much less is he in danger of being punished for his offences, since God spares him, and man dreads him.

Ver. 32.] The pomp of his funeral is answerable to the splendour wherein he lived; and a stately monument is raised to preserve his me-

33 The clods of the valley shall be sweet unto him, and every man shall draw after him, as *there* are innumerable before him.

34 How then comfort ye me in vain, seeing in your answers there remaineth falsehood?

mory, and represent him as if he were still living.

Ver. 33.] There he lies quietly in the earth, and none disturbs his ashes: he suffers nothing but what all men shall do after him, as innumerable have done before him.

Ver. 34.] See then how ill you discharge the office of comforters, whose answers have so little truth in them. For you maintain that prosperity is the inseparable companion of piety; when every body can tell you, that none flourish more than the wicked, and that calamities are common to all mankind.

CHAPTER XXII.

ARGUMENT.—*Though Job had clearly stated the controversy in the foregoing chapter, yet Eliphaz would not yield; but begins the combat a third time without any ground at all, but a pure mistake, as I have expressed it in the first verse. And to avoid the reproof which had been given him, of repeating merely the same things: he now brings in a catalogue, though without any proof (so much was his anger and bitterness increased), of the particular sins, both against God and against his neighbour, of which he supposes Job to have been guilty. Else, he still boldly concludes, God would not have punished him with such severity; that there was not a greater instance of his indignation to be found anywhere; unless it was in the old world, and in Sodom. Yet he hath so much moderation, that he invites him at last to repentance, and promises him the happy fruit of it; as he had done in his first speech, but not in his second. Nay, he tells him, in conclusion, for his encouragement, that he should be able to do as much for a nation, as ten righteous men, could they have been found there, might have done for Sodom.*

1 THEN Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said,

2 Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself?

3 Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? or is it gain to him, that thou makest thy ways perfect?

4 Will he reprove thee for fear of him? will he enter with thee into judgment?

5 Is not thy wickedness great? and thine iniquities infinite?

6 For thou hast taken a pledge from thy bro-

ther for nought, and stripped the naked of their clothing.

7 Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink, and thou hast withholden bread from the hungry.

8 But as for the mighty man, he had the earth; and the honourable man dwelt in it.

9 Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless have been broken.

10 Therefore snares are round about thee, and sudden fear troubleth thee;

11 Or darkness, that thou canst not see; and abundance of waters cover thee.

CHAP. XXII.

Ver. 1.] Then Eliphaz, not being able to deny all this and yet not minding the scope of it (but imagining Job had accused the divine providence of injustice, in suffering the wicked to prosper and the righteous to be afflicted), grew very angry, and said,

Ver. 2.] Is God ever the better for anything that we do? because a wise man receives great benefit by his virtue, shall we think that God is a gainer by it too, and that he is bound to reward it?

Ver. 3.] Doth he, who needs nothing (being possessor of all things), desire thou shouldst be righteous for his own advantage? or will it turn to his profit, if thou livest never so unblameably?

Ver. 4.] Or, on the contrary, is he afraid thou shouldst hurt him by thy sins, and will therefore punish them? Is this the reason that he now afflicts thee, to prevent the damage they might do him?

Ver. 5.] Are not rather thy sins against God and against men so great and so numberless, that no other cause is to be sought of thy sore and multiplied punishments?

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Ver. 6.] For (to begin with those against man) thou hast been a tyrant, and exacted pawns of thine own kindred for little or nothing: and hath stripped even those of their garments, who had no more but just to cover their nakedness.

Ver. 7.] Thou hast been hard-hearted to the weary traveller, when thou sawest him ready to die with thirst or with hunger.

Ver. 8.] But as for the great and the powerful, all thy estate was at his service: if he brought the title to any land in question, he was sure to carry the cause by thy favour to him.

Ver. 9.] When at the same time, the poor widow and orphans (whose protection God hath in a special manner commended to us) could not obtain the favour of having justice done them; but were crushed and broken by thee, and had all the means of defending themselves taken from them.

Ver. 10.] Thou art guilty, sure enough, of some such sins as these, which are the cause that now thou art beset with these calamities, and most dreadful plagues have on a sudden confounded thee.

Ver. 11.] Oh! thy blindness; dost thou not yet

12 Is not God in the height of heaven? and behold the height of the stars, how high they are!

13 And thou sayest, How doth God know? can he judge through the dark cloud?

14 Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he seeth not; and he walketh in the circuit of heaven.

15 Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden?

16 Which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflowed with a flood:

17 Which said unto God, Depart from us: and what can the Almighty do for them?

18 Yet he filled their houses with good things: but the counsel of the wicked is far from me.

19 The righteous see it, and are glad: and the innocent laugh them to scorn.

20 Whereas our substance is not cut down, but the remnant of them the fire consumeth.

21 Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee.

see how God hath proportioned thy punishment to thy crimes? hath the depth of the afflictions wherein thou art plunged quite taken away all sense from thee?

Ver. 12.] Is not God above the heavens! behold, he is the head and governor of the stars, although they be so high; and therefore how shouldst thou think to escape his justice?

Ver. 13.] But, perhaps, thou fanciest (such is thy impiety against him, as well as cruelty to thy neighbour) that, because he is so high, he minds not what is done here below: or that he cannot discern the difference of things so very remote through such a mist as is between us.

Ver. 14.] He is wrapped, thou imaginest, in such thick clouds, that they obscure us from his sight: or he is confined to the heavens, and so busied in their affairs, that he hath no leisure to attend to ours.

Ver. 15.] But didst thou never observe, or hast thou forgotten, the course of the old atheistical world, who ran licentiously into all manner of wickedness?

Ver. 16.] To whom God therefore put a stop, by destroying them before their time, and carrying them quite away with the flood, when they thought themselves firmly settled in the earth;

Ver. 17.] And were saying (as thou wouldest have us believe the wicked now do, and yet prosper xxi. 14), We have nothing to do with God, nor he with us. Dost thou remember what God then did to them for their horrid ingratitude to him?

Ver. 18.] Who had filled their houses with all manner of good things: O, vile wretches! whose wicked thoughts I abhor as much as thou thyself (xxi. 16).

Ver. 19.] Whose overthrow Noah and his family beholding, rejoiced in God's righteous judgment: that innocent men derided their incredulity.

Ver. 20.] Whereas we, who believe God's care and providence, are untouched in our estates; when the relics of those impious men are devoured by fire from heaven.

22 Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thy heart.

23 If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles.

24 Then thou shalt lay up gold as dust, and the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks.

25 Yea, the Almighty shall be thy defence, and thou shalt have plenty of silver.

26 For then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God.

27 Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows.

28 Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee: and the light shall shine upon thy ways.

29 When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, There is lifting up; and he shall save the humble person.

30 He shall deliver the island of the innocent; and it is delivered by the pureness of thy hands.

Ver. 21.] Let me advise thee therefore (whom God hath not yet quite consumed) to join thyself to the society of the righteous, and to become like Noah: then be secure, and doubt not but by that means all happiness shall return to thee.

Ver. 22.] Do not refuse the instruction which such men give thee from God, but heartily embrace it, and faithfully preserve it to be the rule of thy life.

Ver. 23.] Thou shalt soon feel the comfortable fruits of it; for if thou return to the Almighty, who hath laid thee thus low, he will return to thee, and raise thee up as high as ever: he will pardon thine iniquity, and remove the punishment of it far from thee and thine.

Ver. 24.] Thou shalt recover all thy losses with usury; and no more value gold than the dirt on which it shall lie, nor the purest gold more than the pebbles in the brook.

Ver. 25.] Thou shalt be at no pains to secure thy vast heaps of gold and silver; because thy Almighty Restorer, who gave them to thee, will defend them better than the strongest fortresses, and be himself thy treasure.

Ver. 26.] For then thou shalt be so far from doubting of his care over thee, that thou shalt delight to think how he loves thee: thou shalt not be dejected any more, but confidently and cheerfully expect his blessing on thee.

Ver. 27.] Thou shalt ask nothing of him but thou shalt obtain it; and have abundant cause to be continually giving thanks to him for his bounteous goodness in fulfilling thy desires.

Ver. 28.] Thou shalt accomplish whatsoever thou designest, and all thy undertakings shall be prosperous.

Ver. 29.] Thou shalt pray to God also to lift up others who are in a low condition; and he shall grant thy petitions, by delivering him that is depressed.

Ver. 30.] Yea, a whole country shall owe its safety to thine innocence: it shall be delivered by thy pious prayers and blameless actions.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ARGUMENT.—To the foregoing discourse of Eliphaz, Job thought at first to make no answer, but only by complaints of their injustice, and fresh appeals to God: by whom he desires, more earnestly than ever, to be tried, being assured that he would acquit him. And though for the present God was not pleased to give him audience (of which he complains with too much passion), yet he maintains that hope, which began to appear in his soul (in his last discourse with Bildad, ch. xix.) that God would at last clear him from all the aspersions which were cast upon him.

1 THEN Job answered and said,
 2 Even to-day is my complaint bitter: my stroke is heavier than my groaning.
 3 Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!
 4 I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments.
 5 I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me.
 6 Will he plead against me with his great power? No; but he would put strength in me.
 7 There the righteous might dispute with him; so should I be delivered for ever from my judge.
 8 Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him:
 9 On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him:

10 But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

11 My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined.

12 Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.

13 But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth.

14 For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me: and many such things are with him.

15 Therefore am I troubled at his presence: when I consider, I am afraid of him.

16 For God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me.

17 Because I was not cut off before the darkness, neither hath he covered the darkness from my face.

CHAP. XXIII.

Ver. 1.] Then Job hearing his person thus defamed, and his discourse perverted, renewed his complaints, and said,

Ver. 2.] Still my just defence of myself, is judged to be rebellion against God: which renders my sufferings heavier than all my sighs and groans can express:

Ver. 3.] And makes me once more appeal to God, and wish I could be admitted into his presence (so free from the conscience of any guilt), and approach even to his judgment seat.

Ver. 4.] I would set before him the justice of my cause, and fill my mouth with confutations of your false accusations.

Ver. 5.] I would press to know his judgment of me, and diligently attend to the sentence which he would pass upon me.

Ver. 6.] Do you think he would make no other use of his absolute power than to oppress me? I cannot believe it; he would rather employ it to support me;

Ver. 7.] Till at his bar I had proved myself a righteous person, and been perfectly acquitted by him my righteous judge.

Ver. 8.] But all these, alas! are vain wishes; but which way soever I turn myself, whether to the east or to the west, I cannot see him appear to do me right.

Ver. 9.] He works and moves invisibly in all other quarters of the world; but I can discover nothing he does to clear my innocence.

Ver. 10.] My only comfort is, that though I can-

not know all his ways, yet he being everywhere, knows the whole course of my life: and when he hath proved me by these afflictions, as gold is by the fire, I doubt not, I shall be cleared from these imputations which you lay upon me.

Ver. 11.] I am sure I have ever followed his guidance, and so steadfastly observed his commandments, that no temptation hath made me swerve from them.

Ver. 12.] I have prevented the advice you give me (xxii. 22), having never done otherwise than he bade me, and laid up his words more carefully than my necessary provision for this life.

Ver. 13.] But for the present doth not at all move him to relieve me: he continues his purpose (whatever it may be), and none can alter it, no more than they can hinder the fulfilling of it.

Ver. 14.] For what he hath resolved to inflict upon me, that I find he will accomplish: and many such things as these he doth, of which he will not give us the reason.

Ver. 15.] This terrifies me when I reflect upon it, notwithstanding my innocence. I tremble at the thoughts of his absolute power and unsearchable wisdom, which may think fit still to continue these afflictions:

Ver. 16.] Which by the weight of them have broken my spirit, and made me so timorous, that I cannot but dread the danger I am in of suffering more from his almighty hand.

Ver. 17.] For still he keeps me alive under all these evils which I endure, and will not let me have the favour to die by that hand which strikes me so severely.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ARGUMENT.—Upon farther consideration, Job thought good again to confute their rash assertion, about the plagues which always befall the wicked, by an induction of particulars that prove the contrary. Among which the wild Arabs, he tells them, are a notorious instance; whose profession is rapine, and yet they thrive and prosper in it (ver. 5, &c.). And so do the more civilized oppressors, of whom he says something before, and again ver. 11, 12, where he seems to reflect upon hard landlords, and griping merchants and traffickers in cities; to whom he adds murderers, adulterers, pirates, with several other wicked villains (in the conclusion of the chapter), who notwithstanding die like other men, and are not called to an account for their enormous crimes in this present world.

1 WHY, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know him not see his days?

2 Some remove the landmarks; they violently take away flocks, and feed thereof.

3 They drive away the ass of the fatherless, they take the widow's ox for a pledge.

4 They turn the needy out of the way: the poor of the earth hide themselves together.

5 Behold, as wild asses in the desert, go they forth to their work; rising betimes for a prey: the wilderness yieldeth food for them and for their children.

6 They reap every one his corn in the field: and they gather the vintage of the wicked.

7 They cause the naked to lodge without clothing, that they have no covering in the cold.

8 They are wet with the showers of the moun-

tains, and embrace the rock for want of a shelter.

9 They pluck the fatherless from the breast, and take a pledge of the poor.

10 They cause him to go naked without clothing, and they take away the sheaf from the hungry;

11 Which make oil within their walls, and tread their wine-presses, and suffer thirst.

12 Men groan from out of the city, and the soul of the wounded crieth out: yet God layeth not folly to them.

13 They are of those that rebel against the light; they know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof.

14 The murderer rising with the light killeth the poor and needy, and in the night is as a thief.

15 The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me: and disguiseth his face.

CHAP. XXIV.

Ver. 1.] But to answer a little what you have so often asserted: if punishments from the Almighty be so apparent and visible upon the wicked, why do not they who are truly pious see the public and open judgments?

Ver. 2.] Especially when the wickedness of some of them is so notorious, that they violate all known rights; seizing on the lands of their neighbours, taking away their cattle, and (not content with that) owning it when they have none, by putting them openly into their pastures?

Ver. 3.] If a poor fatherless child have an ass left him to carry his burdens, they drive it away on some pretence or other; and have no more mercy than to take of the widow, for the security of her debt, the only ox she hath wherewith to plough her ground.

Ver. 4.] They offer abuses to helpless people upon the highway, so that the meaner sort dare not appear for fear of their insolence or their violence.

Ver. 5.] And you shall see others of them, who (making pillage their trade) leave the cities and towns, and go to skulk in forests and desert places; where, becoming wild and savage, they live on rapine and spoil; in which they are so diligent, that those wildernesses (where they neither plough nor sow) maintain their families.

Ver. 6.] For they make inroads out of those woods into the neighbouring fields and vineyards, and thence wickedly carry away the corn and the grapes, never regarding who is the owner of them.

Ver. 7.] They spare not the poor reapers and vintagers; but, stripping them to their very skin, leave them never a rag to defend them from the cold, when they go to rest after their wearisome labours.

Ver. 8.] They are exposed (poor wretches!) to the injury of the weather, as they lie asleep at the foot of mountains: they have not whither to run, but into

caves and holes of rocks; where they endeavour to shroud themselves, when they see a tempest coming.

Ver. 9.] Nay, the persons of men are not safe from the violence of these outlaws; but they snatch away young children from their mother's breast, and carry away the poor (pretending they owe them something) to make them their slaves.

Ver. 10.] Whom when they have stolen, they will not allow so much as clothes to cover their nakedness, nor let him that is ready to starve eat of the sheaf which he hath gleaned.

Ver. 11.] They cause these miserable creatures to press out their oil and their wine in their cellars; but let them not taste a drop, though they be ready to die with thirst.

Ver. 12.] Whole cities groan under the oppression of some or other of these wicked men, and cry out like those that are dying of their wounds: and yet God, who knows all this, doth not make them examples of his displeasure, nor can we tell when he will punish them for their injustice and cruelty.

Ver. 13.] The world would be very empty, if he should destroy all such persons; for besides these open there are more secret sinners, who look upon the light as their enemy: they dare not be seen in the day-time; or if they be espied, they presently seek to hide themselves, that they may not be discovered.

Ver. 14.] The murderer, for instance, rises before the sun to kill those whose poverty calls them up to early labour; and then, lurking all day in the close thickets and woods, he turns robber, and rifles rich men's houses in the night.

Ver. 15.] The adulterer also, whose eye hath let unlawful love into his heart, waits for the dusk of the evening to favour his lewd desire: then he hopes nobody he meets withal will know him; but lest they should, he wraps his face in his cloak to prevent discovery.

16 In the dark they dig through houses, *which* they had marked for themselves in the day-time: they know not the light.

17 For the morning *is* to them even as the shadow of death: if *one* know *them*, *they are* in the terrors of the shadow of death.

18 He *is* as swift as the waters; their portion is cursed in the earth: he beholdeth not the way of the vineyards.

19 Drought and heat consume the snow waters: *so doth* the grave *those which* have sinned.

20 The womb shall forget him; the worm shall feed sweetly on him; he shall be no more remem-

Ver. 16.] And when all are at rest, he will dig through the walls of houses, if there be no other way to come at the adulteress: the assignment was made between them in the day-time, and the place then marked out, at which he may most easily enter; but it is the night which brings them together to act the works of darkness.

Ver. 17.] These are their delight, and if they chance to sleep too long together, and the morning surprise them, they are ready to die with fear; if any one know them, they are in the very agonies of death.

Ver. 18.] To this wicked crew you may add the pirate, who robs upon the sea, and runs from one little creek to another in swift ships: which brings him in so much riches, that he despises the employment of those who till the earth and plant vineyards, as poor and unprofitable.

Ver. 19.] And yet all these, after they have spent their life in such horrid villainies, do not die of lingering and tormenting diseases; but go down to the grave as easily as snow-water sinks into the dry ground when it is melted by the sun.

Ver. 20.] God sets no such mark of his displeasure upon him, but that his mother may soon forget him: the hand of justice doth not hang him on a gibbet for the birds to feed on; but he is carried to his grave

bered; and wickedness shall be broken as a tree.

21 He evil entreateth the barren *that* beareth not: and doeth not good to the widow.

22 He draweth also the mighty with his power: he riseth up, and no *man* is sure of life.

23 *Though* it be given him *to be* in safety, whereon he resteth; yet his eyes *are* upon their ways.

24 They are exalted for a little while, but are gone and brought low; they are taken out of the way as all *other*, and cut off as the tops of the ears of corn.

25 And if *it be* not so now, who will make me a liar, and make my speech nothing worth?

like other men, to be the sweet food of worms. There he lies quietly, and neither he nor his wickedness are any more remembered than a tree which is broken all to shivers.

Ver. 21.] This is true even of him who, to hide his villany, kills the child in the womb of her whom he hath deflowered; and when he hath abused a poor widow, makes her no satisfaction.

Ver. 22.] The greatest persons are not able to stand before him: when he riseth up to assassinate, there is no man, be he never so strong, is sure of his life.

Ver. 23.] Though he give you his hand, and promise you security so solemnly, that you think you may rely upon him, yet he watches all occasions, and lies in wait secretly to do you mischief.

Ver. 24.] Thus these impious men flourish, and are lifted up above all other; and then they depart the world without any punishment: they are laid down and shut up in their graves like all other men; nay, they die as easily (without those tedious pains which some endure) as the top of an ear of corn is cropped with your hand.

Ver. 25.] All this I know to be so true, that I challenge all the world to disprove me: I am sure it is not in any man's power to show that my discourse is frivolous.

CHAPTER XXV.

ARGUMENT.—*The foregoing discourse of Job, in the twenty-fourth chapter, was so undeniable, that Bildad begins to break off the dispute. For he says not a word to it, but only advises him to speak more reverently of the majesty of God, than he imagined he had done in his appeal to him (ch. xxiii.).*

1 THEN answered Bildad the Shubite, and said,

2 Dominion and fear *are* with him, he maketh peace in his high places.

3 Is there any number of his armies? and upon whom doth not his light arise?

4 How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean *that is* born of a woman?

5 Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight.

6 How much less man, *that is* a worm? and the son of man, *which is* a worm?

CHAP. XXV.

Ver. 1.] Then Bildad (whose turn it was to speak), being unable to refute what Job had said, only desired him in a few words, to beware how he reflected upon the justice of God, or imagined himself to be just if he examined him. The words were these:

Ver. 2.] Take heed what thou sayest of God, the sovereign of the world, who ought to be worshipped by thee with the most awful reverence; as he is in the heavenly places, where they never rebel against his orders.

Ver. 3.] Hath he not innumerable troops of angels and other creatures, all ready to execute his pleasure?

And where is the man that is out of the verge of his all-overspreading providence?

Ver. 4.] Why then doth such a pitiful wretch as he talk of his righteousness before this glorious majesty? He forgets sure the condition of his birth, who pretends to purity in his sight.

Ver. 5.] Let a man lift up his eyes as high as the moon; nay, look as far as the sun, and the stars of heaven, he shall find that they have their spots; nay, in his presence, have no lustre at all.

Ver. 6.] What can be expected then from miserable man or his posterity; who, being full of corruption whilst they live, can be nothing but rotteness when they are dead?

CHAPTER XXVI.

ARGUMENT.—*Job, hearing Bildad wander so far from the business, derides his grave affectation of wisdom; and tells him, that though he talked as if he thought himself fit to be a coadjutor to God Almighty, yet, as his discourse was impertinent, so it was but mean and flat, in comparison with what he was able to speak himself, concerning the omnipotent wisdom of God: which he sets forth in a far more lively manner.*

- 1 BUT Job answered and said,
 2 How hast thou helped *him that is* without power? how savest thou the arm *that hath* no strength?
 3 How hast thou counselled *him that hath* no wisdom? and *how* hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is?
 4 To whom hast thou uttered words? and whose spirit came from thee?
 5 Dead *things* are formed from under the waters, and the inhabitants thereof.
 6 Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering.
 7 He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing.

CHAP. XXVI.

Ver. 1.] To this Job replied almost as briefly; saying,

Ver. 2.] O wonderful advocate! how excellently hast thou defended him who hath no need of thy help! dost thou think to do the Almighty any service by such discourses?

Ver. 3.] What admirable advice wouldest thou give him in his government of the world, if he would admit thee to be his counsellor, who imaginest, no doubt, thou aboundest with wisdom, and hast hit the very mark!

Ver. 4.] Dost thou think me ignorant of such things as these? or canst thou pretend to any extraordinary inspiration concerning them?

Ver. 5.] I know as well as thou canst inform me the power of God; which appears, not only in the heavens (to which thou biddest me look), but even in the lowest parts of the earth: where vast giant-like creatures are formed under the water, whose inhabitants are innumerable.

Ver. 6.] Nor is his knowledge, I am sensible, less than his power; but penetrates into the greatest depths: the very dead, who are quite removed out of our sight, being perfectly visible unto him.

Ver. 7.] Who by his wonderful power and wisdom stretches out the whole world from one pole to the other, which he alone sustains; as he doth this globe of earth hanging in the air, without anything to support it.

8 He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds; and the cloud is not rent under them.

9 He holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it.

10 He hath compassed the waters with bounds, until the day and night come to an end.

11 The pillars of heaven tremble and are astonished at his reproof.

12 He divideth the sea with his power, and by his understanding he smiteth through the proud.

13 By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked serpent.

14 Lo, these *are* parts of his ways: but how little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his power who can understand?

Ver. 8.] It is he who binds up the fluid waters, as it were in bags, and keeps them a long time hanging in the clouds: through which they do not burst all at once, but distil by drops to moisten the earth in due season.

Ver. 9.] These clouds he spreads before the glorious face of heaven, to restrain the beams of the sun from scorching the earth.

Ver. 10.] He hath enclosed the waters of the sea in shores: and so exactly compassed them about, that as long as the world lasts they shall not be able (be they never so furious) to exceed those bounds, but shall break all their rage against them into froth.

Ver. 11.] And yet the highest mountains, which look as if they were the pillars and supporters of the heavens, quake and tremble, when he thunders and lightens upon them.

Ver. 12.] By his power he raises a tempest, which makes great furrows in the sea, and divideth, as it were, one part of it from another: and (such is his wisdom) he knows how to appease it again, and depress its proud waves into the dearest calm.

Ver. 13.] Finally, by his wise contrivance the heavens were adorned, and made thus beautiful, as we behold them: his power made the milky way (and other celestial signs), whose windings are so admirable.

Ver. 14.] And yet these are but very small parcels of his works: for, alas! it is very little that such as we can comprehend of him; but the utmost force of his power is past all understanding.

CHAPTER XXVII.

ARGUMENT.—*As Bildad began to decline the dispute, so Zophar quite gives it over: either looking upon Job as incurably obstinate, or (as we might more charitably conceive, were it not for what we read xxxii. 1), being convinced he had more reason on his side. Whose silence so raised the spirit of Job, that he now triumphs over his opponents: as the word mashal, which we render parable, may denote. For it signifies among the Hebrews an elegant ingenious kind of speech; excelling, and as it were, domineering over all other, in its pithiness, or neatness, or some other rare quality. Such is the following discourse of Job, which begins (in this chapter) with a vehement protestation that he would never desert his plea; nor yield to their doctrine, that a remarkable vengeance always attends upon wickedness in this world: though he grants, and largely here asserts, that sometimes there doth.*

1 **MOREOVER** Job continued his parable, and said,

2 As God liveth, *who* hath taken away my judgment; and the Almighty, *who* hath vexed my soul;

3 All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils;

4 My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit.

5 God forbid that I should justify you: till I die, I will not remove mine integrity from me.

6 My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.

7 Let mine enemy be as the wicked, and he that riseth up against me as the unrighteous.

8 For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?

9 Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him?

10 Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?

11 I will teach you by the hand of God: *that* which is with the Almighty will I not conceal.

12 Behold, all ye yourselves have seen it; why then are ye thus altogether vain?

13 This is the portion of a wicked man with God, and the heritage of oppressors, *which* they shall receive of the Almighty.

14 If his children be multiplied, *it is* for the sword: and his offspring shall not be satisfied with bread.

15 Those that remain of him shall be buried in death: and his widows shall not weep.

16 Though he heap up silver as the dust, and prepare raiment as the clay;

17 He may prepare it, but the just shall put it on, and the innocent shall divide the silver.

18 He buildeth his house as a moth, and as a booth *that* the keeper maketh.

19 The rich man shall lie down, but he shall not be gathered: he openeth his eyes and he is not.

20 Terrors take hold on him as waters, a tempest stealeth him away in the night.

21 The east wind carrieth him away, and he departeth: and as a storm hurleth him out of his place.

CHAP. XXVII.

Ver. 1.] After Job had made some pause, and Zophar (whose turn it was now to speak) had nothing at all to reply, he proceeded with greater eloquence than ever to assert his innocence; saying,

Ver. 2.] I protest by the eternal God, who, for the present, will not judge my cause; by the omnipotent Lord of the world, who hath loaded me with so many afflictions, that they have taken away all the pleasure of life from me:

Ver. 3.] I protest, I say, that as long as I have breath in my body, and he shall enable me to speak a word,

Ver. 4.] My tongue shall be the faithful interpreter of my heart, and I will never speak otherwise than I think.

Ver. 5.] Therefore never hope I will yield to your opinion, which I know to be false: no, I abhor the thought of it, and will sooner die than confess the guilt you charge me withal.

Ver. 6.] You shall never extort that from me, but I will resolutely maintain my righteousness, and not be persuaded by any reasons to desert its defence: my conscience doth not hitherto accuse me, and it shall never upbraid me hereafter, for betraying mine innocence.

Ver. 7.] And let me tell you, he that sets himself against me, and would have me thought wicked, shall be found so himself in the end: I say again, he shall prove himself unrighteous sooner than me;

Ver. 8.] Who knows very well it is madness for a man to counterfeit piety when he hath none: for though he may get riches by that pretence while he lives, yet what hope hath he when he dies?

Ver. 9.] Nay, before that, when any calamity comes upon him, will God give any regard to the cries of one who regarded him so little?

Ver. 10.] Or will he himself have the confidence to go to God, and expect any comfort from him? will he not rather despond in such a case, and cease to call upon him?

Ver. 11.] Do not disdain to learn of me, and I will

make you understand what God doth with the wicked; and discover to you some of the secrets of his Almighty providence.

Ver. 12.] Behold, there is not one of you but hath by his own experience found what I am about to say to be certainly true; and yet, such is your vanity, you will defend an ungrounded opinion.

Ver. 13.] I grant that a wicked man (but not all wicked men, as you maintain) doth sometimes receive such punishment from God as he deserves: which might make other tyrannical oppressors fear to meet with the same vengeance.

Ver. 14.] We have seen, for instance, his numerous posterity fall by the sword of justice or war, or by the fury of a popular tumult: and they who escaped, were reserved to perish with cruel hunger;

Ver. 15.] Or else with such pestilential diseases, that none would adventure to bury them, nor did their widows survive to lament them.

Ver. 16.] So that if he have treasured up such heaps of riches, that he values silver no more than dust, nor costly apparel and furniture than the mire of the street:

Ver. 17.] He shall have only the trouble of gathering them together, but none of his shall enjoy them: God shall translate all these treasures to another family, who shall do more good with them.

Ver. 18.] He builds a goodly fabric, out of which he is as easily shaken as a moth out of a garment: and it shall not be more durable than the booth, which is made for him that keeps the fruits of a garden.

Ver. 19.] And when he dieth, he shall have no monument made for him: nay, while he lives, it so falls out, that he looks about him, and sees that every body hath deserted him.

Ver. 20.] Innumerable terrors then break in upon him, and surprise him like an inundation of waters; the divine vengeance, like a violent tempest, unexpectedly hurries him away.

Ver. 21.] Some pestilent vapour blasts him irrecoverably; and as certainly kills him, as a whirlwind hurls things out of their place.

22 For God shall cast upon him, and not spare : he would fain flee out of his hand.

Ver. 22.] Our God shall send some other mischiefs so fast upon him (without any pity to him, who had none for others), that all the attempts shall be in vain which he makes to escape the vengeance.

23 Men shall clap their hands at him, and shall hiss him out of his place.

Ver. 23.] At which the beholders shall rejoice, and applaud God's righteous judgment (which I confess he sometimes executes) : they shall hiss at his name when he is dead, in that very place where he hath been so much magnified.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ARGUMENT.—*The connexion of this chapter with the foregoing, I hope I have truly expressed in the first verse. And that being found, it is not difficult to see at what it drives ; viz. to stop the busy inquiry of mankind, who are very wise, he shows, in other things, but have not wit enough to comprehend the reasons why God doth not inflict those punishments upon all wicked men which fall upon some. It is not needful to set down here how this argument is managed (with such admirable elegance of words, and such weightiness of matter, as make it deserve the name of mashal, parable, or proverb), because it will sufficiently appear in the paraphrase.*

1 SURELY there is a vein for the silver, and a place for gold where they find it.

2 Iron is taken out of the earth, and brass is molten out of the stone.

3 He setteth an end to darkness, and searcheth out all perfection : the stones of darkness, and the shadow of death.

4 The flood breaketh out from the inhabitant ; even the waters forgotten of the foot : they are dried up, they are gone away from men.

5 As for the earth, out of it cometh bread : and under it is turned up as it were fire.

6 The stones of it are the place of sapphires : and it hath dust of gold.

7 There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen :

8 The lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it.

9 He putteth forth his hand upon the rock ; he overturneth the mountains by the roots.

10 He cutteth out rivers among the rocks ; and his eye seeth every precious thing.

11 He bindeth the floods from overflowing ; and the thing that is hid bringeth he forth to light.

12 But where shall wisdom be found ? and where is the place of understanding ?

13 Man knoweth not the price thereof ; neither is it found in the land of the living.

14 The depth saith, It is not in me : and the sea saith, It is not with me.

15 It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof.

16 It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire.

17 The gold and the crystal cannot equal it :

CHAP. XXVIII.

Ver. 1.] You would have me give a reason, perhaps, why God punishes some wicked men and not all : but the wit and industry of mankind, which have discovered mines of silver and gold, must not think to find out this secret, which God hath reserved to himself.

Ver. 2.] They invent means to extract iron and brass out of the earth and out of stone.

Ver. 3.] There is no mine so dismally dark, but there some man or other sets things in order for his work ; he searches to the very bottom of it, and finds out those stones which lie in the most abstruse and hidden parts of the earth.

Ver. 4.] A flood breaks out from some neighbouring place, and disturbs the miners (for the waters seem as if they would stagnate there, and never stir a foot) : but by the hard labour of man they are drained, and leave the place dry again.

Ver. 5.] Out of the surface of the earth he gets herbs and corn for his food and sustenance, and underneath it he finds lime and brimstone, and such-like fiery stuff for other uses.

Ver. 6.] He goes into countries whose stones are the place where sapphires are lodged, and whose dust to him is as good as gold.

Ver. 7.] He treads in paths which no bird of prey knoweth, which the most quick-sighted among them hath never seen.

Ver. 8.] Where the wildest beasts, who search for solitary places, never made their den, or so much as

approached, no, not the ravenous lions, whose hunger leads them everywhere to seek satisfaction.

Ver. 9.] He digs through the hardest rocks by his obstinate labour, and undermines mountains, that he may find the treasure hid in their bowels.

Ver. 10.] And if he meet with waters which hinder his work, he cuts a channel through the rock to convey them away, and never rests till he hath discovered everything that may require his indefatigable pains.

Ver. 11.] Nay, more than this, he stops the course of rivers, and leaves not a drop remaining, that he may bring to light all that is hidden in the bottom of them.

Ver. 12.] But though he be so successful in these searches, he must not think to comprehend the reasons of wise providence. He may study as long as he pleases, and weary himself with busy inquiries, but never be able with all his labour to dive into the bottom of this secret, why God doth not punish all the wicked who so insolently contemn him.

Ver. 13.] Alas ! this wisdom is not to be purchased with all that wretched man hath to give for it : it is not a thing that any part of this world affords.

Ver. 14.] The miners, poor souls, dig they never so deep, are never like to come within the reach of it ; nor is it to be fetched by the mariner from any of those countries to which he sails.

Ver. 15.] All the gold and silver that men have heaped up by such long toil and labour, are too inconsiderable a price to be offered for it.

Ver. 16.] Though it be the purest gold which comes from Ophir, together with all the precious

and the exchange of it *shall not be for* jewels of fine gold.

18 No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls: for the price of wisdom is above rubies.

19 The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold.

20 Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding?

21 Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air.

22 Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears.

stones wherewith that rich country abounds, they are of so little value,

Ver. 17.] That if you should add the gold and the crystal which are brought from other places, with all the vessels made by the art of man of the most refined and massy gold, they could do nothing to obtain it.

Ver. 18.] The precious stones which are fetched out of the mountains of the east are not worthy to be named with it: men may dive into the sea, and fetch up pearls, but this wisdom lies a great deal deeper.

Ver. 19.] The Arabian topaz, which is so much esteemed for its wonderful lustre, doth not come near it; nor are all the golden ornaments, which they wear in those parts, proportionable to it.

Ver. 20.] By what means then shall we get this wisdom of which we are desirous? Who can show us where it lies, that we may go and search for it?

Ver. 21.] We may ask this question as often as we please, but none can resolve us; for it is concealed from all men living; the most soaring wits were never able to disclose it.

Ver. 22.] Death is the best informer, and the grave where we may learn something of it. But this is all that they can tell us (which is as far short of a full account as a rumour is from a certain knowledge), that they will shortly make all men equal, and then it will be of no great moment, whether we have been happy or miserable.

23 God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof.

24 For he looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven;

25 To make the weight for the winds; and he weigheth the waters by measure.

26 When he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder:

27 Then did he see it, and declare it; he prepared it, yea, and searched it out.

28 And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.

Ver. 23.] None but God understands the way and method of his own providence: he alone knows the place of that wisdom we inquire after, which is nowhere else but in his own mind.

Ver. 24.] For who should govern the world but he, whose understanding is infinite, and sees the motions of all creatures, from one end of it to the other?

Ver. 25.] Which he hath set in such exact order, and given to them such just measures, that the wind cannot blow, nor the water flow, but in those proportions which he hath prescribed.

Ver. 26.] To the like laws he hath bound the rain, and appointed the course which the thundering cloud shall take.

Ver. 27.] And when he ordered all these things, he was pleased in the wisdom which he saw in his works; he made it visible and apparent; he fixed it therefore, and made these laws perpetual; because after all the search that could be made, he found no fault in it.

Ver. 28.] And making man at the same time, he imprinted this sense upon his heart, that he ought to be a humble adorer, not a censurer, of his secret wisdom, whereby he governs the world. For the highest wisdom and skill that man can attain, is to be possessed with such a religious fear of the great Lord of all, as not to dare to do anything which he knows will displease him.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ARGUMENT.—*To such discourses as these, Job presumes his friends would have given greater attention than it seems they did, had not the vileness of his present condition made his speeches also contemptible. And therefore he puts them in mind with what reverence all his orations were formerly received, by great and small; wishing God would restore to him those happy days: and inserting all along so remarkable instances of his integrity (especially as a judge), in the height of his princely prosperity, when he had an uncontrollable power to do as he pleased, and yet not abused it; but employed it constantly for the defence and comfort of the meanest people in his province.*

1 MOREOVER Job continued his parable, and said,

2 Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me;

3 When his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness;

4 As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle;

CHAP. XXIX.

Ver. 1.] Here Job made another pause, to see if his friends would return any answer: but they continuing silent, he proceeded in his eloquent vindication of himself, saying,

Ver. 2.] Oh that God would re-establish me in that happy condition, wherein, some time ago, I was a principal part of his care! you would then give a greater regard to my words than you do now in my misfortune:

Ver. 3.] Which hath left me nothing but only wishes, that he would restore me those pleasant days when I saw nothing but continued tokens of his favour, by which I passed untouched through all the inconveniences and troubles of this life.

Ver. 4.] Oh, the flourishing season of that prosperous estate! would it were possible to recall the felicity of those days, when the divine providence treated me so kindly, and all my answers were held for oracles:

5 When the Almighty *was* yet with me, *when* my children *were* about me ;

6 When I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil ;

7 When I went out to the gate through the city, *when* I prepared my seat in the street !

8 The young men saw me, and hid themselves : and the aged arose, and stood up.

9 The princes refrained talking, and laid *their* hand on their mouth.

10 The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth.

11 When the ear heard *me*, then it blessed me ; and when the eye saw *me*, it gave witness to me :

12 Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and *him that had* none to help him.

13 The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me : and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.

14 I put on righteousness, and it clothed me : my judgment *was* as a robe and a diadem.

15 I was eyes to the blind, and feet *was* I to the lame.

Ver. 5.] When the Almighty goodness had not ceased to be gracious to me ; but I saw myself surrounded with my children and servants, waiting to know my pleasure :

Ver. 6.] When my lands were so fertile, and were blessed with such plenty, as if the rivers had flowed with butter and oil :

Ver. 7.] When I went in state to the court of judgment, and sat on the bench in the open place, where the people are wont to have their causes heard.

Ver. 8.] And the youth, seeing me appear, were seized with such fear, that they durst not look me in the face ; and the aged no sooner perceived me, but they rose up from their seats, and, in token of reverence, stood in my presence.

Ver. 9.] Immediately ensued a general silence, the princes themselves breaking off their discourses, and not taking the liberty to speak a word.

Ver. 10.] The nobles and great commanders could not have heard me with greater attention and stillness, if they had quite lost their voices, or their tongues had been tied to the roof of their mouths.

Ver. 11.] And (so far was I from being a tyrant, as you have accused me, xxii. 5, 6), there was no ear heard the sentence I gave but prized my integrity ; no eye saw me after I had spoken, but you might have beheld therein the respect and honour which they all bare me.

Ver. 12.] Because I never failed to ease the poor when he complained of his oppressions ; the fatherless, and such as had none to take their parts, ever found me their defender.

Ver. 13.] I had his prayer for my prosperity, whose life and estate I preserved when he was in danger of utter undoing : and I made the sorrowful widow such a joyful woman, that she openly proclaimed my praise.

Ver. 14.] For in the morning I put on a resolution to do justly, together with my clothes, and I never swerved from it all the day after : but looked upon the righteous sentence which I pronounced as a greater ornament than the purple robe on my shoulder, and the diadem upon my head.

Ver. 15.] I instructed him who did not well understand his own business, and assisted him who wanted means to carry on his cause.

16 I *was* a father to the poor : and the cause *which* I knew not, I searched out.

17 And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth.

18 Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply *my* days as the sand.

19 My root *was* spread out by the waters, and the dew lay all night upon my branch.

20 My glory *was* fresh in me, and my bow was renewed in my hand.

21 Unto me *men* gave ear, and waited, and kept silence at my counsel.

22 After my words they spake not again ; and my speech dropped upon them.

23 And they waited for me as for the rain ; and they opened their mouth wide *as* for the latter rain.

23 *If* I laughed on them, they believed *it* not ; and the light of my countenance they cast not down.

25 I chose out their way, and sat chief, and dwelt as a king in the army, as one *that* comforteth the mourners.

Ver. 16.] For the poor I had such a paternal affection, that it made me his advocate as well as his judge : and I never left studying his cause (when there was an obscurity in it) till I had cleared the business, and done him right.

Ver. 17.] By which means I disabled the unjust to oppress them, and forced them to restore that which they had violently extorted from them.

Ver. 18.] And having done so many virtuous actions, and being in such high authority, I was apt to promise myself, that, after an exceeding long and happy life, I should die quietly in mine own house among my children and friends.

Ver. 19.] For, being like a tree, whose root spreadeth out itself by the waters, and whose boughs are perpetually moistened by the sweet dew of heaven, I thought I should never wither.

Ver. 20.] My esteem and reputation increased every day, and grew greater ; and so did my power, to defend the authority and dignity I had obtained.

Ver. 21.] Though there was no need I should so employ it ; for when I spake all men gave me the greatest attention, and my words were a law to them.

Ver. 22.] Which, when I had uttered, no man contradicted, or so much as corrected, but it sweetly instilled itself, and sunk into their hearts.

Ver. 23.] For they expected my opinion with the same eager desire that the husbandman doth the showers, after he hath sown his seed ; they gaped for it as the thirsty earth doth for the latter rain, to plump the corn.

Ver. 24.] The reverence they bare me was so great, that when I laid aside my gravity, and jested with them, they would not believe it, but still took all I said to be serious ; and whatsoever pleasantness I used with them, it did not diminish my authority among them.

Ver. 25.] But if I went to visit them, they still preserved their respect to me, and gave me the pre-eminence. And, as my condescension to them did not make them less honour me, so their submission to me did not make me less familiar with them ; for when I sat as a king, guarded with many troops of followers, I comforted the meanest, and would not suffer them to be dejected.

CHAPTER XXX.

ARGUMENT.—From the foregoing account of his ancient splendour, he takes occasion to annex a no less elegant description of the vilestness of his present condition. Hoping that the consideration of such a prodigious change (which he represents in several particulars, and not without some touches still upon his integrity), might at last move his hard-hearted friends to some compassion towards him; especially, when they saw how near he was to his grave, notwithstanding all his prayers to God for relief.

1 BUT now they that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdain'd to set with the dogs of my flock.

2 Yea, whereto might the strength of their hands profit me, in whom old age was perished?

3 For want and famine they were solitary; fleeing into the wilderness in former time desolate and waste.

4 Who cut up mallows by the bushes, and juniper roots for their meat.

5 They were driven forth from among men, (they cried after them as *after* a thief;)

6 To dwell in the cliffs of the valleys, in caves of the earth, and in the rocks.

7 Among the bushes they brayed; under the nettles they were gathered together.

8 They were children of fools, yea, children of base men: they were viler than the earth.

9 And now am I their song, yea, I am their byword.

10 They abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face.

11 Because he hath loosed my cord, and afflicted me, they have also let loose the bridle before me.

12 Upon my right hand rise the youth; they push away my feet, and they raise up against me the ways of their destruction.

13 They mar my path, they set forward my calamity, they have no helper.

14 They came upon me as a wide breaking in of waters: in the desolation they rolled themselves upon me.

15 Terrors are turned upon me: they pursue my soul as the wind: and my welfare passeth away as a cloud.

16 And now my soul is poured out upon me; the days of affliction have taken hold upon me.

17 My bones are pierced in me in the night season: and my sinews take no rest.

18 By the great force of my disease is my garment changed: it bindeth me about as the collar of my coat.

CHAP. XXX.

Ver. 1.] But now, alas! there is so sad an alteration, that the youths, who durst not look me in the face, have the confidence to mock and jeer me; even those youths, whose fathers were so mean, that I disdain'd to employ them in the vilest service.

Ver. 2.] Men whom, if I had had a mind to employ, were fit for nothing; being so lazy, listless, and unable to do any business, that it was in vain to call them to it.

Ver. 3.] Beggary fellows, who, being ready to starve, were ashamed to be seen; and sneaked into desert places to hide their poverty: it is but yesterday that they were most wretchedly miserable;

Ver. 4.] Satisfying their hunger with those unsavoury herbs, which they cut up in the salt marshes; and having no other bread but the roots of juniper-trees.

Ver. 5.] They were driven from the society of men; and if ever they appeared, an outcry was raised against them, as there is against a thief when he is discovered.

Ver. 6.] They had no other habitation, but the clefts which the brooks sometimes make in the valleys; or the caves which they found in other parts of the earth, or in the rocks.

Ver. 7.] Their sighs might be heard, like the braying of asses, among the thorn-bushes; they lurked together under nettles or thistles:

Ver. 8.] Being lewd villains, the children of obscure parents; viler than the earth upon which they trod.

Ver. 9.] And I now am become their pastime: they have made songs of my calamity; and it is the common entertainment to discourse of my misery.

Ver. 10.] They express an abhorrence of me; and, as vile as they are, will not come near me; or if

they do, it is only to show their extreme contempt of me.

Ver. 11.] God, they see, hath scattered all my estate, and, by sore afflictions, laid me very low; which hath made them forget all respect to me, and take an unrestrained license in their insolent behaviour towards me.

Ver. 12.] They set up the very boys to accuse me; they push me down, and then trample on me. I am become the beaten path, as I may call myself, of their pernicious reproaches.

Ver. 13.] They so disturb my thoughts, that I know not what course to take in this miserable condition: which they heighten by their calumnies; and are so fruitful in them, that they need none to help to invent them.

Ver. 14.] They assault me with such a fury as soldiers do their enemies, when they have made a wide breach in the wall of a besieged city, and pour in all their forces to destroy them.

Ver. 15.] This dismal change hath fearfully astonished me; to see all my wishes and hopes dispersed like the wind, and all the happiness I possessed pass'd away as swiftly as a cloud.

Ver. 16.] I can do nothing now but melt into tears; my very soul is ready to faint away with grief, when I think how those joyful days are gone, and what distresses have seized on me, and come to take their place.

Ver. 17.] In the night (when sleep is wont to bury our grief) I feel such sharp pains, as penetrate through my very bones; my blood boils so violently in my veins, that I can take no rest.

Ver. 18.] It requires a great deal of strength, when I would shift my clothes, to pull them off; my outward garment, by the filthy matter of my sores, being glued as fast to me, as the collar of my shirt.

19 He hath cast me into the mire, and I am become like dust and ashes.

20 I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me : I stand up, and thou regardest me *not*.

21 Thou art become cruel to me : with thy strong hand thou opposest thyself against me.

22 Thou liftest me up to the wind ; thou causest me to ride *upon it*, and dissolvest my substance.

23 For I know *that* thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.

24 Howbeit he will not stretch out *his* hand to the grave, though they cry in his destruction.

Ver. 19.] I look as if I had been thrown into the dirt : there is little difference between me and dust and ashes.

Ver. 20.] And, which is saddest of all, I call upon thee, O God, but cannot prevail with thee to relieve me ; I continue praying and waiting for thy help, and thou sufficiently understandest my miserable case.

Ver. 21.] But thy former kindness to me is turned into such severity, that it looks like cruelty : thou hast given me such deadly blows, as if thou hatedst me.

Ver. 22.] Thou didst lift me up on high, and madest me as it were, to ride upon the clouds ; but hast thrown me down with so much the sorer fall, which hath broken me all in pieces.

Ver. 23.] So that I can think of nothing but dying, and going to my grave ; the common sanctuary of all mankind.

Ver. 24.] Whither thy afflicting hand will not pursue me : for, though men cry when they are sent thither, yet when they are there, all their sufferings and complaints are ended.

Ver. 25.] Strange that I should be thus punished without any mercy ! was I wont to be so unmerciful

25 Did not I weep for him that was in trouble ? was *not* my soul grieved for the poor ?

26 When I looked for good, then evil came *unto me* : and when I waited for light, there came darkness.

27 My bowels boiled, and rested not : the days of affliction prevented me.

28 I went mourning without the sun : I stood up, and I cried in the congregation.

29 I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls.

30 My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burned with heat.

31 My harp also is *turned* to mourning, and my organ unto the voice of them that weep.

to others ? No, I never looked upon men under any hardship without tears ; and was so sensibly touched with the miseries of the poor, that I ever relieved them.

Ver. 26.] Which gave me good hope that I should be very happy : but, instead thereof, the saddest afflictions and troubles are befallen me.

Ver. 27.] Which have so suddenly surprised me, that they have put me into the greatest commotion and disorder : my bowels boil without the least intermission.

Ver. 28.] My affliction is so constant, without any glimpse of joy, that I am a perpetual mourner ; and am not able to lie still, nor to refrain from shrieks and cries in the greatest assemblies.

Ver. 29.] I can do nothing but lament myself, as if I were one of those mournful creatures which make such doleful noises in desert places.

Ver. 30.] The boiling heat of my body hath so parched me, that my skin looks black ; and the marrow in my bones, and all my vital moisture, is dried up.

Ver. 31.] And to say no more, all mirth is banished my house, the musical instruments are laid aside, and nothing but mourning and weeping come in their room.

CHAPTER XXXI.

ARGUMENT.—It was possible his friends might make quite another use than Job intended of the relation he had made of his miserable condition, in the chapter foregoing : and therefore, lest it should harden them in their old error, and they should take what he had said to be an argument of his guilt, he gives in this chapter a large and particular account of his integrity, which in general he had so often asserted ; laying his very soul, and the most secret inclinations of it open before them : together with the actions of his whole life, in his private capacity (for of his public he had spoken before, ch. xxix.), both in respect of his neighbours, of all sorts, and in respect of God : to whom he again most solemnly appeals, in the conclusion of this discourse, that he did not boast of more virtues than he had : but would most gladly be tried before him, by some impartial judge. I need not here enumerate his virtues, because they are plainly and distinctly expressed in the paraphrase : and I do not pretend to give the entire contents, but the design only, of each chapter.

I I MADE a covenant with mine eyes ; why then should I think upon a maid ?

2 For what portion of God is *there* from above ? and *what* inheritance of the Almighty from on high ?

CHAP. XXXI.

Ver. 1.] But do not, I beseech you, any longer look upon these sufferings as an argument that I am not innocent ; for I protest to you, I have been very resolute, and careful to avoid even the occasions of lasciviousness : and therefore how should I ever so much as deliberate to corrupt a virgin ?

Ver. 2.] For I know there is a God in Heaven, au

3 Is not destruction to the wicked ? and a strange *punishment* to the workers of iniquity ?

4 Doth not he see my ways, and count all my steps ?

almighty being, who rules over all : and what could I expect from him, as the reward of such impurity ?

Ver. 3.] Doth it not lead to destruction ? nay, do not strange and horrible punishments fall upon the workers of that iniquity ?

Ver. 4.] Is it possible to commit it so secretly that it shall not be known by him, who observes every motion, and tells every step I take ?

5 If I have walked with vanity, or if my foot hath hasted to deceit ;

6 Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity.

7 If my step hath turned out of the way, and my heart walked after mine eyes, and if any blot hath cleaved to my hands ;

8 Then let me sow, and let another eat ; yea, let my offspring be rooted out.

9 If my heart have been deceived by a woman, or if I have laid wait at my neighbour's door ;

10 Then let my wife grind unto another, and let others bow down upon her.

11 For this is a heinous crime ; yea, it is an iniquity to be punished by the judges.

12 For it is a fire that consumeth to destruction, and would root out all mine increase.

13 If I did despise the cause of my manservant or of my maid-servant, when they contended with me ;

14 What then shall I do when God riseth up ? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him ?

15 Did not he that made me in the womb make him ? and did not one fashion us in the womb ?

16 If I have withheld the poor from their de-

sire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail ;

17 Or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof ;

18 (For from my youth he was brought up with me, as with a father, and I have guided her from my mother's womb ;)

19 If I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering ;

20 If his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep ;

21 If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw my help in the gate :

22 Then let mine arm fall from my shoulder blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone.

23 For destruction from God was a terror to me, and by reason of his highness I could not endure.

24 If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, *Thou art my confidence ;*

25 If I rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because my hand had gotten much ;

26 If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness ;

27 And my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand :

Ver. 5.] If I have broken my promises, or have been forward to deceive and cheat my neighbour :

Ver. 6.] I refuse not to be tried : but rather desire my actions may be scrupulously weighed and examined ; for God, I am sure, will approve of my upright dealing.

Ver. 7.] If I have turned aside from the rules of justice for fear or favour ; if I have coveted the goods of other men, or my hands have taken any bribes :

Ver. 8.] Let me be served in my kind, and let other men eat the corn which I have sowed, and pluck up the trees (roots and all) which I have planted.

Ver. 9.] If my heart hath been seduced to filthy desires after another man's wife ; if I have watched for his absence, or some fair opportunity to enter into his house and defile his bed ;

Ver. 10.] Then let others take away my wife from me, and make her the vilest slave, whom they may use at their pleasure.

Ver. 11.] I ever thought this a crime of the highest nature, an iniquity to be corrected by the severity of the public justice.

Ver. 12.] For it is a fire, which, if it be not extinguished, consumes men and their estates ; yea, destroys whole families and kingdoms ; and so incenses the divine displeasure, that, should it escape the magistrates' punishment, I could never hope that anything of mine (were I guilty of it) should thrive, but all come to utter ruin.

Ver. 13.] So far was I from doing such foul injuries to my neighbours, that I never extended my power to the oppression of my slaves : but was content to waive the privilege the law gave me, of using them as I pleased ; and to allow them a fair hearing when they had any difference with me.

Ver. 14.] For I thought with myself, that though men could not punish me for my rigour towards them, yet I should never be able to excuse it to God when he came to judge me ; nor tell what to answer when he called me to an account for my ill usage of them.

Ver. 15.] I often also called to mind that there was no such a difference in our estates as there was an equality in our births : and that we having one common creator, my slave was as nearly related to God as myself.

Ver. 16.] Nor have the poor any reason to complain of me : for if I ever denied to satisfy their desire, or let the widow in vain expect my relief ;

Ver. 17.] Or have sitten down at my table alone, without the company of fatherless children :

Ver. 18.] (For whom I have always had a natural compassion from my very youth ; I brought it into the world with me, and it hath been my companion ever since.)

Ver. 19.] If I have suffered any to perish for want of clothing, or let the poor go naked without a covering ;

Ver. 20.] If his loins did not admonish him to bless me as oft as he girded on his garment, and he were not kept warm with the cloth made of my wool :

Ver. 21.] If I have ever beaten the fatherless, because I knew I should be too strong for him in the court, in case he complained there of the injustice ;

Ver. 22.] Then let that guilty arm fall off from my shoulder, or be broken in two in the midst.

Ver. 23.] For I never thought I could escape the divine vengeance ; the dread of which affrighted me, when men could not, from all such insolence ; for I knew I could not support myself against his majesty :

Ver. 24.] Whose favour I do not desire, if I have put my trust in riches, and thought myself safe and secure, because I was furnished with the noblest treasures :

Ver. 25.] Or, if I was vainly elevated and puffed up with the large possessions left me by my ancestors, or with the great increase I had made to them by my own industry.

Ver. 26.] If when I beheld the sun arise, or the moon appear in her full lustre,

Ver. 27.] I ever entertained an opinion in my mind that they were gods, or kissed my hand in token of worship and reverence to them :

28 This also *were* an iniquity to be punished by the judge: for I should have denied the God that is above.

29 If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him:

30 Neither have I suffered my mouth to sin by wishing a curse to his soul.

31 If the men of my tabernacle said not, Oh that we had of his flesh! we cannot be satisfied.

32 The stranger did not lodge in the street: but I opened my doors to the traveller.

33 If I covered my transgression as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom:

34 Did I fear a great multitude, or did the contempt of families terrify me, that I kept silence, and went not out of the door?

Ver. 28.] This also *were* a fearful crime, which God's vicegerents should punish; because it were to put those stars in the place of him who is above all heavens.

Ver. 29.] Whom I do not wish to be my friend, if I ever was glad at the ruin of mine enemy, or insulted over him, when any mischief befell him:

Ver. 30.] (No, I was not so much as guilty of making any imprecations against him, nor was provoked by his malice to wish him dead:)

Ver. 31.] Though the people of my family were so enraged at him, that, if I would have yielded to their passion, they were ready to eat him up with an insatiable anger:

Ver. 32.] (Much less was I guilty of unkindness to strangers, whom I never suffered to lodge in the streets: for the door of my house stood open, that any traveller might turn in there if he pleased:)

Ver. 33.] If I have studied to seem better than I am, and have not now made a free confession; but, like our first parent, have concealed or excused my faults, and out of self-love have hidden mine iniquity:

Ver. 34.] (Because I dread what the people will say of me, or am terrified by the contempt into which the knowledge of my guilt may bring me with the

35 Oh that one would hear me! behold, my desire is, that the Almighty would answer me, and that mine adversary had written a book.

36 Surely I would take it upon my shoulder, and bind it as a crown to me.

37 I would declare unto him the number of my steps; as a prince would I go near unto him.

38 If my land cry against me, or that the furrows likewise thereof complain;

39 If I have eaten the fruits thereof without money, or have caused the owners thereof to lose their life:

40 Let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley. The words of Job are ended.

neighbouring families: then I am content my mouth should be stopped, and that I never stir out of my door any more.

Ver. 35.] Oh that the truth of all this might be examined by some equal judge! Behold, I continue still to desire of God this favour; and let him that can excuse me, bring in his libel in writing against me.

Ver. 36.] Surely I would not endeavour to obscure it, but openly expose it to be read by all; nay, wear it as a singular ornament, which would turn to my honour, when the world saw it disproved.

Ver. 37.] I myself would assist him to draw up his charge, by declaring to him freely every action of my life: I would approach him as undauntedly as a prince, who is assured of the goodness of his cause:

Ver. 38.] For if so much as a bit of my land was unjustly gotten, or I have defrauded those who ploughed it of their wages;

Ver. 39.] If I have taken the fruits of it from my tenants, and paid nothing for them; or let them such hard bargains, that it broke their heart:

Ver. 40.] Then let corn never grow there any more; but let it be overrun with thistles and the most stinking weeds.

Here Job ended his defence.

CHAPTER XXXII.

ARGUMENT.—It appears by the fifteenth verse of this chapter, that there were several other persons present besides those that are named, when this dispute was held between Job and his three friends. Among whom there was a young man named Elihu; and who was either a Syrian (in which language this book was first written, and translated by Moses into Hebrew, says the author of the commentaries under Origen's name), descended from the second son of Nahor, Abraham's brother, Gen. xxii. 20, or an Idumean, of the same country with Eliphaz the Temanite, Jer. xxv. 23. I have made him a Syrian in my paraphrase, because he is said to be of the kindred of Ram; by whom we are to understand either Aram, or as the Hebrews think, Abraham, by whom such wisdom and piety might be promoted in his brother's family, as is apparent in Elihu; who, though much inferior to the rest in years, (for which reason he had held his peace thus long), yet was much superior to them in knowledge. Which he discovers in the judicious censures he here passes, not only upon the three friends, but upon Job himself: whom he hath nothing to charge withal, relating to any crime committed before this affliction befell him: but thinks he had not managed the dispute about it with so much calmness and submission to God, as became his piety. In this he differs from those that spake before him: for I do not find that he blames him for any miscarriages, but those only which he observed in the heat of his disputation: and he spends his time rather in justifying God, than in carping at Job, as the other had done.

I So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.

CHAP. XXXII.

Ver. 1.] And his three friends also left off disputing with him, because they saw him immovably fixed in the opinion of his innocence.

Ver. 2.] Which very much displeased a young

2 Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram:

man, who had stood by all this time, and heard what both sides said for themselves. His name was Elihu, descended from a brother of Abraham; who was exceeding angry with Job, because he spent more time in justifying himself than in justifying God;

against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God.

3 Also against his three friends was his wrath kindled, because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job.

4 Now Elihu had waited till Job had spoken, because they were elder than he.

5 When Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these three men, then his wrath was kindled.

6 And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said, I am young, and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not shew you mine opinion.

7 I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom.

8 But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.

9 Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment.

10 Therefore I said, Hearken to me; I also will shew mine opinion.

11 Behold, I waited for your words; I gave ear to your reasons, whilst ye searched out what to say.

Ver. 3.] And with his three friends also, because they were not able to maintain their charge against Job, and yet had condemned him to be a wicked hypocrite.

Ver. 4.] Yet he moderated his passion so discreetly, that he said not a word, till he had waited, as well as Job, to see whether they would resume the debate: because it was not fit, he thought, for him to meddle, as long as his elders had anything to say.

Ver. 5.] But when he saw that none of the three offered to reply, but sat as men that knew not what to say, he was not able to hold his peace any longer.

Ver. 6.] But in this manner addressed himself unto them, saying, I have considered all this while mine own youth, and your aged experience, which have deterred me so much, that I have hitherto been afraid to interpose my opinion.

Ver. 7.] I thought with myself, that it was becoming one of my small standing to hear, rather than to speak; and to learn wisdom in such grave company as yours, rather than pretend to teach it.

Ver. 8.] But I see I was mistaken: man is a very wretched thing, though he live never so long, if God do not illuminate him. It is the divine inspiration which gives understanding.

Ver. 9.] They are not always the wisest who are in authority, and the teachers of others: nor do old men always so well employ their years as to understand the difference of things.

Ver. 10.] Therefore let me entreat you to lend your ears a little to me: I also will tell you what I think about this matter.

Ver. 11.] Do not think me too forward; for I have with great patience heard all your discourses, and observed your arguments; and let you proceed till you have searched as far as you could into the business:

Ver. 12.] And having duly considered and comprehended every word, I must needs pronounce, that there is none of you hath confuted Job, nor said any-

12 Yea, I attended unto you, and, behold, there was none of you that convinced Job, or that answered his words:

13 Lest ye should say, We have found out wisdom: God thrusteth him down, not man.

14 Now he hath not directed his words against me: neither will I answer him with your speeches:

15 They were amazed, they answered no more: they left off speaking.

16 When I had waited, (for they spake not, but stood still, and answered no more:)

17 I said, I will answer also my part, I also will shew mine opinion.

18 For I am full of matter, the spirit within me constraineth me.

19 Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles.

20 I will speak, that I may be refreshed: I will open my lips and answer.

21 Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man.

22 For I know not to give flattering titles; in so doing my maker would soon take me away.

thing to the purpose in answer to his defence of himself.

Ver. 13.] For it is not sufficient for you to say he is obstinate, and therefore it is wisely done of us to leave him to God: he shall confound him, by continuing his affliction; not we by our arguments.

Ver. 14.] Which truly are so weak, that I shall make no use of them; but, as Job hath directed none of his words against me, so I shall trouble him with none of your replies.

Ver. 15.] See, I beseech you all, you that hear us, how these disputants are amazed; how silent they are, as if their speech had forsaken them.

Ver. 16.] You are my witnesses, that I have waited for satisfaction: but after long expectation they bring forth nothing; they are at a stand, and furnished with no further answer.

Ver. 17.] Which made me resolve within myself, that I would have a share in this dispute; and show, as I have often told you, what my opinion is concerning it.

Ver. 18.] And indeed it is high time; for I am so full, by long thinking of what I have to say, that I am in pain till I have uttered my mind.

Ver. 19.] My thoughts work within me, like new wine in a vessel: and we are both alike in danger to burst, unless there be a vent.

Ver. 20.] I must speak, therefore, if it be but to ease myself: I will open my lips, as they do such vessels, and make an answer, because I cannot with safety hold my peace any longer.

Ver. 21.] And, I beseech you, let me speak with all freedom; with regard only to the cause, and not to the person: and do not expect that I should compliment, and give to man any glorious titles.

Ver. 22.] For I do not understand that art of soothing men into a great opinion of themselves: or if I did, I should not venture to use it; lest he that made me should presently stop my mouth for not dealing plainly.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ARGUMENT.—Here Elihu addresses his speech to Job alone (for he rejected all that the three friends had said, as sufficiently confuted by Job in his dispute with them), and tells him, first, that he was the man who would now plead with him in God's behalf (as he had often desired), and that he was no equal match for him. And then begins to reprehend those passages which he thought were blameable in Job's speeches; particularly his insisting so much upon his integrity: which, though true, should not have been mentioned without due acknowledgment, that the Sovereign of the world had done him no wrong in thus afflicting him; and that it was not fit for him to question the wisdom and justice of God's providence, because he did not understand it. For the care of God over man, and his kindness to him, he shows, are so apparent, upon so many scores, that they ought not to be denied because of the unaccountable afflictions that may befall us; which we ought rather to think are one of the ways whereby he dath man good.

1 WHEREFORE, Job, I pray thee, hear my speeches, and hearken to all my words.

2 Behold, now I have opened my mouth, my tongue hath spoken in my mouth.

3 My words shall be of the uprightness of my heart; and my lips shall utter knowledge clearly.

4 The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.

5 If thou canst answer me, set thy words in order before me, stand up.

6 Behold, I am according to thy wish in God's stead: I also am formed out of the clay.

7 Behold, my terror shall not make thee afraid, neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee.

8 Surely thou hast spoken in my hearing, and I have heard the voice of thy words, saying,

9 I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there any iniquity in me.

10 Behold, he findeth occasions against me, he counteth me for his enemy.

11 He putteth my feet in the stocks, he marketh all my paths.

12 Behold, in this thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than man.

13 Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters.

14 For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not.

15 In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed;

16 Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction.

17 That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.

18 He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword.

CHAP. XXXIII.

Ver. 1.] And truly I think I need not use any farther preface to persuade thee, O Job, to hear my discourse, and to give an attentive ear to all I have to say.

Ver. 2.] Behold, now I begin; the words are upon my tongue, if thou art ready to receive them.

Ver. 3.] And I assure thee they shall be the unfeigned language of my heart, which it shall not be hard for thee to understand; for the instructions they give thee shall be clearly and perspicuously delivered.

Ver. 4.] And first of all consider, that I am no other creature than what thou art; a man whom the power of God hath formed, and then inspired with life.

Ver. 5.] Thou needest not therefore decline the encounter; but if thou art able to answer, set thy forces in order against me, and stand up to oppose me.

Ver. 6.] Thou hast formerly desired (ix. 33. xiii. 3), that somebody would appear in God's stead, to reason the case with thee: behold, thou hast thy wish; I am the man that appears for him, who am made of the same matter with thyself.

Ver. 7.] Look upon me, the combat is not unequal (as thou complainedst when thou lookedst upon God, ix. 34. xiii. 21), thou seest no dreadful majesty in me to affright thee, nor any power to oppress thee.

Ver. 8.] I do not accuse thee neither, as thy three friends have done, of crimes uncertain or unknown, but of what I myself, with mine own ears, have heard thee utter.

Ver. 9.] For surely thou hast said more than once (x. 7. xiii. 23. xvi. 17. &c. xxxi.), I am pure and without any fault, in my heart and in my actions, both towards God and towards man.

Ver. 10.] Behold, he who I thought would have vindicated my innocence, seeks for occasions to fall out with me, and for slight matters declares himself mine enemy.

Ver. 11.] Whom he keeps so fast in prison, that I cannot stir, and watches so narrowly, that I can find no way to escape.

Ver. 12.] This is thy complaining language, and mark what I say to thee: though I cannot accuse thee, as thy friends have done, of other sins, yet in this thou dost offend; and I must reprehend thee for it, by remembering thee, that there is no comparison between God and man.

Ver. 13.] And therefore, why dost thou presume to dispute with him, and call him to an account for his actions, who will not reveal to us all the secrets of his providence?

Ver. 14.] Not that God envies knowledge to us, for he teaches man more ways than one, and a great deal more than he takes care to learn.

Ver. 15.] One way is by a dream (which you may call a night vision), when men fall into a deep sleep, or lie on their beds between sleeping and waking.

Ver. 16.] Then (when their minds are free from the business and cares of the day) he secretly whispers instruction in their ears, and imprints it upon their minds.

Ver. 17.] Not to make them understand, indeed, all the secret reasons of his providence, but to turn man from his evil way, and to dispose him with all humility to submit himself to his heavenly instructor.

Ver. 18.] Who by this means mercifully preserves him (if he obey his admonition) from running on to his own destruction, and rescues him from the violent death which the sword of justice, or of an enemy, would have inflicted on him.

19 He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain :

20 So that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat.

21 His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen ; and his bones that were not seen stick out.

22 Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers.

23 If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness :

24 Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit : I have found a ransom.

25 His flesh shall be fresher than a child's : he shall return to the days of his youth :

26 He shall pray unto God, and he will be fa-

vourable unto him : and he shall see his face with joy : for he will render unto man his righteousness.

27 He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not ;

28 He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light.

29 Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man.

30 To bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living.

31 Mark well, O Job, hearken unto me : hold thy peace, and I will speak.

32 If thou hast any thing to say, answer me : speak, for I desire to justify thee.

33 If not, hearken unto me : hold thy peace, and I shall teach thee wisdom.

Ver. 19.] Another way (and more common than this by dreams) is the painful diseases wherewith he chastises man, and lays him low on his bed, though his constitution of body be never so firm and strong.

Ver. 20.] In which languishing state he loathes his food ; yea, nauseates that very meat which formerly was his greatest delight.

Ver. 21.] Which makes so great a change in him, that his flesh, which formerly appeared plump and fair, cannot be seen ; and his bones stick out, which formerly did not appear.

Ver. 22.] There is but a step between him and his grave ; the pangs of death being ready to seize on him.

Ver. 23.] If then (which is a third way whereby God teaches men) there come a divine messenger unto him, a rare person that can expound the mind of God, and persuade the sick man to repent and amend his life :

Ver. 24.] He shall beseech God to be gracious to him, saying, Spare him, good Lord, and rescue him from going down to the grave ; let it satisfy thee that thou hast corrected him, and that I have found him a penitent.

Ver. 25.] Presently the sick man shall begin to recover, and become a new man in his body as well as in his mind : his flesh shall look as fresh as when he was a child ; and he shall be restored to the vigour and strength of his youthful age.

Ver. 26.] His prayer also shall be acceptable to God, and prevail for the blessings he asks ; he shall

go into the house of God, and with the most joyful voice give thanks unto him and praise his goodness ; who will then acquit him, and restore this poor man to his favour.

Ver. 27.] And he (as becomes a true penitent), casting his eyes upon his neighbours, shall openly confess and say, I have offended God, and he hath justly chastised me ; I have done wickedly, and he hath punished me according to my desert :

Ver. 28.] But hath redeemed me from that death into which I was going : and not only made me live, but given me hope that I shall enjoy prosperous days.

Ver. 29.] Behold, in all this, the wonderful goodness of God ; who by so many means very often admonishes man :

Ver. 30.] To reduce him from those evil courses which had just brought him to his grave, and to raise him up again to live in all true happiness and pleasure.

Ver. 31.] Mark this well, O Job, for it may very much concern thee : consider what I have said ; and if thou pleasest to hear me patiently, I will still instruct thee more fully.

Ver. 32.] Or if thou hast anything to object to what I have said, I am willing to hear it : speak before I go any further ; for I heartily desire that thou mayest clear thyself, and appear a righteous person.

Ver. 33.] If thou hast no exception against my discourse, then continue thy attentions, and silently listen to me, and I will teach thee more wisdom.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

ARGUMENT.—Here Job shows himself a far more humble and teachable person than his three friends ; for though Elihu had invited him to make what exceptions he pleased to his discourse in the former chapter, he would not open his mouth, because he plainly saw that Elihu had hit upon the thing wherein he was defective. And so this young man proceeds to carry the charge a little higher, and tells him, with more sharpness than before, that there were some words in his discourses which sounded in his ears as if he accused God's justice and goodness. For what else did he mean when he complained that God did not do him right, and that he destroyed alike both good and bad ? which rash assertions he overthrows, from the consideration of the sovereign dominion, power, righteousness, and wisdom of God ; and represents to him what behaviour and discourse would have better become him than that which he had used.

1 FURTHERMORE Elihu answered and said,

CHAP. XXXIV.

Ver. 1.] To this last motion Job consented ; and replying never a word, Elihu proceeded in his discourse, and said,

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2 Hear my words, O ye wise men ; and give ear unto me, ye that have knowledge.

Ver. 2.] I do not desire to be judge alone in this cause, but I appeal to them that are wise ; and beseech all those (among you that hear me) who are intelligent, to mark and consider what I now deliver.

3 For the ear trieth words, as the mouth tasteth meat.

4 Let us choose to us judgment : let us know among ourselves what *is* good.

5 For Job hath said, I am righteous : and God hath taken away my judgment.

6 Should I lie against my right ? my wound *is* incurable without transgression.

7 What man *is* like Job, *who* drinketh up scorning like water ?

8 Which goeth in company with the workers of iniquity, and walketh with wicked men.

9 For he hath said, It profiteth a man nothing that he should delight himself with God.

10 Therefore hearken unto me, ye men of understanding : far be it from God, *that he should do* wickedness ; and *from* the Almighty, *that he should commit* iniquity.

11 For the work of a man shall he render unto him, and cause every man to find according to *his* ways.

12 Yea, surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment.

13 Who hath given him a charge over the earth ? or who hath disposed the whole world ?

14 If he set his heart upon man, *if* he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath ;

15 All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.

16 If now *thou hast* understanding, hear this : hearken to the voice of my words.

17 Shall even he that hateth right govern ? and wilt thou condemn him that is most just ?

18 *Is it fit* to say to a king, *Thou art* wicked ? and to princes, *Ye are* ungodly ?

19 *How much less* to him that accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor ? for they all *are* the work of his hands.

20 In a moment shall they die, and the people shall be troubled at midnight, and pass away : and the mighty shall be taken away without hand.

21 For his eyes *are* upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings.

22 *There is* no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.

23 For he will not lay upon man more *than right* ; that he should enter into judgment with God.

Ver. 3.] You can discern whether it be true or false ; for the mind is as proper a judge of discourse, as the palate is of meat.

Ver. 4.] Let us agree to examine the business, that we may be able to pronounce a righteous judgment : let us debate among ourselves, and resolve whether Job have a good cause or not.

Ver. 5.] For he hath said, I am innocent ; and God (who knows I do not deserve to suffer in this manner, xxvii. 2. 6), will not do me right :

Ver. 6.] I scorn to defend myself with lies ; but I must still maintain, that this deadly wound is given me for no crime of mine.

Ver. 7.] Did you ever know such a man as Job, who instead of adoring the Almighty (as becomes his wisdom and piety), takes the liberty to pour out abundance of contemptuous language concerning his judgments ?

Ver. 8.] He associates himself with evil-doers ; and talks after the same rate that the wicked are wont to do.

Ver. 9.] For he seems to me to be of this opinion, that though a man study to please God, he shall get nothing by it (ix. 22).

Ver. 10.] What think you of this, ye men of wisdom ? Do you not abhor such a thought as much as I, that he who is almighty should wrong any man, and he who is all-sufficient should swerve from the rule of righteousness ?

Ver. 11.] He will never be charged with such weakness, but always deals with men according as they deserve : for he that doth well never fails to find a reward ; and he that doth ill meets with a just punishment.

Ver. 12.] Surely I need not fear to affirm this with the greatest confidence, that the supreme judge of the world will never condemn an innocent person ; nor will he that possesses all things be corrupted to pronounce an unrighteous sentence.

Ver. 13.] For he did not receive the government of the world from any above himself ; nor is there any higher being whose authority he may be thought to dread, and for fear of whom he may be tempted to do unjustly.

Ver. 14.] No, he made and he sustains all creatures ; so that if he should contain his goodness within himself, and recall that spirit and life which he hath infused into them ;

Ver. 15.] Nothing could subsist one moment : but all mankind would expire together, and return unto their dust.

Ver. 16.] If thou art wise, mind what I say ; and consider also what follows :

Ver. 17.] Can he be an enemy to justice himself, who binds us so fast to the practice of it ? and wilt thou condemn his actions, who is most powerful, as well as just ; and therefore need not serve himself by any wrongful dealing ?

Ver. 18.] There is no king on earth but looks upon it as a great and insufferable reproach to be called a tyrant ; nor will inferior rulers endure you should say that they have no regard to equity.

Ver. 19.] Shall we impute then any such thing to him, before whom a prince or a rich man is no more than the meanest and poorest persons ? who shall have the same justice from him with the greatest, because they are all alike the work of his hands.

Ver. 20.] How should he stand in awe of the power of kings, or be bribed with the gifts of the rich, who can strike them all dead in a moment ? Whole nations tremble before him, and in their deepest security are destroyed. He needs not the help of any force on earth to put down a mighty tyrant ; but invisible powers carry him away.

Ver. 21.] For there is no passage of man's life but he is acquainted with it : and therefore cannot be suspected through ignorance of their actions (no more than through fear of their persons), to overlook their crimes, or to do them any injustice.

Ver. 22.] They may seek to hide their wickedness, when they have committed it ; and may make excuses and subtle pretences : but they cannot east a mist before his eyes, who sees into the thickest darkness, and the deepest secrets.

Ver. 23.] And therefore as he will never charge man with that of which he is not guilty ; so, when he calls him to an account, he will not delay, nor put off his judgment, to hear what man can say for himself.

24 He shall break in pieces mighty men without number, and set others in their stead.

25 Therefore he knoweth their works, and he overturneth *them* in the night, so that they are destroyed.

26 He striketh them as wicked men in the open sight of others ;

27 Because they turned back from him, and would not consider any of his ways :

28 So that they cause the cry of the poor to come unto him, and he heareth the cry of the afflicted.

29 When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble ? and when he hideth *his* face, who then can behold him ? whether *it be done* against a nation, or against a man only :

30 That the hypocrite reign not, lest the people be ensnared.

Ver. 24.] For he needs not be informed how matters stand ; and therefore breaks in pieces mighty men, without inquiry or examination of witnesses against them, and confers their dignity upon others.

Ver. 25.] And by this means shows that he knows their works ; when he so suddenly overturns them, that they are crushed in pieces.

Ver. 26.] He punishes them as men that in his eyes are apparently wicked ; and therefore makes them public examples for the terror of their neighbours ;

Ver. 27.] Because they would not follow his counsels, nor regard any of his commands :

Ver. 28.] But went on in their oppression of the poor, till they cried to heaven for vengeance upon them : and the cry of such afflicted people God never fails to answer.

Ver. 29.] And if he will grant such poor wretches rest and ease, who can disturb them ? or if he be angry with their oppressor, who can show him favour ? (which is as true of whole nations, as one single person).

Ver. 30.] He will not let the wicked tyrant reign always, though he pretend piety and the public good never so much, lest the people should be ensnared into sin by his example.

Ver. 31.] Wherefore it is best for an afflicted person not to complain, but to suspect himself (though he be never so good), and presently to say to God, I

31 Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne *chastisement*, I will not offend *any more* :

32 *That which* I see not teach thou me : if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.

33 *Should it be* according to thy mind ? he will recompense it, whether thou refuse, or whether thou choose ; and not I : therefore speak what thou knowest.

34 Let men of understanding tell me, and let a wise man hearken unto me.

35 Job hath spoken without knowledge, and his words *were* without wisdom.

36 My desire *is that* Job may be tried unto the end because of *his* answers for wicked men.

37 For he addeth rebellion unto his sin, he clappeth *his hands* among us, and multiplieth his words against God.

confess this suffering is just ; I will not offend by pleading my innocence.

Ver. 32.] If I have overlooked anything that I should have observed, do thou show it me ; if I have committed any fault, I will take care to do so no more.

Ver. 33.] Hast thou addressed thyself to God in this manner ? Answer that question ; for God will recompense it, if thou dost despise such good counsel ; which perhaps thou wilt choose to do, but so would not I. Speak therefore what thy opinion is.

Ver. 34.] Or let any understanding persons tell us what is their opinion ; for such as I said before, would I have to judge between us.

Ver. 35.] Job seems to be very much mistaken ; and his discourses to be inconsiderate and without reason.

Ver. 36.] And therefore I am so far from wishing he may be presently released from his afflictions, that I take it to be more desirable he should be still tried and proved by them, till he recant the answers in which he hath complained of divine providence, after the manner of wicked men.

Ver. 37.] For otherwise he will add greater offences to those lesser he hath already committed : he will defend what he hath inconsiderately spoken ; nay, triumph, as if he had got the better of us ; and, instead of making the confession to which I have exhorted him, continue to multiply his complaints against God.

CHAPTER XXXV.

ARGUMENT.—*Job still keeps silence, notwithstanding that Elihu had made the harshest construction of his words ; because he was sensible he meant him well, and had now, in the conclusion of his discourse, given him very wholesome counsel ; and, allowing his integrity, had only charged him with some unhappy expressions, which had fallen from him when he was in great anguish of spirit. Which, I suppose, was the reason he doth not contradict him, though he continue here in this chapter to fasten the very same harsh sense upon his words, ver. 2, 3, which he refutes from the consideration of the infinite disproportion there is between man and God : who is never the worse, indeed, for any evil, nor at all the better for any good that we do ; and yet hath such a love to mankind, that it is certain he would not have them miserable, but takes care for their relief when they are oppressed, if they address themselves, as they ought, to him.*

1 ELIHU spake moreover, and said,
2 Thinkest thou this to be right, *that* thou saidst, My righteousness is more than God's ?

CHAP. XXXV.

Ver. 1.] To this Job making no answer, Elihu pressed him again, and said,

3 For thou saidst, What advantage will it be unto thee ? *and*, What profit shall I have, *if I be cleansed* from my sin ?

Ver. 2.] Let me appeal to thy own conscience : Dost thou think this to be right, that thou saidst God is not so righteous as I am !

Ver. 3.] What else could be thy meaning, when

4 I will answer thee, and thy companions with thee.

5 Look unto the heavens, and see; and behold the clouds *which* are higher than thou.

6 If thou sinnest, what doest thou against him? or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto him?

7 If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thy hand?

8 Thy wickedness *may hurt* a man as thou art; and thy righteousness *may profit* the son of man.

9 By reason of the multitude of oppressions they make *the oppressed* to cry: they cry out by reason of the arm of the mighty.

10 But none saith, Where *is* God my maker, who giveth songs in the night:

thou utterest such words as these, What doth God care whether I be innocent or not? or what benefit shall I have by it if I be?

Ver. 4.] I will answer thee, and such as thou art, in a few words.

Ver. 5.] Cast up thine eyes to the heavens, look upon the clouds and the sky, and consider, that as high as they are they are not so much above thee as God is above them.

Ver. 6.] And therefore it is true, that he is never the worse for the sins which thou hast committed, nor will be the worse, though thou should proceed to commit more and greater:

Ver. 7.] And that he is never the better for thy being righteous, which can confer nothing upon him, which he hath not already, nor add anything to his greatness.

Ver. 8.] But thou shouldst not conclude from thence, that it is all one whether a man be good or bad: for thy wickedness will prove hurtful to thyself and to the rest of mankind; and thy righteousness will do thee and them great service.

Ver. 9.] The cries of the oppressed tell us what mischief injustice doth, and how miserable it makes them: the tyranny of the mighty forces them to cry aloud to God for vengeance; who, though he be not hurt himself by it, is touched with a sense of their affliction.

Ver. 10.] The greatest mischief is, that not one of these miserable wretches inquires seriously after God, who gave him his being; and is able therefore not

11 Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven?

12 There they cry, but none giveth answer, because of the pride of evil men.

13 Surely God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it.

14 Although thou sayest thou shalt not see him, yet judgment *is* before him; therefore trust thou in him.

15 But now, because *it is* not so, he hath visited in his anger; yet he knoweth *it* not in great extremity:

16 Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vain; he multiplieth words without knowledge.

only to relieve him, but to comfort, yea, to fill him with joy in the midst of the saddest affliction.

Ver. 11.] Having endued us with reason and wisdom to consider, that he, who takes care of the beasts and the birds, will not neglect us, if we do not merely cry and groan under our oppressions (as those brute creatures do); but, with hearty repentance, and a thankful sense of his benefits, and humble confidence in his goodness, piously address ourselves unto him.

Ver. 12.] This is the reason that God doth not deliver them; because they lie crying, indeed, under their afflictions; but it is not a sense of him, but only the haughty violence of their oppressors, which extorts it from them.

Ver. 13.] For we must not think that God (though he be inclined to relieve the afflicted) will give ear to men so void of piety: he will not regard those who have so little regard to him; even for this reason, because he stands in need of nobody.

Ver. 14.] Therefore, although thou complainest that thou dost not see him appear for thy deliverance (xxiii. 8), yet do not conclude from thence that he is unrighteous; but go and condemn thyself before him, and then patiently wait for his mercy.

Ver. 15.] But now, because there is nothing of this in thee, God hath thus severely afflicted thee; and not at all regarded the exceeding great prosperity wherein thou hast hitherto lived.

Ver. 16.] And Job may spare his complaints hereafter, for they are to no purpose; he heapeth up words without reason.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

ARGUMENT.—Having reprehended some of the unwarrantable expressions in Job's discourses (which he himself would not justify), Elihu comes closer to the business, and speaks to the very cause itself. Showing, from the nature of God, and the methods of his providence, that if Job had, instead of disputing, submitted himself humbly to God's corrections, he would have delivered him (it being as easy for him to lift up as to cast down): and that his not discerning the reason of his corrections (which Job had made a great cause of his grief, xix. 7), ought not to have hindered his humble submission; because we are not able to comprehend any of the works of God, which we see every day, and acknowledge to be most excellently contrived.

1 ELIHU also proceeded, and said,
2 Suffer me a little, and I will shew thee that I have yet to speak on God's behalf.

CHAP. XXXVI.

Ver. 1.] Job still keeping silence, Elihu proceeded in his discourse, and said,

Ver. 2.] Be not weary, and I will open my mind

3 I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and will ascribe righteousness to my maker.

more fully; for thou hast not yet heard all that God hath to say for himself by my mouth;

Ver. 3.] Which shall now, from the most sublime contemplations, assert the righteousness of my Maker.

4 For truly my words *shall* not *be* false : he that is perfect in knowledge *is* with thee.

5 Behold, God *is* mighty, and despiseth not *any* : he *is* mighty in strength *and* wisdom.

6 He preserveth not the life of the wicked : but giveth right to the poor.

7 He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous : but with kings *are they* on the throne ; yea, he doth establish them for ever, and they *are* exalted.

8 And if *they be* bound in fetters, *and* he holden in cords of affliction ;

9 Then he sheweth them their work, and their transgressions that they have exceeded.

10 He openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity.

11 If they obey and serve *him*, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures.

12 But if they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge.

13 But the hypocrites in heart heap up wrath : they cry not when he bindeth them.

14 They die in youth, and their life *is* among the unclean.

Ver. 4.] For assure thyself I would not seek to baffle thee with sophistical arguments : he that discourses with thee is none of those subtle disputers, but loves sincere and solid reason.

Ver. 5.] Know then that God is most mighty, but despiseth not the meanest : the excellence of his power, and the greatness of his mind, will not suffer him to wrong any body.

Ver. 6.] When men are extremely wicked, and fit to be punished, he will let them live no longer ; and the poor at last shall recover their right, and be delivered out of their affliction.

Ver. 7.] For whatsoever affliction the righteous suffer, God never ceases to take a special care of them ; and sometimes raises them to the highest offices that kings can confer upon them : in which they are settled as long as they live, and exalted above the power of their enemies that would pull them down.

Ver. 8.] Or if they should fall into any trouble, which lies as heavy on them, and holds them fast, as if they were bound with chains and with cords ;

Ver. 9.] It is only to make them reflect upon their lives, and to show them their sins ; because they grow strong, and begin to prevail over them.

Ver. 10.] He disposeth them hereby to listen to instruction, and admonishes them to forsake their sins, and return to their duty.

Ver. 11.] And if they profit so much by their affliction, as to obey his counsel, and devoutly serve him, they shall regain their former splendour ; and pass the rest of their life in prosperity and pleasure.

Ver. 12.] But if they be disobedient, they shall be utterly cut off, and die in their folly.

Ver. 13.] And they that are false-hearted, do but heap up wrath to themselves by their counterfeit piety : which surprises them so suddenly, that it gives them no time so much as to cry to God, when his punishments seize on them.

Ver. 14.] They die before their time, in the flower of their age ; and perish like the impure Sodomites, with a hasty and unexpected destruction.

Ver. 15.] Whereas he delivers the poor humble

15 He delivereth the poor in his affliction, and openeth their ears in oppression.

16 Even so would he have removed thee out of the strait *into* a broad place, where *there is* no straitness ; and that which should be set on thy table, *should be* full of fatness.

17 But thou hast fulfilled the judgment of the wicked : judgment and justice take hold *on thee*.

18 Because *there is* wrath, *beware* lest he take thee away with *his* stroke : then a great ransom cannot deliver thee.

19 Will he esteem thy riches ? *no*, not gold, nor all the forces of strength.

20 Desire not the night, when people are cut off in their place.

21 Take heed, regard not iniquity : for this hast thou chosen rather than affliction.

22 Behold, God exalteth by his power : who teacheth like him ?

23 Who hath enjoined him his way ? or who can say, Thou hast wrought iniquity ?

24 Remember that thou magnify his work, which men behold.

25 Every man may see it ; man may behold *it* afar off.

26 Behold, God *is* great, and we know *him*

man in his affliction ; and makes his oppression the means of giving him wholesome counsel :

Ver. 16.] Even so would he have rescued thee (if thou hadst humbly submitted to his correction) out of these miserable straits to which thou art reduced : and not only enlarged thee, but set thee so far from all danger of falling again into them, that peace and plenty should have been thy portion.

Ver. 17.] But thou hast maintained the cause of the wicked : and such as a man's cause is, such will the judgment of God be upon him.

Ver. 18.] And because God is angry with thee, take heed lest thou farther incense him to punish thee so heavily, that upon no terms he will deliver thee.

Ver. 19.] Dost thou think he will have any regard to thy riches ? no, not if thou hadst all the treasure and all the force which all the power on earth can muster up.

Ver. 20.] Do not dream that they can do thee any service ; nor entertain thyself with vain hopes, as thou art musing on thy bed in the night : when God sometimes destroys whole nations on a sudden.

Ver. 21.] But let thy sufferings teach thee caution, and make thee afraid to go on to provoke offended justice : for thou hast done it too much already, in choosing rather to accuse divine providence, than to submit patiently to his chastisements.

Ver. 22.] Consider the vast extent of God's power, which lifts men up as well as casts them down. What lord is there so absolute as he ! or who shall teach him how to govern his dominions ?

Ver. 23.] What visitor is there over him, to examine and take an account of his actions ! or who may presume to say, this or that is not well done ?

Ver. 24.] See that thou leave off this carping at his providence, and remember to extol and magnify it, as well as the wonderful fabric of the world, which men behold with admiration and praise.

Ver. 25.] All mankind contemplate it with astonishment : there are none so dull, but in the farthest parts of the earth they behold, if they open their eyes, the majesty of God ;

Ver. 26.] And must confess that he is great in wis-

not, neither can the number of his years be searched out.

27 For he maketh small the drops of water : they pour down rain according to the vapour thereof.

28 Which the clouds do drop and distil upon man abundantly.

29 Also can any understand the spreadings of the clouds, or the noise of his tabernacle ?

dom and power, and cannot be comprehended by our shallow understandings ; which are presently confounded, when they enter into the search of his eternal being.

Ver. 27.] For it is he who dissolves the clouds into water, and doth not pour it down all at once ; but by small drops sweetly restores to the earth the vapour which was exhaled from thence :

Ver. 28.] For he hath made the clouds to be fluid bodies ; which distil their showers in so many places, that there are multitudes of spectators and admirers of this wonderful contrivance.

Ver. 29.] And can any one understand how he spreads those clouds, and makes them hang in the air, when they are full of water ? or give an account of the dreadful sounds which are heard from thence, and which tells us that he dwells in those celestial places ?

30 Behold, he spreadeth his light upon it, and covereth the bottom of the sea.

31 For by them judgeth he the people ; he giveth meat in abundance.

32 With clouds he covereth the light ; and commandeth it not to shine by the cloud that cometh betwixt.

33 The noise thereof sheweth concerning it, the cattle also concerning the vapour.

Ver. 30.] Observe also how he spreads the beams of the sun upon the sea, and covers it all over with light ; which raises new vapours and clouds in the room of those which are exhausted.

Ver. 31.] Which he uses for quite contrary ends : both to punish mankind by storms, and tempests, and floods, and to make a plentiful provision for them by fruitful showers.

Ver. 32.] By those clouds also he sometimes quite hideth the sun from us, that it cannot ripen the fruits ; and sometimes only intercepts its beams awhile, that it may not burn them up by immoderate heat.

Ver. 33.] The very cattle perceive the cloud as soon as it rises, and declare what God intends to do with it ; whether to turn it into storms and tempests, or into fruitful rain and showers.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

ARGUMENT.—*Elihu continues his speech, which he had begun before, concerning the incomprehensible works of God : and limits himself chiefly, as he had in the foregoing chapter, to the wonders God doth in the clouds. To which, at last, he subjoins the amazing extent, brightness, and firmness of the sky ; in which the sun shines with a lustre which we are not able to behold. And thence concludes, that the splendour of the divine majesty is infinitely more dazzling, and that we must not pretend to give an account of his counsels.*

1 At this also my heart trembleth, and is moved out of his place.

2 Hear attentively the noise of his voice, and the sound that goeth out of his mouth.

3 He directeth it under the whole heaven, and his lightning unto the ends of the earth.

4 After it a voice roareth : he thundereth with the voice of his excellency ; and he will not stay them when his voice is heard.

5 God thundereth marvellously with his voice ; great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend.

6 For he saith to the snow, be thou on the

earth ; likewise to the small rain, and to the great rain of his strength.

7 He sealeth up the hand of every man ; that all men may know his work.

8 Then the beasts go into dens, and remain in their places.

9 Out of the south cometh the whirlwind : and cold out of the north.

10 By the breath of God frost is given : and the breadth of the waters is straitened.

11 Also by watering he wearieth the thick cloud : he scattereth his bright cloud :

wonderful voice, doth other great things which the wit of man cannot comprehend.

CHAP. XXXVII.

Ver. 1.] These are a few of the works of God ; and though there be innumerable more, yet this one single effect of his power strikes terror into me, and makes my heart tremble, as if it would leap out of my body, and leave me dead.

Ver. 2.] Hearken, I beseech you, seriously to the horrible noise which comes out of some of those clouds, and it will astonish you also. The smallest murmurs are so dreadful, that it may be fitly styled the voice of God, calling men to stand in awe of him.

Ver. 3.] It is heard far and near, for he darts it through the whole region of the air ; accompanied with his flashes of lightning, which shoot to the ends of the earth.

Ver. 4.] After them follow the claps of thunder, more terrible than the roarings of a lion : which grow louder and louder till they conclude in a violent rain, or hail, or tempest.

Ver. 5.] And he who thunders thus with his most

Ver. 6.] For in those clouds, which I have so often mentioned, he makes the snow, and commands it to cover the earth ; and on a sudden they turn into rain, which sometimes falls in gentle showers, and sometimes in impetuous spouts of water :

Ver. 7.] Which stop the labour of all those whose business is in the fields ; and make the husbandmen know that he disposes of them as he pleases.

Ver. 8.] The very beasts also are driven at that season into their lurking-places, and are forced to stay in their dens.

Ver. 9.] From one quarter of the heavens blow turbulent winds : and from the opposite quarter those cold blasts which clear and purify the air again.

Ver. 10.] By the like sharp blasts God sends the frost ; and binds up the waters so fast that they cannot flow.

Ver. 11.] In serene evenings also he presses the

12 And it is turned round about by his counsels : that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth.

13 He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy.

14 Hearken unto this, O Job : stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God.

15 Dost thou know when God disposed them, and caused the light of his cloud to shine ?

16 Dost thou know the balancing of the clouds, the wondrous works of him which is perfect in knowledge ?

17 How thy garments are warm, when he quieteth the earth by the south wind ?

18 Hast thou with him spread out the sky,

cloud into drops of dew upon the earth ; or the dewy cloud, receiving the sunbeams, by a dispersed and various light, makes the beautiful rainbow in the heavens.

Ver. 12.] For it is turned about and whirled several ways, according to the orders of his wise counsel ; and so are all the rest that I have mentioned, which execute his commands upon the face of the whole earth.

Ver. 13.] Being sent either to bring a dearth, and to scourge our sins with plagues and pestilential diseases ; or to produce the wanted crop of the earth for the necessary sustenance of man and beast ; or to reward our obedience with extraordinary plenty, and very healthful seasons.

Ver. 14.] Listen diligently to these things, O Job ; do not dispute any more with God, but silently consider these his wonderful works.

Ver. 15.] Canst thou tell beforehand what orders God will give about them ? Art thou able to tell so much as when a rainbow will appear in the clouds ?

Ver. 16.] What canst thou tell us then of the hanging of the clouds in the air, as in an equal balance, and such-like stupendous works of his most absolute wisdom ?

Ver. 17.] Whence comes the violent heat which we sometimes feel ! or how do calms come out of the same quarter from whence comes whirlwinds ? (ver. 9).

Ver. 18.] Lift up thy thoughts still higher, and tell us, Didst thou join with him when he stretched out the sky, in which, as in a mirror, we behold the ad-

mirable power and wisdom of him, who, though it be so wide and vast, made it as firm as it is clear and bright ?

19 Teach us what we shall say unto him ; for we cannot order *our speech* by reason of darkness.

20 Shall it be told him that I speak ? if a man speak, surely he shall be swallowed up.

21 And now men see not the bright light which is in the clouds : but the wind passeth, and cleanseth them.

22 Fair weather cometh out of the north : with God is terrible majesty.

23 Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out : he is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice : he will not afflict.

24 Men do therefore fear him : he respecteth not any that are wise of heart.

mirable power and wisdom of him, who, though it be so wide and vast, made it as firm as it is clear and bright ?

Ver. 19.] Teach us (if thou art so well skilled) what we shall say to him of his power and wisdom ; for we must confess our ignorance is so great, that our thoughts are confounded when we attempt it.

Ver. 20.] Is any thing that I have said of him worth his hearing ! Whoever he be that goes about to describe him shall lose himself, and be dazzled with the brightness of his glory.

Ver. 21.] For, alas ! men are not able to look upon the brightness of the sun when it shines in the heavens, after a wind hath swept and cleansed them ;

Ver. 22.] And brought pure and serene weather out of the northern parts : how then shall they look upon God, whose majesty is most dreadful, and therefore not to be pried into with curiosity, but worshipped and praised with the humblest reverence !

Ver. 23.] For when we have done all we can, we must acknowledge, that the Almighty cannot be comprehended by our understanding : his power is so excellent, his judgment so exact, his justice so abundant, that he ought not to be questioned by us for what he doth ; but if he be, he will not give an account of his actions.

Ver. 24.] Which should make all men stand in awe of him, and lowly adore, rather than boldly dispute with him : for he despiseth all those who are wise in their own conceit.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

ARGUMENT.—*What Elihu had said concerning the divine majesty, in the twenty-second verse of the foregoing, God declares to be true, by a sensible demonstration, as I have expressed it in the first verse of this chapter. In which God himself appears as a judge (according to Job's repeated desires) to decide this great controversy. And taking up the argument begun by Elihu (who came nearest to the truth), and prosecuting it in inimitable words (excelling his and all other men's in the loftiness of the style, as much as thunder doth a whisper), he convinces Job of his ignorance and weakness, by showing him how little he understood of the most obvious things in this world. Intending from thence, at last, to infer, that he who found himself puzzled, when he went about to give an account of the meanest of God's visible works, should not presume to penetrate into his secret counsels, nor question his goodness, no more than he could his wisdom and power, though he knew not why he was afflicted. One instance had been sufficient to bring Job to a nonplus ; but he heaps up abundance, to humble him the more when he saw how much cause there was for it ; whether he considered the earth, or the heavens, the sea, or the sun, things contained in the bosom of the sea, or in the bowels of the earth, especially all the meteors (as we call them) which are formed in the clouds, and the constellations in the higher regions ; together with the beasts upon the earth, and the birds which fly in the air ; one of each of which he mentions in the end of this chapter*

1 THEN the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said,

2 Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge ?

3 Gird up now thy loins like a man ; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.

4 Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth ? declare, if thou hast understanding.

5 Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest ? or who hath stretched the line upon it ?

6 Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened ? or who laid the corner-stone thereof ;

7 When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy ?

8 Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb ?

9 When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddlingband for it,

10 And brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors,

11 And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further : and here shall thy proud waves be stayed ?

12 Hast thou commanded the morning since

thy days ; and caused the dayspring to know his place ;

13 That it might take hold of the ends of the earth, that the wicked might be shaken out of it ?

14 It is turned as clay to the seal ; and they stand as a garment.

15 And from the wicked their light is withholden, and the high arm shall be broken.

16 Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea ? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth ?

17 Have the gates of death been opened unto thee ? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death ?

18 Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth ? declare if thou knowest it all.

19 Where is the way where light dwelleth ? and as for darkness, where is the place thereof,

20 That thou shouldest take it to the bound thereof, and that thou shouldest know the paths to the house thereof ?

21 Knowest thou it, because thou wast then born ? or because the number of thy days is great ?

22 Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow ? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail,

CHAP. XXXVIII.

Ver. 1.] No sooner had Elihu spoken these words, but there was a sensible token of the presence of that most dreadful majesty of God (xxxvii. 22) among them. For there arose an unusual cloud (after the manner of God's appearing in those days), and a voice came out of it, as loud as a tempest, which called to Job, saying,

Ver. 2.] Who is this that disparages my counsels with his ignorant discourses about them ?

Ver. 3.] If thou hast the courage to argue the case with me (as thou hast often desired), make thyself ready for the debate, and answer me the questions I shall ask thee.

Ver. 4.] Where wast thou when I founded the earth ? Speak, man, and relate how I went about that work, if thou art so skilful as thou pretendest.

Ver. 5.] How came it to have these dimensions ? (For thou, sure, who presumest to censure my providence, canst not be ignorant of such matters). After what manner was the line and the rule applied, to give it these exact proportions ?

Ver. 6.] Canst thou tell how it was fixed and settled upon its centre, or what it is that holds all the parts of it so firmly together ?

Ver. 7.] Where wast thou when the bright stars first appeared to proclaim my praise with one consent ; and all the angelical powers expressed their joy, but did not assist at the birth of the world ?

Ver. 8.] What midwife had the sea to bring it forth, when it burst out of the confused abyss, like an infant out of the womb ?

Ver. 9.] And I covered it with clouds as with a garment, and wrapped its boisterous waves in a thick mist, with as much ease as a nurse swaddles a newborn child ;

Ver. 10.] And laid it in that bed, which I had appointed to be broken up for it in the earth ! Where, though it be tossed to and fro, as an infant in a cradle, yet it keeps within its shores, which cannot be overturned ?

Ver. 11.] For I have fixed its bounds, and resolved, Thus far shalt thou flow, but no farther : these sands and these cliffs shall stop thy swelling waves, be they lifted up never so tempestuously.

Ver. 12.] Raise up thy thoughts still higher, and tell me, dost thou remember since the morning-light was made ? Or was it thou who ordered the sun, in what part of the heaven it should every day arise ?

Ver. 13.] And spread its beams to the ends of the earth ; that the wicked, who delight in works of darkness, may be detected and dragged to their deserved punishment !

Ver. 14.] For they are daunted at its approach, and change colour as oft as the clay doth its form under different seals ; they are no more consistent with themselves than a changeable garment :

Ver. 15.] And at last lose the use of that light, which innocent persons enjoy with so much pleasure ; their insolent power, which in the night was so audacious, being broken in pieces in the morning.

Ver. 16.] O thou who adventured to enter into the abyss of my judgments, didst thou ever penetrate into the spring of the sea ? or hast thou perfectly discovered all that lies at the bottom of that great deep ?

Ver. 17.] Hath the earth opened all her dark caverns to thee ? or hast thou gone down to the very centre of it ?

Ver. 18.] Nay, dost thou so much as understand all that grows upon the surface of the earth ? show thy skill, if it be so comprehensive.

Ver. 19.] Tell me, which is the way that leads to the place where light takes up its dwelling when the sun goes down ? Or what becomes of the darkness when the sun rises again ?

Ver. 20.] Art thou able to go and bring either of them hither ? or to carry them back again away from hence, and prescribe them their limits at thy pleasure ?

Ver. 21.] Art thou acquainted with these things, because thou wast then born when I made them ? How comest thou to discourse so confidently of my government of mankind, who canst neither tell that thou shouldest be born, nor art able now to say when thou shalt die ?

Ver. 22.] And when wast thou in the clouds, to see how the snow or the hail is made in such abundance ;

23 Which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war ?

24 By what way is the light parted, *which* scattereth the east wind upon the earth ?

25 Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters, or a way for the lightning of thunder ;

26 To cause it to rain on the earth, *where* no man is ; on the wilderness, wherein *there is* no man ;

27 To satisfy the desolate and waste *ground* ; and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth ?

28 Hath the rain a father ? or who hath begotten the drops of dew ?

29 Out of whose womb came the ice ? and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it ?

30 The waters are hid as *with* a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen.

31 Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion ?

32 Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his

season ? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons ?

33 Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven ? canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth ?

34 Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee ?

35 Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are ?

36 Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts ? or who hath given understanding to the heart ?

37 Who can number the clouds in wisdom ? or who can stay the bottles of heaven,

38 When the dust groweth into hardness, and the clods cleave fast together ?

39 Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion ? or fill the appetite of the young lions,

40 When they couch in *their dens* ? and abide in the covert to lie in wait ?

41 Who provideth for the raven his food ? when his young ones cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat.

Ver. 23.] That I need no other weapon than those, if I please to use them, for the destruction of mine enemies ?

Ver. 24.] Art thou able to give an account how the light diffuses itself all over in an instant ? or what makes the east wind blow so violently upon the earth ?

Ver. 25.] Didst thou make a channel in heaven for the conveyance of overflowing showers ? or open the way for the breaking out of lightning and thunder ?

Ver. 26.] Is it by thy direction that these showers go, and fall upon the desert places, where there are no inhabitants to employ their art to provide them with water ?

Ver. 27.] And that they satisfy the dry and rotten parts of the earth, where all the labour of man is unprofitable, without such plentiful rains to make them fruitful ?

Ver. 28.] What is more common than the rain and the dew ? but who is able to produce one drop of either ?

Ver. 29.] In whose womb was the ice formed ? or who can make so small a thing as the hoary frost ?

Ver. 30.] Whence comes the cold that turns the waters into stone, and fetters the raging waves of the sea ?

Ver. 31.] Canst thou forbid the sweet flowers to come forth when the seven stars arise in the spring ? or open the earth for the husbandman's labour, when the winter season, at the rising of Orion, ties up their hands ?

Ver. 32.] Is it by thy power that the rest of the stars, great and small, appear in the southern and the northern signs, in their proper seasons ?

Ver. 33.] Dost thou understand the orders and the laws which I have established among the heavenly bodies ? or couldest thou tell what to do, if it were referred to thee here on earth, to settle the government of them ?

Ver. 34.] Let me see an instance of thy power and skill ; lift up thy voice to the clouds, and command them to pour out abundance of waters upon the place where thou now art.

Ver. 35.] Or call to the lightnings, and bid them go whither thou hast a mind to send them ? and let me hear them answer, Behold, we are ready to obey thee.

Ver. 36.] Didst thou give thyself understanding ? how comes it then to be so small, that thou canst not tell how a thought is made ?

Ver. 37.] Nor, with all the wisdom thou hast, so much as count the number of the clouds, whose showers thou art as unable to stop, as to make them run :

Ver. 38.] Though they have fallen so long, that the earth is abundantly satisfied, and fit for the plough or for the seed ?

Ver. 39.] Or dost thou pretend to have great power upon earth, though none in heaven ? wilt thou undertake then to provide food for a lion and all his whelps.

Ver. 40.] And that in a desert ; where they lie lurking in their dens, and greedily watch for a prey in close and shady places ?

Ver. 41.] Or, which is less, wilt thou take upon thee to feed the young ravens ? who, expelled by the old ones out of their nest, complain to me of their cruelty, but know not where to get a bit of meat.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

ARGUMENT.—*This chapter continues the discourse begun in the latter end of the foregoing, concerning God's providence about beasts and birds : and to the two before mentioned he adds seven more. First, the wild goat, or hind, whose hard labour among the rocks God is wont to help and promote (as the Psalmist observes, xxix. 9, and other authors agree) by a clap of thunder ; the terror of which puts her into such an agony, that she presently excludes her young one, which sticks in the birth. Then he mentions the wild ass ; and after that a tall creature in those countries called reem, which we render a unicorn ; but Bochartus hath proved to be a two-horned goat, in Arabia, of great strength, with an erected head and ears. Of the rest I need say nothing here, they are so well known.*

1 Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth? or canst thou mark when the hinds do calve?

2 Canst thou number the months that they fulfil? or knowest thou the time when they bring forth?

3 They bow themselves, they bring forth their young ones, they cast out their sorrows.

4 Their young ones are in good liking, they grow up with corn; they go forth, and return not unto them.

5 Who hath sent out the wild ass free? or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass?

6 Whose house I have made the wilderness, and the barren land his dwellings.

7 He scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regardeth he the crying of the driver.

8 The range of the mountain is his pasture, and he searcheth after every green thing.

9 Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib?

10 Canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow? or will he harrow the valleys after thee?

11 Wilt thou trust him, because his strength is great? or wilt thou leave thy labour to him?

12 Wilt thou believe him, that he will bring home thy seed, and gather it into thy barn?

13 Gavest thou the goodly wings unto the peacocks? or wings and feathers unto the ostrich?

14 Which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in the dust.

15 And forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them.

16 She is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers: her labour is in vain without fear;

17 Because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her understanding.

18 What time she lifteth up herself on high, she scorneth the horse and his rider.

19 Hast thou given the horse strength? hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?

20 Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? the glory of his nostrils is terrible.

21 He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men.

22 He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword.

23 The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield.

CHAP. XXXIX.

Ver. 1.] Vain man, who wouldest so fain pry into my secrets! didst thou ever climb the rocks to see the wild goats bring forth? or hast thou assisted at the hard labour of the hinds, and helped to ease them of their burden.

Ver. 2.] Dost thou know the moment of their conception? or keepest an account when they will be delivered?

Ver. 3.] Hast thou seen how they bow themselves; with what pain they bring forth, and with how much difficulty they are freed from their sorrow?

Ver. 4.] And yet their young ones are lusty and strong; they grow up in the open fields; they leave their mothers, and return to them no more.

Ver. 5.] Was it thou that gave the wild ass his liberty, and made him so free from their servitude, in which you keep other creatures?

Ver. 6.] Who but I made that difference between him and them; and laying no burden on him, assigned him the wilderness and barren countries for his habitation?

Ver. 7.] Where he laughs at those that live in the tumult and bustle of cities; and hears none of the cries of him that drives other asses to their labour.

Ver. 8.] Nor is confined in small enclosures, but hath whole mountains to range in for his pasture: where he finds sufficient food to appease his hunger.

Ver. 9.] Go to the unicorn (thou who wouldest have all things conformable to thy will), and see if thou canst persuade him to serve thee: will he be content to be tied to thy crib all night?

Ver. 10.] Or submit his proud neck to thy yoke all day? Canst thou make him go to plough? or will he draw the harrow over thy land?

Ver. 11.] Wilt thou rely upon him (because his strength is great) to do all the rest of thy work in the field?

Ver. 12.] Or leave thy harvest out of doors, till thou hast prevailed with him to bring it home, and lay it in thy barn?

Ver. 13.] Have other birds any reason to complain that they are not so goodly as the ostrich! whose

wing is triumphant, if it be compared with the wing and the feather of the stork;

Ver. 14.] But her inward qualities are not so beautiful as her plumes: for she doth not seek for solitary places wherein to lay her eggs; but drops them anywhere upon the ground, and negligently leaves them to be corrupted by the heat of the sand and of the sun.

Ver. 15.] She doth not secure them from the foot of travellers or of wild beasts; who frequently tread upon them and crush them in pieces;

Ver. 16.] But is hardened against the fruit of her own womb, as if it were not hers; and so she loses all her labour, because she hath no fear it may be lost.

Ver. 17.] For God hath not given her that wisdom which he hath bestowed upon other creatures; but made her of a stupid and careless nature.

Ver. 18.] Though he hath imparted so much as is necessary for her preservation: for when she raises herself, and lifts up her wings, she runs so fast, that she despises a man on horseback, who cannot overtake her.

Ver. 19.] And now I speak of the horse, let me ask thee again, Who was it that made him so much superior to other creatures in strength and in courage? didst thou give him his valiant spirit, or clothe his neck with such a stately mane?

Ver. 20.] Or put that vigour and mettle into him, which make him leap and bound in the air like a grasshopper? there is a majesty in his looks; and when he snorts vehemently, it is terrible.

Ver. 21.] He stamps impatiently on the ground, and breaks it up with his feet: he glories in his strength, and goes out boldly to meet the arms that oppose him.

Ver. 22.] He derides all the dreadful instruments of war, and cannot be dismayed by them: he runs upon naked swords;

Ver. 23.] And is not daunted at the noise of arrows which come whizzing by his ears, nor at the sharp points of spears and lances which are thrust at his breast.

24 He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage : neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet.

25 He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha ; and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting.

26 Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom, and stretch her wings towards the south ?

Ver. 24.] He makes the earth quake and tremble as he gallops over it, and rides abundance of ground in a moment : neither can he stand still, when he hears the sound of the trumpet :

Ver. 25.] But the louder it is, the more he neighs and dances for joy. He perceiveth the battle before it begins, by the thundering voice of the captains, and the shouting of the soldiers.

Ver. 26.] Behold, also, how the hawk mounts up aloft. Didst thou give her those swift wings ; or teach her, when the winter comes, to fly into the southern parts, that she may still enjoy the warmth of the sun ?

Ver. 27.] But what bird soars so high as the eagle ?

27 Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high ?

28 She dwelleth and abideth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place.

29 From thence she seeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off.

30 Her young ones also suck up blood : and where the slain are, there is she.

Is she behelden to thee for that strength which carries her into the clouds ? or was it by thy direction that she builds her nest quite out of all men's reach ?

Ver. 28.] She dwells on the top of high rocks ; in the steep and craggy rock, as in an inaccessible fortress, she settles her abode.

Ver. 29.] There she leaves her young ones safely, while she goes to provide them food ; from thence (so sharp is her sight) she spies her prey a vast way off.

Ver. 30.] Which when she hath seized and torn she brings to her nest, that they may suck its blood : she looks down to the very earth ; and where the carcasses lie, there may she be found.

CHAPTER XL.

ARGUMENT.—*Job modestly declining to say one word in his own defence (though he was graciously invited by God to speak, if he had any plea remaining), is still more humbled by a plain declaration from the divine majesty, that Elihu had reason to reprove him for his immoderate complaints (which some might look upon as an accusation of God's providence), and for maintaining his own righteousness so much, and God's righteousness so little, in the dispute he had had with his friends. Showing him withal, that he was not sensible enough of the infinite distance and inequality between him and God ; when he desired so vehemently to argue his case with him, that he forgot to make those submissions to the divine majesty, which had better become him. This disproportion is most lively represented and illustrated, by an admirable description of the strength of the behemoth, a word of Egyptian termination ; signifying, not the elephant (which seldom lies down, and never among reeds, as this doth, ver. 21, but a creature in that country, called by the Greek writers hippopotamus, i. e., river-horse. For it appears by the second book of Esdras, ch. vi. 49, that the Hebrews reckon behemoth, not among the land-creatures, but among those belonging to the water, which were created on the fifth day. And there is none, that we know, of that sort, to whom the characters here mentioned belong, but the creature now named.*

1 MOREOVER the LORD answered Job, and said,

2 Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him ? he that revolveth God, let him answer it.

3 ¶ Then Job answered the LORD, and said,

4 Behold, I am vile ; what shall I answer thee ? I will lay my hand upon my mouth.

5 Once have I spoken ; but I will not answer : yea, twice ; but I will proceed no further.

CHAP. XL.

Ver. 1.] After a short silence, to see what Job would reply to this long discourse, the Lord proceeded, and said ;

Ver. 2.] Why dost thou not speak ? Hath not the Almighty brought arguments enough to convince thee ? Let him that will argue with God about his providence, first make an answer to these questions.

Ver. 3.] Then Job, whose confusion had made him silent, answered with great humility and said :

Ver. 4.] Behold, I am a wretched creature, and not worthy to speak unto thy majesty : nor do I know what to answer : and therefore I will hold my peace.

Ver. 5.] I have said too much already, in speaking only these two words to thee : but I have done ; I will add no more.

6 ¶ Then answered the LORD unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said,

7 Gird up thy loins now like a man : I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.

8 Wilt thou also disdain my judgment ? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous ?

9 Hast thou an arm like God ? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him ?

10 Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency ; and array thyself with glory and beauty.

Ver. 6.] Then the divine majesty spake again, after the same manner as before, saying,

Ver. 7.] What, hast thou (who desiredst so much to plead with me) lost thy courage ? pluck up thy spirit, man, and prepare thyself (as I said at first) to answer the questions I shall farther ask thee.

Ver. 8.] Is there any reason to suspect my care of mankind, who have shown it so much about other creatures ? Canst thou not defend thyself, but thou must also complain of me ! must I be condemned that thou mayest be justified ?

Ver. 9.] Who art thou, that talkest so much of thine own innocence, that thou forgettest to maintain my righteousness ? hast thou a power equal to mine ; or canst thou speak with a voice like this ; or imitate the thunder thou hearest in the clouds ?

Ver. 10.] Lift up thyself then ; and let me see thee

11 Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath : and behold every one *that is* proud, and abase him.

12 Look on every one *that is* proud, and bring him low ; and tread down the wicked in their place.

13 Hide them in the dust together ; and bind their faces in secret.

14 Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee.

15 ¶ Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee ; he eateth grass as an ox.

16 Lo now, his strength *is* in his loins, and his force *is* in the navel of his belly.

17 He moveth his tail like a cedar : the sinews of his stones are wrapped together.

18 His bones *are* as strong pieces of brass ; his bones *are* like bars of iron.

appear in the highest majesty : put on thy robes, and show thyself in such royal state, that all may honour and reverence thy excellent greatness.

Ver. 11.] Let all thine adversaries round about thee (as becomes a mighty prince) feel the fierceness of thy wrath ; frown upon all the haughty, and make them hang down their heads.

Ver. 12.] Look, I say, upon every proud oppressor, and make him cringe and throw himself at thy feet : tread down all the wicked, wheresoever thou shalt find them.

Ver. 13.] Cast them all into one grave, that the world may be no more troubled with them : cover those faces with perpetual shame and confusion, which now bear themselves so high, and overlook all others.

Ver. 14.] When I see thee do such things as these, then will I myself also magnify thy power, and acknowledge that thou needest none of my help to deliver thee.

Ver. 15.] But consider awhile (if thou art not yet humble enough) a creature [Behemoth, i. e. river-horse,] which I have made in a country not far from thee : he lives among the fishes in the great river of Egypt, but he feeds upon the earth and eateth grass like an ox.

Ver. 16.] Consider, I say, the greatness of his strength, and the firmness of his flesh, not only in his loins, but even in the navel of his belly, where other creatures are wont to be weak and tender.

19 He *is* the chief of the ways of God : he that made him can make his sword to approach unto him.

20 Surely the mountains bring him forth food, where all the beasts of the field play.

21 He lieth under the shady trees, in the covert of the reed, and fens.

22 The shady trees cover him *with* their shadow ; the willows of the brook compass him about.

23 Behold, he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not : he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth.

24 He taketh it with his eyes : *his* nose pierceth through snares.

Ver. 17.] He hath a tail as thick and as stiff as a cedar, but he bends and throws it back at his pleasure : the nerves of his thighs are so many, that they are intricate and perplexed one within another.

Ver. 18.] His bones (for so they are rather than gristles) are as strong as bars of brass, and as hard and firm as rods of iron.

Ver. 19.] He is one of the principal works of God, a very singular instance of his power : he that made him hath fastened such crooked teeth in his jaws, exceeding sharp, that therewith he mows the grass and the corn as with a scythe.

Ver. 20.] For he goes in the night to graze upon the hills, in the company of the rest of the beasts of the field ; who sport themselves in those rich pastures :

Ver. 21.] But (in the day) he lies down in shady and close places, under the covert of the reeds, and in the fenny mud.

Ver. 22.] The bushy trees, which are there very numerous, afford him a shelter ; he is encompassed with the willows and the osiers, which grow in abundance on the banks of Nile.

Ver. 23.] Nay, behold, he dives to the very bottom of the river, and there takes his repose without fear : he will be secure though Jordan also should break out, and be poured upon his mouth.

Ver. 24.] Who dare come in his sight, or attempt to take him by open force ? Where is he that will undertake to fasten hooks in his nose ?

CHAPTER XLI.

ARGUMENT.—In this chapter another creature of vast bigness and strength is described, called in the Arabian language leviathan. By which we are not, in this place, to understand the whale ; because that fish is not armed with such scales as the leviathan is here said to have (ver. 15) : nor is impenetrable, as every body knows ; and, to say no more, never creeps upon the earth, which is part of the description of this leviathan (ver. 3). Whereby we are therefore to understand the crocodile (to whom every part of this description exactly belongs), a creature as big again as a man of the greatest stature, and in some places vastly greater : there having been crocodiles seen of twenty, nay, forty feet long ; and in some places of a hundred. To this fierce and untamable creature God sends Job, that he might learn more humility than to contend with his majesty, when he saw how unable he was to stand before one of his creatures. That use he himself teaches Job to make of this description (ver. 10—12.)

1 CANST thou draw out leviathan with a hook ? or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down ?

CHAP. XLI.

Ver. 1.] There is another creature also in the same river, which I would have thee consider ; and behold therein the divine power and human weakness. Canst thou catch the leviathan [crocodile] as you do other

2 Canst thou put a hook into his nose ? or bore his jaw through with a thorn ?

fishes ? Canst thou let down a line, and draw him out by the tongue with a hook ?

Ver. 2.] When thou hast made a cord of the rushes of the river, canst thou put it about his nose ; canst thou strike an iron, as sharp as a thorn, into his jaw ?

3 Will he make many supplications unto thee? will he speak soft words unto thee?

4 Will he make a covenant with thee? wilt thou take him for a servant for ever?

5 Wilt thou play with him as with a bird? or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens?

6 Shall thy companions make a banquet of him? shall they part him among the merchants?

7 Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons? or his head with fish spears?

8 Lay thy hand upon him, remember the battle, do no more.

9 Behold, the hope of him is in vain: shall not one be cast down even at the sight of him?

10 None is so fierce that dare stir him up: who then is able to stand before me?

11 Who hath prevented me, that I should repay him? whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine.

12 I will not conceal his parts, nor his power, nor his comely proportion.

13 Who can discover the face of his garment? or who can come to him with his double bridle?

14 Who can open the doors of his face? his teeth are terrible round about.

16 His scales are his pride, shut up together as with a close seal.

16 One is so near to another, that no air can come between them.

17 They are joined one to another, they stick together, that they cannot be sundered.

18 By his needings a light doth shine, and his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning.

19 Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire leap out.

20 Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, as out of a seething pot or caldron.

21 His breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth.

22 In his neck remaineth strength, and sorrow is turned into joy before him.

23 The flakes of his flesh are joined together: they are firm in themselves; they cannot be moved.

24 His heart is as firm as a stone; yea, as hard as a piece of the nether millstone.

25 When he raiseth up himself, the mighty are afraid: by reason of breakings they purify themselves.

26 The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold: the spear, the dart, nor the habergeon.

Ver. 3.] Will he importune thy favour, and with many prayers beseech thee to spare him? will he sue for his liberty with submissive words, and speak thee fair to let him go?

Ver. 4.] Will he enter into bonds, and make a solemn covenant with thee, never to do thee hurt, but be thy slave, and serve thee for ever?

Ver. 5.] Wilt thou adventure to play with him, as with a sparrow? or tie him by the leg, for the sport and pastime of thy daughters?

Ver. 6.] Shall the society of fishermen make a feast for joy they have taken him, and sell their share in him among the merchants?

Ver. 7.] Where is the dart wherewith thou canst hope to penetrate his skin? or the fish-spear that is able to wound his head?

Ver. 8.] Go, and touch him, if thou darest: the battle will be soon ended; for thou shalt not do it the second time.

Ver. 9.] Mark what I say: he will be sorely disappointed that thinks to take him: for he will be ready to sink down with fear at the very sight of him.

Ver. 10.] Though he lie asleep on the shore, there is none so hardy as to dare to awake him. Who is he then that takes upon him to contend with me? If one of my creatures be so terrible, how dangerous is it to provoke my majesty?

Ver. 11.] And where is the man to whom I am a debtor? How came I, that made the whole world, to be obliged to thee, or any one else? Did you first begin to do me kindnesses, that I should owe you a requital?

Ver. 12.] What insolence is this to dispute with me, when thou art not able to stand before this single work of my hands? None of those limbs or joints I will conceal, nor forbear to speak of his strength, and of the comely disposition of all his parts.

Ver. 13.] And first take a view of his scaly skin, wherewith he is covered; who hath ever stripped him of that upper garment? or who dare come within his doubled snout?

Ver. 14.] Who will venture to open his wide jaws, and so much as look into his mouth, in which his long rows of teeth are very dreadful?

Ver. 15.] The scales of his back are like the plates of a shield, which I have provided for his defence: every one of them is closely compacted, and strictly sealed to the next.

Ver. 16.] They are knit so close, that the air, which presses into all things else, cannot come between them.

Ver. 17.] They cleave one to another, they hold so fast together that no art or violence can make a separation.

Ver. 18.] When he sneezeth, as he lies gaping in the sun, the spirits break forth with such a force that they seem to sparkle: and when he riseth up out of the river, his eyes appear before the rest of his body, as the morning light before the sun.

Ver. 19.] The steam also which then comes out of his mouth is as vehement as if it were full of burning torches; or there were a fire in him that sends forth sparks.

Ver. 20.] Out of his nostrils goes a smoke, like the reek of a seething-pot or a boiling caldron.

Ver. 21.] His breath is so hot, though he come out of the water, that it is sufficient to kindle coals; and may be called a flame, which issues out of his mouth.

Ver. 22.] His neck is exceeding strong, as if it were the very seat of strength: sadness and terror march before him, and seize on all those that meet him.

Ver. 23.] The muscles of his flesh are glued together; every one of them is compact and solid; they are not easily moved.

Ver. 24.] He is as far from fear as he is from pity: for his heart is as firm as a stone; as hard as an anvil, or a piece of the nether millstone.

Ver. 25.] But the stoutest hearts tremble when he lifts himself up above the water: they are seized with such a fright, that they are at their wits' end, and know not which way to turn themselves.

Ver. 26.] Though they assault him with the sword, it will do them no service; for the hardness of his skin will break it in pieces: the spear, also the dart and the javelin, are altogether as feeble, and cannot enter into him.

27 He esteemeth iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood.

28 The arrow cannot make him flee: sling-stones are turned with him into stubble.

29 Darts are counted as stubble: he laugheth at the shaking of a spear.

30 Sharp stones are under him: he spreadeth sharp pointed things upon the mire.

Ver. 27.] All the other weapons of iron (which the wit of man can devise) he values no more than a straw; and those of brass no more than rotten wood.

Ver. 28.] The arrow shot out of the strongest bow cannot make him flee: and these stones which are thrown out of a sling with so much force, move him no more than a little chaff.

Ver. 29.] Lay at him with heavy clubs, and he regards them no more than if they were stubble: shake the lance at him, and he contemns its most violent thrusts.

Ver. 30.] For instead of him it meets only with the rough shells wherewith he is armed; which are so hard, that he beats back the sharpest weapon, and throws it into the mire.

Ver. 31.] When he tumbles about in the bottom of

31 He maketh the deep to boil like a pot: he maketh the sea like a pot of ointment.

32 He maketh a path to shine after him; one would think the deep to be hoary.

33 Upon earth there is not his like, who is made without fear.

34 He beholdeth all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride.

the river, he raises bubbles on the top; and the water of the lake is so troubled with the slimy mud which he stirreth up, that it looks like a pot of ointment.

Ver. 32.] When he swims, he makes furrows in the face of the deep; and leaves a path behind him so covered with a froth and foam, that it looks as if it were grown old, and were full of grey hairs.

Ver. 33.] His fellow is not to be found upon the earth; where he creeps indeed in the dust, but is so made that he cannot be trodden under foot and bruised.

Ver. 34.] No, though he lie so low, yet he despises the tallest beast; and reigns over the oxen and camels, and all those creatures whose long legs raise them to the loftiest height; whom he masters and rends in pieces at his pleasure.

CHAPTER XLII.

ARGUMENT.—*This chapter concludes the book, with an account how Job completed the submission which he had begun before to make to God: whose pardon he sorrowfully begs: confessing and repenting of his fault: resigning himself entirely to be instructed by him: but resolving never hereafter to complain, nor to move any questions about his providence. This repentance God accepts: and for his sake grants a pardon also to his friends, whom he condemns as more faulty than Job. Who after this receives extraordinary marks of God's favour: and hath such an ample recompense made him for his losses, as may encourage all posterity to persevere in well-doing and patient suffering: believing steadfastly that nothing can be done or permitted by God, without much reason (whose wisdom shines so gloriously in all his works), and humbly expecting a comfortable issue out of all our troubles.*

1 THEN Job answered the LORD, and said,

2 I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.

3 Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.

4 Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.

5 I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.

6 Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

7 ¶ And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me, the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.

CHAP. XLII.

Ver. 1.] These words so lively represented the power and wisdom of God in his works, that Job, seeing his error more clearly than ever, submitted himself unto the great Lord of all; and said,

Ver. 2.] I am abundantly satisfied that thy power is as large as thy will; and that nothing can hinder thee from effecting everything which thou designest: but as thou hadst reason to cast me down, so thou canst restore me and lift me up again.

Ver. 3.] I am sensible also of the justice of the reproof which thou hast given me (xxxviii. 2), and do confess I very much forgot myself, when I ventured to talk so ignorantly of thy wise administrations. It was that which made me so rash as to discourse of things far above my reach; wonderful things, which I ought humbly to admire, not arrogantly censure.

Ver. 4.] Be not angry with me, I beseech thee, but

graciously hear me speaking in thy own words. I do not pretend to give an account of thy wonderful works, and of thy providence; and therefore ask me no more questions (xxxviii. 3), but let me learn of thee, and do thou instruct my ignorance.

Ver. 5.] Something I did know before of thy greatness, and mightiness, and wisdom; but nothing so clearly as I do now, by this revelation and visible appearance of thy dreadful majesty.

Ver. 6.] Which touches me with a sensible displeasure against myself for my indecent complaints, and vehement expostulations, and eager desires to die, or to be delivered: I condemn them all (together with whatsoever I have spoken too boldly about thy government), and in the most sorrowful manner repent, that I have justified myself so much, and thee so little.

Ver. 7.] Which ingenuous confession pleased the Lord so much, that he did not hide Job any farther: but turning his voice to Eliphaz (his principal accu-

8 Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you *after your folly*, in that ye have not spoken of me *the thing which is right*, like my servant Job.

9 So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as the Lord commanded them: the Lord also accepted Job.

10 And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.

11 Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the Lord had

brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold.

12 So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses.

13 He had also seven sons and three daughters.

14 And he called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Keren-happuch.

15 And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren.

16 After this lived Job a hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, *even four generations*.

17 So Job died, *being old and full of days*.

ser), he said, I am angry with thee and with thy two friends: for you have made a perverse construction of the afflictions I sent upon Job; whom, notwithstanding all his errors, I acknowledge to be my servant, and to have spoken better of me than you have done.

Ver. 8.] And therefore take no less than seven bullocks, and as many rams, and carry them to my servant Job; whom I appoint to be your priest, to offer for you a burnt-offering, in token of my absolute dominion over all creatures. And that faithful servant of mine shall pray for you, and obtain your pardon: for I have a great love to him, and will be favourable to you for his sake. Do not fail to go about this, lest I inflict some grievous punishment upon you; because, as I said, you have made an ill representation of my providence, and repeated those things confidently which my servant Job showed you to be false.

Ver. 9.] So Eliphaz and his two companions submitted themselves also unto God, and went, as he commanded them, and desired Job to intercede for them. And the Lord heard his prayer, and was reconciled to them.

Ver. 10.] And at that very time when Job was performing this charitable office to his friends, the Lord was pleased to begin to restore to him all those things which had been taken away from him: and never ceased, till he had not only established him in his former splendour, but made him twice as rich as he was before.

Ver. 11.] All his kindred likewise, and his familiar acquaintance (whom his unusual affliction had estranged from him, xix. 3), when they heard of the wonders the Lord had done for him, came to visit him and feast with him: and after they had condoled his misery, and testified their sorrow for all that had befallen him, they congratulated his happy recovery; and, in token of their joy, every one of them presented him with a piece of money and a pendant of gold.

Ver. 12.] Thus the Lord impoverished this good man only to make him richer. For, instead of seven thousand sheep which he had before his troubles, he found he had fourteen thousand when they were ended; and for three thousand camels which were taken from him, the Lord gave him six thousand; and multiplied his yokes of oxen, which were but five hundred, into a thousand; and his she-asses in the same proportion.

Ver. 13.] His wife also became very fruitful, and brought him as many children as he had lost; seven sons and three daughters.

Ver. 14.] And to preserve the memory of so mar-

vellous a deliverance (of which they were so many living monuments), he called the name of the first Jemima, that is, the day; because of the felicity wherein he now shone, after a sad night of affliction, wherein he had lain; and the second Kezia (a spice of an excellent smell), because God had healed his filthy stinking ulcers, which made even his wife refuse to come near him (xix. 17), and the last he called Keren-happuch, i. e. plenty restored, or a horn of varnish, because God had wiped away the tears which fouled his face (as he complains, xvi. 16).

Ver. 15.] The beauty also of these women proved as bright as their names; for there were none so amiable in all that country: and their father did not (as the manner was) endow them with a small portion of his goods, but (having a large estate, and a great affection to them) he made them coheirs with their brethren, in the inheritance which he left them.

Ver. 16.] After which glorious restitution of him and his family, his years were multiplied as well as his estate: for the Lord added almost an age and a half (no less than a hundred and forty years) to those he had lived before; so that he had the pleasure to see his children's children to the fourth generation.

Ver. 17.] And departed not out of the world till he was so fully satisfied, that he desired not to live any longer.

APPENDIX.

HERE ends the book of Job; whose short sufferings (for the space of twelve months, as the Hebrews reckon in Seder Olam) were recompensed with a very long life in great prosperity. If we could rely upon all their traditions, this might have been added to the paraphrase upon the last words, That the whole time of his life was two hundred and ten years. For in the Jerusalem Targum upon Exod. xii. 40, and in Bereschith Rabba upon Gen. xlii. 2, they make account that the Israelites stayed just so long in Egypt; and in the Chronicle forenamed, and in Bava Bathra, and other books, they tell us, that Job was born that very year when Jacob went with his family down thither to sojourn; and died that same year when they were delivered from thence by the hand of Moses. But this agrees neither with what other of their authors say, whom I mentioned in my preface;

nor with the LXX. who, in the last verse but one in this book, insert this clause, "All the days of his life were two hundred and forty years."

This, indeed, might be easily reconciled with the account before mentioned, if we did but rectify their numbers in the beginning of that verse by the Hebrew truth, and cut off the thirty years which they have added to the true time that he lived after his recovery from his sickness; for then this passage also must be corrected, and instead of two hundred and forty we must set down two hundred and ten. Which we might also prove in this manner (out of Seder Olam, cap. 3) to be the right account of his age; because it is said (ver. 10 of the last chapter) that *the Lord added to Job the double of what he had before*; and therefore, if a hundred and forty years were added, he had seventy before, which in all make two hundred and ten. But it is not worth our while to trouble ourselves with such uncertainties; much less is it safe to rely upon any thing which is supported by no stronger authority than the Hebrew tradition: the vanity of which appears most notoriously in this, that Manasseh ben Israel saith (lib. i. De Resurrect. cap. ult.), it is evidently certain, by tradition, that the Mahometans at this day pay a great reverence to this holy man's sepulchre, and honour it at Constantinople with much religion and devotion; when all men that have any considerable acquaintance with other authors, besides those of their own nation (upon which the Hebrews dote), may easily know, that the Job whom the Turks honour was a captain of the Saracens, who was slain when they besieged that city, in the year of Christ 675.

It will be to better purpose if I take notice of an observation of theirs, which hath more certainty in it, because clearly founded upon the holy scriptures; which is, that Job was a prophet among the gentiles, and a prophet of very eminent quality and decree: who deserved to have been at least mentioned by Josephus in his book of Antiquities, where he hath not vouchsafed to name him; nay, to have been praised by the son of Sirach, in his catalogue of famous men (Ecclus. xlv. &c.), who were honoured in their generations, and were the glory of their times. But, according to the humour of the Jews, he magnifies only those of their own country, or such from whom they were directly descended: not considering, how much it was for their honour, that, by the care of their noble ancestors, the history of Job, and his excellent virtues, had been preserved: which he ought not therefore to have omitted, but to have celebrated him among the chief of those worthy persons, "by whom God wrought great glory; such as did bear rule in their kingdoms, men renowned for their power, giving counsel by their understanding, and declaring prophecies," &c. (Ecclus. xlv. 2, 3).

Nay, his friends deserved a short remembrance, who seem nothing inferior to the wise men among the Jews (though they mistook in the application of many excellent truths), but are acknowledged by themselves to have been prophets among the gentiles. And not without reason; for Eliphaz, we read (iv. 13, &c.), had night-visions, an apparition of an angel, and secret whispers, like the still small voice which Elijah heard (1 Kings xix. 12), which made R. Sol. Jarchi not fear to say, that the Shechinah was upon him. And Elihu, it is easy to discern, felt a divine power working in him mightily (xxxii. 8, 18, 19), which was not altogether a stranger, he shows (xxxiii. 15, 16), to other men; whom God in those days instructed by dreams, amongst other ways that he had of communicating his mind to them. But there was none equal to that wherein he made himself known to Job, who in three things seems to have had the pre-eminence

among all the gentile prophets. First, in that God was pleased to speak to him aloud by a voice from heaven, xxxi. 1 (which the Jews call the *bath coi*), and not merely in such silent whispers as he did to Eliphaz. Secondly, that this voice was attended with a notable token of a divine presence, from whence it came, viz. a *whirlwind*, which I take to have been something like that *sound as of a rushing mighty wind*, wherein the Holy Ghost came upon the day of Pentecost. And lastly, he saw likewise, in all probability, the appearance of some visible majesty (xlii. 5), suppose in a glorious cloud (as the LXX. seem to understand it, xxxviii. 1), or something like that which Moses beheld in the bush, when God first called unto him out of the midst of it (Exod. iii. 4).

Which need not at all puzzle our belief; when we consider that the church in those days was catholic, and not as yet confined to any one family or nation. God was pleased, indeed, to show an extraordinary grace to Abraham, in calling him out of his own country and father's house, where idolatry had taken a deep root, or had been long growing without any hope of amendment. For if we may give any credit to Kessaus, a Mahometan writer, or to Elmacinus, a Christian, they were infected with it in the days of Heber, who stoutly opposed it, but with so little effect, that though God sent a whirlwind, which threw down all their idols, and broke them in pieces, that false worship still prevailed. But this doth not warrant us to imagine that God utterly rejected and neglected all other people; to whom he revealed himself in a very familiar manner, and gave many demonstrations of his divine presence among them, till they corrupted themselves by such abominable idolatries, that they became altogether unprofitable, and unfit for the society of that Holy Spirit which oft-times moved them. Even among the Canaanites, into whose country God led Abraham, we find Melchisedec was then a priest of the most high God; a greater person than that prophet, and the minister of that oracle (some fancy) which Rebekah went to consult when she felt the twins struggling in her womb, Gen. xxv. 22. To whom I might add several others, if I had a mind to prolong this discourse.

And though the book before mentioned (Seder Olam Rabba, cap. 21) is pleased to say, that the Holy Ghost ceased to inspire men of any other nation, after the giving of the law; yet it is easy to show, that therein it contradicts even its own affirmation elsewhere, which is grounded on good reason, that Balaam was a prophet divinely moved among the Syrians in Mesopotamia. He was a man, indeed, of naughty affections, and inclined to superstition, but still had many illuminations and motions from the Most High: as appears, not only by his predictions, but by the express words of Moses, who says, "the Spirit of God came upon him," Numb. xxiv. 2. To which, if I should add his own testimony concerning himself, that he *heard the words of God*, and *saw the vision of the Almighty*, and that in an extraordinary manner, *having his eyes open* in his ecstasy, I see no reason why it should be rejected; especially since he declared at the first, when the princes of Midian impertuned him to go with them, that he would be wholly guided by the Lord in the business; and when he was come to Balak, constantly went to meet the Lord, to ask him what he should say, and professed his care to speak what the Lord had put in his mouth (xxii. 8. xxiii. 3. 12. 15, &c.). These considerations, to which many more might be added, are sufficient to show, that there is little, if any, ground for the opinion of Theodoret; who resolves (Quest. 39. in Num.), that Balaam did not inquire of the true God, though the answer was given by him of

whom he was ignorant, not by him whom he invoked: and that the conclusion of St. Basil (Epist. 80, ad Eustath.), or Greg. Nyssen (Lib. de Trinitate; it is uncertain whose work it is wherein we find it), is more remote from truth, who determines, that when the scripture saith he went to consult with God, we are thereby to understand the devil. For should we allow the word *Elohim*, or God, to be so equivocal, that it may be applied not only to other excellent things besides the Divinity, but to the devil himself (which is the foundation there laid for that conclusion), yet the word *Jehovah* or *Lord* is never so used; and Balaam always says that he would go and meet with him. And accordingly, the Lord is said to put a word in his mouth, even then when just before we read that *God met him*, xxiii. 4, 5. When it is most reasonable by God to understand the angel mentioned xxii. 35, whom the *Lord* employed to deliver his mind unto him.

All which I have said to show, that God did not quite desert the gentile world, as long as there were any considerable relics of the ancient religion remaining among them; and they did not only divert to fables, and deliver up themselves to the guidance of evil spirits, against the apparent testimony of the Holy Spirit of God; who spake to them by such good men as Job, in whose days those sinners were not only reprov'd, but punished also by the judges, who worshipped the sun, moon, and stars; which seems to have been the oldest idolatry of all other, as not only Maimonides, but Diodorus Siculus observes. And if they had listened to such instructions, and not suffered themselves to be led merely by sense, to which those heavenly bodies appeared in such an amazing brightness that struck with admiration (as the last named author speaks, they fancied them to be *θεοί; αἰδιούς τε καὶ ἀνώτους*, "both eternal and the first Gods"); we cannot conceive that they would have sunk so low, as to fall into image worship; which in Job's country doth not seem to have obtained in his days.

But the chiefest part of the wisdom of this prophet consisted in his piety; of which he proved a rare example, as I have said already; especially in adversity: wherein he behaved himself with such admirable virtue, that though the apostle to the Hebrews does not mention him among those who were famous for their *faith* (he not being of their race to whom the promises were made), yet St. James in the next epistle highly magnifies and applauds his *patience*. And not only propounds him, together with the prophets and holy men, "who had spoken to them in the name of the Lord" (ver. 10), as a pattern of well-doing, and contented suffering, to the Christian Hebrews; but numbers him among those blessed souls whose worthy deeds we praise, and whose happiness we admire (ver. 11); or rather he names him alone, as an example of a happy man; who endured more than we read of in ancient times, and in the end found the Lord so mercifully gracious and bountiful to him, that it may encourage all pious men to endure with such a wonderful submission as he did.

Who, when he lost his goods, his house, his children, his health, nay, was all over ulcerous, and in great pain; and, moreover, was solicited by his wife to speak irreverently, if not irreligiously, of God, and to deny his providence; and by his friends was upbraided as a hypocrite, nay, accused in their passion as a tyrannical oppressor; whereby they endeavoured to bereave him, as St. Ambrose observes (lib. i. De Interpel. cap. 4), of that great comfort in afflictions, *culpa vacare*, "to be conscious of no enormous crime," and to make him appear to himself as the author of his calamity; at which his inferiors mocked

and scoffed, who had formerly had him in great veneration: nay, it exposed him to the scorn of those who were not worthy to be set with the dogs of his flock; so that he looked as if he had been deserted by God, and made an example of his heaviest displeasure: yet he bare all at the very first (when men are wont to be shaken, nay overthrown, by the sudden news of such dreadful disasters), not only with much resolution and resignation, but with hearty thanksgiving; and, through the whole course of his calamity, committed no error that I can discern, but what the indiscreet and uncharitable censures of his friends provoked him unto: which put him upon too frequent and long justifications of himself, and perplexed him extremely (which seems his greatest trouble), that he could not find out the reason why God afflicted him so severely.

But in the issue God revealed to him what it was fit for him to think in this matter also: and thereby hath given us such satisfaction in that great controversy, and difficult question about God's providence, as is nowhere to be met withal but in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Even prudent men, as St. Ambrose observes (lib. ii. De Interpellatione, cap. 1), in a book he hath written about Job, are apt to be extremely moved when they see the wick'd abound with good things, and the just very much afflicted: and truly, says he, it is lubricus locus, "a slippery place," in which the saints have scarce been able to tread in the path of a true opinion, as we see in David, and Job, who maintained a long conflict with his three ancient friends who came to comfort him upon this subject. And God himself brought the dispute at last to such a conclusion, as may fully settle the minds of all those who meet with this book, and preserve them from being scandalized, or in the least offended, on such occasions. The Mahometans themselves seem to be fully satisfied, as we read in the Lives of the Fathers, written in the Arabian language by Kessæus; who brings in the Most High, speaking to Job's friends after this manner (Hotting. Hist. Orientalis, lib. i. cap. 3), "Do you not know that Job is a prophet of God, whom he hath chosen to his apostleship, and to whom he hath committed his inspiration? God would not have you think that he is angry with him; as you seem to gather from this afflicted state wherein he lies. For you know that God is wont to prove the prophets, the just, the martyrs, and other good men; wherein notwithstanding there is no indignation, or contempt of them, but honour rather with God most high."

Thus St. Chrysostom I find most elegantly represents him as a far more glorious spectacle when he sat on the dunghill, than the greatest prince, without his virtue, is when he sits upon a throne. "His ulcers (says he, Hom. v. ad Populum Antiochenum) were far more valuable in my account than all their precious stones. For what profit do we receive by them? What necessity, what want do they supply? But these ulcers of his are the comfort of all manner of heaviness that can seize upon us. You may know this to be true, if, when a man hath lost his genuine and only son, you show him a thousand jewels and precious stones, which give no comfort at all to his grief, nor in the least assuage his trouble and pain. But in this case, if you remember him of the wounds of Job, he presently finds some ease: when you ask him, saying, Why dost thou weep and lament, O man, on this fashion? Thou hast lost one son, but that blessed man lost all the children he had: and, together with that blow, received a stroke in his flesh, and sat naked in the dung, besmeared all over with the filth that ran out his wounds: in a deep consumption, which by little and little wasted that just, that true, that devout man, who abstained from all manner of

evil, and had God himself for the witness of his virtue. If thou dost but speak these words, instantly thou extinguishest the heaviness of the mourner, and riddest him out of all his grief; and so the ulcers of that righteous man become more profitable to him than jewels.

"Do you therefore conceive now that you have that champion before your eyes; and that you see the dung and him sitting in it; a statue of gold, of diamonds, I am not able to say of what: for there is nothing so precious as to be worthy to be compared with that ulcerated body, whose sores shine more brightly than the beams of the sun; which enlighten only the eyes of the body, but these illuminate the eyes of the mind. They make us see, and they made the devil quite blind: for after he had given those wounds in his body, he fled and appeared no more. See here, beloved, how great the gain of affliction is! For when that righteous man was rich, and enjoyed his ease, the devil had something to say against him: though falsely, indeed, yet this he had to say; 'Doth Job serve God for naught!' But after he had stripped him naked, and made him a beggar, he had not a word to say; he durst not so much as open his mouth against him. When he was rich then he adventured to wrestle with him, and threatened to supplant him; but after he had made him poor, deprived him of all he had, and reduced him to the extremest grief and sorrow, he ran away, and durst not renew the assault. When his body was sound then he laid violent hands on him; but when he had filled it with wounds, he was routed and fled away vanquished. By this thou seest how much poverty may prove better than riches, weakness than health, temptation than ease and quiet, to those that are vigilant and watchful: who make a profit of all these; and by fighting grow more illustrious and courageous. Who ever saw, who ever heard, such noble combats?"

But there is none, that I have met withal, who represents him in such lively colours, as the great St. Basil; who, in a sermon of his (tom. I. Homil. xxliii. p. 565, &c. the latter part of which was occasioned by a lamentable fire, that happened near their church, and put it in danger), exhorts all the rich, who were untouched by the flames, to relieve their poor neighbours, whose goods were consumed in them; and then addressing himself to those, who had saved themselves, but nothing else, beseeches them, "Not to take their loss too heavily, nor to let their minds be disturbed; but to shake off the misty cloud of sorrow, and to strengthen their souls with such generous and manly thoughts, as might turn this accident into an occasion of crowns. For which end, he advises them to put themselves in mind of the constancy of Job; and to say to themselves, as he did, 'The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; as it seemed good to the Lord, so it is come to pass.' And by no means (says he) let any of you be moved with what hath happened, either to say, or think, there is no Providence which rules our affairs; or presume to accuse the dispensation and judgment of the Lord; but let him fix his eyes on that champion, and make him his counsellor, who will advise him to better thoughts.

"Let him recount in order all the agonies he endured, and then observe how bravely he came off; and how the devil threw all his darts at him in vain; not one of them giving him a deadly wound. First he set upon his goods, and endeavoured to overwhelm him with doleful news of various calamities, which came tumbling like the waves of the sea, one upon the neck of another; but all to no purpose, for the just man received them as a rock doth the fury of the tempest; turning the rage of the waves into froth, and standing itself immovable. He said not a word

that we read of; he made no complaints of these disasters; or if he said anything, we may well presume, it was those decent and becoming words which we read in the conclusion, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; as it pleased the Lord, so it is come to pass.' But he did not think any of those calamities that befell him to be worth his lamenting with his tears.

"Well, but there comes one afterward that tells him a most dismal story, of the death of all his children by the fall of the house wherein they were making merry. At this, it is true, he rent his garments; and it is the first expression of his grief that we meet withal, in compliance with the passions of nature, and to declare himself a most tender father. But he set some bounds to his grief, and adorned what had happened with those pious words, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away,' &c. As if he should have said, I was called their father, as long as he that made me so pleased. But now he hath taken off this crown of children from my head, and it is not fit for me to contend and dispute with him about his own. Let that be which seemeth best to the Lord. He it was that formed them, I was but the instrument. Why should I, who am but a servant, foolishly complain of my master; and repine at that decree which I cannot alter?"

"With such words as these that righteous man wounded the devil; and, as one would say, shot a dart quite through his heart, which so enraged him, that, seeing him still a conqueror, he made an assault upon his body; which he turned into corruption, and made it become such a bag of worms, that from a throne it was cast upon a dunghill. And yet the good man remained immovable: and when his body was torn, preserved still the hidden treasure of piety in his soul, of which the devil could not rob him. And therefore, not knowing what to do more, he betook himself to his old stratagem; and instigating his wife to entertain irreligious and blasphemous thoughts, attempted that way to overthrow this champion. For she, tired with the long continuance of his calamities, came to him, and clapping her hands at what she beheld, upbraided him with these lamentable fruits of his piety, and rehearsing his former prosperity, and then pointing at this present misery, asked him, if this was the reward which he received from the Lord for all his sacrifices? With abundance of such-like words, which were enough to disturb the most composed, and subvert the most steady and resolved mind. I am a vagabond, said she, and am forced to crouch to others like a slave; I, who was a queen, am constrained to depend upon my servants for relief; I, who maintained many liberally, am now nourished myself out of other folks' charity. Adding, that it would be far better for him, to provoke his angry Creator, by impious words, to cut him off, than by an unprofitable patience thus to prolong both his and her misery.

"But he, more offended with these words than any of his former sufferings, with eyes full of indignation, looked upon her as an enemy, and asked what ailed her to talk thus like one of the foolish women? Lay aside, said he, these thoughts, and let me hear no more of this advice, which makes me appear to myself as if one half of me were wicked and irreligious. 'What, shall we receive good at the hands of the Lord, and shall we not suffer evil? Remember all the past happiness thou hast enjoyed, and oppose better unto worse. No man's life is entirely and thoroughly happy. *Τὸ διὰ πάντων εὐ πράττειν, μόνου Θεοῦ*, "To be always as well as we can wish, belongs to God alone." If thou art grieved at what is present, fetch thy comfort from what thou hast received

before. Now thou weepst, but formerly thou didst laugh; now thou art poor, but there was a time when thou wantedst nothing. Then thou drankest of the pure fountain of life; be content, and drink now the more patiently of the troubled waters. Behold the rivers, their streams are not clear in all places; and our life thou knowest is like to one of them, which slides away continually, and is oftentimes full of waves, which come rolling one upon another: one part of this river is passed by, and another is running on its course. This part of it is gushing out from the fountain, and the next is ready to follow it as soon as it is gone. And thus we are all making great haste to the common sea; death, I mean, which swallows up all at last.

"If we receive good from the hands of the Lord, shall we not bear evil? Think of that again. Shall we go about to compel the Judge to afford us just the very same things for ever? Shall we presume to instruct our Lord and Master how he ought to conduct our life? He hath the power of his own decrees and orders as he pleases, so he appoints our portion for us. And we know that he is wise, and that he dispenses to his servants what is most profitable for them. Do not then curiously pry into the counsels and resolutions of thy Lord and Governor; only take in good part, and affectionately embrace, whatsoever is ordered by his wisdom. Love his administration; and whatsoever he is pleased to give, receive it with pleasure. Demonstrate now in a sorrowful condition, that thou wast worthy of all the joy which thou hadst formerly in a better.

"Thus Job discoursing, he baffled the devil once more; and gave him such a repulse, that he made him perfectly ashamed to see himself thus vanquished. And what ensued after this? why, when the devil was beaten, his disease fled away too, having assaulted him in vain, and got no ground of him. His flesh began to recover into a second youth; he flourished also in his estate, which was restored to him with increase. For riches flowed so plentifully into his house, that they were double to what he had before: first, that he might be no loser by his affliction; and, secondly, that he might have a merciful reward of his patience under it. Therefore it was that his horses, mules, and camels, and sheep, and all the rest of his revenue, were doubled, only his children were no more than equal to the number he had before, seven sons and three daughters. The reason was because his beasts, indeed, perished entirely; but the better part of his children still survived, when they were taken from him. And therefore being again adorned with as many sons and daughters as formerly he enjoyed, he had a double portion of them also; those who are present with him here, and those who expected him in the other world. Behold then what good things this just man, Job, heaped up to himself, by his patient submission to God. And do thou, therefore, if thou hast suffered grievously in this fire, which the malice of the devil kindled, bear it constantly, and lenify the affliction with these better thoughts; according to that which is written, 'Cast all thy care upon the Lord, and he will sustain thee.'

To this purpose that great person, St. Basil, discourses, when he represents how Job received the first assaults of his affliction, and how happily it ended. And there is great reason to think that he did not, in the progress of it, swerve from those good beginnings, which had so blessed a conclusion; but whatsoever expressions fell from him, when he was engaged in the heat of disputation, he still preserved such a religious temper of mind, as made him not cease to submit himself reverently to God's will, and

to thank him for all the benefits he had formerly received from his bounty. Nor do I find any cause for the censures which Maimonides (More Nevoch, par. iii. cap. 23. and out of him Manasseh ben Israel, lib. i. De Resurrectione, cap. 16) hath passed upon the disputation between him and his friends, about divine providence, which he hath thus stated:

"Job (saith he) maintains that mankind is so vile a sort of being, that God doth not regard the best of them any more than he doth the worst; but it is all one to him, when a calamity comes, whether it light upon the offenders, or upon the innocent. Nay, more than this, he affirms that there is no expectation after death, and consequently no hope remaining for him." Which are such blasphemies, that Maimonides is fain to seek excuses for him; and for that end, alleges a common saying among their wise men, that "A man is not apprehended, or seized on, because of his grief;" that is, what he says in extremity of pain is not imputed to him for sin. But there is no need of this apology; for the places he alleges do not prove him guilty of uttering such things, as (to speak in his words) are evil in the highest degree. Though Manasseh ben Israel is so presumptuous, as to charge him with such a profane denial of divine providence, at least here below the moon, that he makes him impute all his misery to the malignant aspect of the planets, under which he was conceived and born.

To which opinion of Job, say they, every one of his friends opposed a particular opinion of his own, differing each of them from the other. And, first, Eliphaz endeavours to establish this for a certain truth, "That as afflictions do not come by chance, but by the providence of God, so they are sent for the sins of men;" and therefore, without all doubt, Job was a great offender, which was the cause he was handled in this manner. "This opinion (says Maimonides) he held to the last; only was fain to add, in conclusion, that all the ways whereby we deserve punishment do not appear."

Then after him (when Job had argued against this) comes Bildad, who produces a new opinion, grounded upon the doctrine of permutation, or recompense, as they speak; that is, "He believed the evils which Job endured here, should, if he proved innocent, be changed into good things; and, in the issue, be highly serviceable to him in another world."

After whom succeeds Zophar, with a different resolution from all these; which was, "That God acts according to his own pleasure, and that we are not to search for any cause of his actions out of his own will; nor to say, why doth he this, and not that? In short, we are not to seek the way of equity, and the decree of wisdom in his doings; for it necessarily belongs to his essence that he do what he will; and our understanding is too shallow to comprehend the secrets of his wisdom, whose right and property it is that he may do according to his pleasure, and for no other cause."

And these four opinions about providence, Maimonides undertakes to show have had their several assertors since, who have propagated them among their scholars. Job's opinion, he saith, is the same with Aristotle's, who attributed all to accident. Bildad was followed by the sect of Mutazali (a kind of pharisees among the Ishmaelites), who ascribed all to wisdom. Zophar, by the sect of Assaria, who attributed all to will and pleasure. And Eliphaz, he fancies, held the opinion of the law; which is, that God deals with men according to their works.

But when that all these men had disputed, nothing moved Job, there stands up another, whose name was Elihu, "who first proves the providence of God from prophetic dreams (xxxiii. 15), and to those things

which Eliphaz had said, adds, according to the imagination of Manasseh ben Israel, the doctrine of the transmigration of souls (which he labours to find in ver. 14), and thereby, in a wonderful way, says he, resolves all the doubt, by determining that Job, and other just men, may be punished for sins which they committed in a former body."

But as there is no footstep, that I can see, for this fond conceit, which he honours with the name of a mystery; so it is evident that these men follow their own vain inventions in all this discourse, directly contrary to the book itself. For they make Job's opinion the very worst of all the rest; when the Lord himself tells Eliphaz, in the conclusion of the book (xlii. 7), that he was angry with him and his two other friends, because they had not spoken of him so rightly as Job had. And it doth not appear by their speeches, that they held several opinions about providence and took every one of them a different way (that is a mere rabbinical subtlety) to solve the doubt, wherein Job's unusual sufferings had perplexed them.

But they seem to have harped all of them upon one and the same string, as I have represented in the arguments before each chapter.

From whence the conclusion of Maimonides will be very evident (which is the best thing he says), that "The scope of the book is, to establish the great article of providence; and thereby to preserve us from error, in thinking that God's knowledge is like our knowledge,—or his intention, providence, and government like our intention, providence, and government. Which foundation being laid, nothing will seem hard to a man whatsoever happens: nor will he fall into dubious thoughts concerning God, whether he knows what is befallen us or not, and whether he takes any care of us. But rather he will be inflamed the more vehemently in the love of God; as it is said in the end of this prophecy, 'Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.' So say our wise men, 'They that act out of love, will rejoice in chastisements.'"

THE

BOOK OF PSALMS.

TO ALL DEVOUT CHRISTIANS,

ESPECIALLY THOSE THAT FREQUENT THE

DAILY PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH,

THE AUTHOR DEDICATETH THIS

PARAPHRASE OF THE BOOK OF PSALMS:

Wishing them increase of grace and comfort, by "singing praises unto God with understanding" (Ps. xlvii. 7).

P R E F A C E .

THE work itself proves so long, that I must make the preface the shorter; which shall be confined to these two heads: First, A brief account of the Book of Psalms; Secondly, of my paraphrase upon it.

I. For the first, The book is a most admirable piece of poetry, which moves more powerfully, and touches the mind more sensibly, than sentences in prose; especially when it is in such perfection as we find it in these divine inspirations.—For, as Melancthon truly speaks, this is the most elegant work extant in the world; and hath performed that, I may add, which Plato himself wished for, but confessed was above the reach of mere men. There was no more efficacious way, that philosopher clearly saw, of instructing youth, than by odes and songs; about which he dis-

courses at large, and gives a great many cautions in his second book of Laws; but, after all, concludes at last (p. 657, edit. Serran.) τούτο δὲ Θεοῦ, ἢ Δείου τιτὸς, ἂν εἴη. "This must be the work of God, or of some divine man:" wherein he plainly acknowledges the defect of their institution (though certain poems were pretended then to have been anciently made by their goddess Isis,) and marvellously justifies the Hebrew discipline, who taught their children or scholars by hymns.

Which Moses, the man of God, began to compose (Exod. xv. Deut. xxxii.,) and other inspired persons afterward imitated (Judges v. 1 Sam. ii.), but was brought to perfection by David; who, as he was an admirable artist in music (1 Sam. xvi. 18), and himself invented some musical instruments, as we learn from the prophet Amos, vi. 5, so was an incomparable poet (2 Sam. xxiii. 1, 2), and took all occasions to exercise this faculty, not on such low subjects as those to which it is commonly debased, but in abundance of divine meditations, which are gathered together in this book; wherein he calls upon them to listen unto him, saying, "Come, ye children, hearken unto me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord" (Ps. xxxiv. 11).

It is called, in their language, *Sepher Tehillem*, *The Book of Psalms or Hymns*; i. e. Praises of the Lord: because, though there are many complaints, and imprecations, and prayers in it, yet the greatest part are praises or thanksgivings unto God: and in those other, there are many mixtures

of acknowledgments what God had formerly done for him, or of confidence what he would still do, or of resolutions how thankful he would be when God granted him deliverance. Which gave them such a strange power "to cure heaviness, to extirpate grief, to wipe away sorrow, to lay asleep troublesome thoughts and passions, to ease us of our cares, to recreate those who are oppressed with any sort of pains (they are the words of Proclus, Archbishop of Constantinople, Serm. de Incarn. Dom.), as well as to move compunction for sin, and to stimulate unto piety;" that no book in the world is to be compared with it for these purposes.

And as it is called the Book of Psalms, or Praises, from the major part, so they are called David's Psalms, because he made the most of them; though it must be confessed there were several other authors, by whom some of them were composed.

In the Hebrew they are divided, like Moses's law, into five books, as I shall show in due place, and so may be called a second Pentateuch: which seem to have been collected by several persons (as will appear in the preface to each of them); for no other reason but that can be given why all that belong to one subject were not put together; or, at least, all those composed by David placed by themselves, and not so mixed as they are with those made by other authors.

Some think they were gathered together by the friends of Hezekiah, before the captivity. But if they had been so, they would, in all probability, have been disposed in such order as they were penned; all the sacred books being preserved in the temple, as Josephus witnesses (Antiq. lib. iii. cap. 1), with great care; from whence they might have taken the copies of them, with the names of all their authors, which now, in many of them, are wanting. Which makes it more likely that, after the temple and the sacred records were burnt by the king of Babylon's army, some pious persons collected as many as they could find, by inquiring among their friends, in those good men's hands who had transcribed them heretofore for their own private use, every one as he had most need. For the songs of Zion the people were very well acquainted withal, though it lay desolate, as it appears by the hundred and thirty-seventh Psalm, where the Babylonians desire to hear one of them sung by the mournful captives.—Who preserved them, no doubt, to their comfort in that sad condition, and added to them such as were made by divine men, during its continuance, and after their return from captivity.

When, as St. Athanasius (tom. ii. p. 86) resolves in his Synopsis (following the Hebrew tradition), Ezra put them together in one volume, as we now have them, which is not affirmed without reason: for we find that the foundation of the second temple was no sooner laid, but Ezra (as the Hebrews call him) restored the ancient custom of psalmody, or singing psalms of praise (Ezra iii. 10, 11), which David had appointed to accompany the sacrifices as soon as the ark was settled (1

Chron. vi. 31, xvi. 17; Eccles. 1. 15, 16, &c.) and which Solomon continued after he had built the temple, and brought the ark into it (2 Chron. v. 12, 13).

Now, when all those bloody sacrifices were abolished, by the offering which Christ made of himself, the sacrifice of praise alone remained, as the principal service of the christian church; several persons being inspired, not only to pray divinely, but to prophesy also, or to sing psalms and hymns of praise; as we read in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, xi. 5, xiv. 15. 26. And in the book of the Revelations, we find the apostles and elders thus employed, Rev. iv. 9—11, in which the people bare a part; as we learn from the next chapter, v. 9, 13, xiv. 1—3. So that St. Austin might tell Januarius (Epist. cxix. cap. 18), that "concerning singing hymns and psalms, we have instructions, and examples, and precepts, both of our Lord himself, and of his apostles." According to which, the churches of Africa sang *divina cantica prophetarum*, "the divine songs of the prophets," while the drunken Donatists sang the composesures of human wit. Nor can I see, saith he, what Christians can do more profitably, and more holily than this, when they meet together, and are not reading, preaching, or praying.

Those *divina cantica*, no doubt, were principally the Psalms of David, in singing of which Christian people delighted above all other exercises of devotion.

The manner of their singing, also, was like that in Ezra's time (Ezra iii. 11); one beginning the hymn, and the rest answering the *τὰ ἀποστιχια*, "extremes, or last words of it," as the author of the Apostolical Constitutions tells us (lib. ii. cap. 57), which Eusebius calls the *Ἀποστιχενρία τῶν ᾠμῶν*, "the last part of the hymns," which he expressly says were sung by the whole company, who hearkened in silence to him that sang the rest, till he came to the close, which they all repeated together (lib. ii. Eccles. Hist. cap. 17). And when that manner of singing the Psalms, which we now use in our choirs, was brought in by Flavianus and Diodorus, who at Antioch divided the choir into two parts (singing the Psalms of David *ἐκ διαδοχῆς*, *alternately*, one verse by this half of the choir, and the next by the other), it thence spread itself, as it were by a joint consent, all the world over. Thus Theodoret informs us in his Eccles. Hist. book ii. ch. 19.

By which means the people came to be so well acquainted with them, that (as the same Theodoret tells us in his preface to this book of Psalms) both in city and country this was the employment of Christian people. They that minded no other book of the scriptures, yet had this so by heart, that both in their houses, and in the streets, and in the highways, they were wont to recreate themselves with the singing of these holy songs.

But I must not enlarge any further on this subject, nor fill this preface with the high commendations which the ancients give both of psalmody and of this book of Psalms; which St. Basil (who

alone would furnish me with the sense of all the rest, if it were fit to transcribe his preface to it) calls the "common treasure of all good precepts" (containing the perfections of all the rest of the scriptures), *ἡ κοινὴ θησαυρὸς πάντων*, "the voice of the church," in which may be found *θεολογία τέλεια*, "a complete body of theology."

Which will make this paraphrase, I hope, the more acceptable; of which it is time now that I give an account.

II. There being two ways of paraphrasing—one which keeps to the metaphors, and pursues them in more words of the like kind; another which puts those borrowed forms of speech into proper and common expressions,—I have chosen the latter, and endeavoured, by giving a clear interpretation, and expressing as well as I could the true force and just value of every phrase, to make the original words plain and easy in our language; as may be seen particularly, xviii. 2, xix. 8, 9. In which endeavour, it is likely, I may sometimes meet with the censures of those who do not consider the import of the Hebrew words; but not be thought much faulty, I hope, by such as can and will consult them; for they will find I have carefully weighed them, and taken some pains rightly to expound them; not largely, nor making discourses upon them, but in a few words representing the mind and spirit of the psalmist in his own way, which is devotion. And where there are two senses of which a word is capable, they will find likewise that I have endeavoured to express them both, if the matter would bear it. As, for example (to name one place for all) in Ps. cxix. 126, where we read, "It is time for thee, O Lord, to work: for they have made void thy law:" I have expounded it thus, "It is time to work to the Lord," or "for the Lord," &c.; because all the ancient interpreters, except one, have so understood it; yet I have not neglected the other sense, which we follow, but made them agree well together. I have preferred, indeed, the first interpretation, not only for the reason now named, but because the words run most currently so in the Hebrew: and the best of the Jews have expounded them in that manner. Maimonides, for instance, who says this was one argument that moved him to write his famous book, called *More Nevochim*; which some might account an audacious attempt, because never undertaken, he saith (Præfat. pag. penult.), by any of their nation since this long captivity (as he calls it); but he supported himself with this principle—that it is said concerning such sort of matters, "It is time to do something for the Lord: they having made void thy law." And in like manner, David Ganz, in his *Chronology*, says (ad an. 3978), that R. Judah Hakodesh, observing their oral law, or traditional religion, in danger to be lost, set it down in writing, though there was a prohibition against it: for *הבתרוב סמך על התורה* the rabbi relied upon this scripture (thinking it would bear him out), "It is time to work to the Lord," &c. which he expounded to this sense; Now that the law by word of mouth is like to be forgotten, and utterly

lost, there must be something extraordinary done to uphold it; and so he wrote the Mishna.

I have sometimes also followed Theodoret in the explication of some phrases; which I think good to signify, that none may be too forward to censure that for which I have a good authority at least, if not a weighty reason. As, for example, Ps. lxxxix. ver. 13. I have grounded my paraphrase upon his notion, That as the *hand of God* denotes the divine energy, so *his right hand* signifies his energy for good; and therefore, they then needing a double energy, the psalmist remembers both his *hand* and his *right hand*; desiring to see their enemies destroyed and themselves delivered.

And if the readers will please to take the pains to compare the text with the references I have made (and enclosed) in the paraphrase to other scriptures, they will easily see (especially if they have any understanding in the original language) that I have not followed my own fancy in my interpretation, but had good reason for expounding the text as I have done in such places; and that this paraphrase may serve, in many places, instead of a larger commentary upon the words. As, for example, Ps. cxlvii. 19, *his words*, I think, plainly relate to the *ten words* spoken on mount Sinai, as I might have shown if I intended to write annotations.

Which if I had undertaken, it would not, perhaps, have been wholly a superfluous labour; but I might have produced something new, as I think I have done in this paraphrase; else I should not have attempted it, especially after such an excellent person as Dr. Hammond. For therein I have interpreted some phrases otherwise than they have been understood; of which I think good here to give one example. The *son of man* and the *sons of men* (*ben Adam* and *bene isch*) are phrases which often occur; which I have good ground to think belong in the scripture language to *princes*; and sometimes *the greatest of princes*. So I have expounded that known place, Ps. lxxx. 17, "the man of thy right hand, the son of man, whom thou madest strong for thyself;" and Ps. iv. 2, "O ye sons of men," i. e. rulers of people; and viii. 3, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man (i. e. the greatest of men), that thou visitest him?" cxlvi. 3. "Put not your confidence in princes, nor in the son of man (how great a prince, that is, soever he may be, though of never such dignity and power), in whom there is no help."

And thus the counsellors of Saul are called "the sons of men," lviii. 1, and so I understand those words in Isa. li. 12, "Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man (that is, a prince), who shall be as grass?" where, upon the words that go before, "I am he that comforteth you," Theodoret hath this note: "I am he that cast Pharaoh and his army into the sea; he who killed many thousands of the Assyrians by one angel." From which I conclude, that he understood the following words thus: Why dost thou then fear any

man, though he be never so great a tyrant, and armed with never so much power! as the king of Babylon then was, whom he calls an *oppressor* presently after, who carried them captive from their own land.

Thus, in the title of the ninth Psalm, the Septuagint, for *labben* read *τοῦ νόου*; and so Symmachus Aquila and Theodoret, as Theodoret there observes: the former of whom makes it a triumphal song for the death of *that son*; which most interpreters, as I have there observed, conclude to have been that great man Goliath. The original of which language, I conceive, is to be fetched from the common manner of speech among the Hebrews, who call the chief of any kind by the name of the whole kind. As they call man *creature*, Mark xvi. 15, because the prime creature here below: so a king, or eminent person, they call the *son of man*, because the prime among the sons of men. Thus St. Peter, 1 Pet. ii. 13, calls magistrates *human creatures*; where the Syriac translates *sons of men*, i. e. *great men, or governors*. And so *man* is used, Gen. ix. 6, for a man in authority. But all this is to be understood of that expression, *ben Adam*; as for *ben Enosh*, which we also render *son of man* (Ps. cxlv. 3), it hath another signification, importing the wretchedness of any man's condition. And if that had been the name whereby the angel salutes Ezekiel, it might have been to put him in mind of his mean condition, though conversing with heavenly ministers; but he constantly calling him *ben Adam*, I see no reason why we should not think it denotes him to be a *great man*, highly esteemed by God, and appointed by him to judge and pass sentence upon his people (Ezek. xx. 4). And, in like manner, Daniel is called *son of man*, Dan. viii. 17, who in the next chapters hath the title of a "man greatly beloved" (ix. 23. x. 11).

And, by the way, I may observe, that from hence we may learn what to understand by that title which our blessed Saviour so often gives himself, of *ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου*, "the Son of man," or rather "that Son of man;" that is, the Messiah, the Lord's anointed, that great Prince God promised to bless them withal. It can have no other meaning in John v. 22, 27 (where he saith, God hath committed all judgment unto him, and given him authority to execute it, because he is the Son, or that Son, of man) than this; that he is that great person whom God designed to be the Lord and governor of all things. So he appeared to be when he sent the Holy Ghost; which seems to be called "the coming of the Son of man," Matt. x. 23, where he says, they "shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man come;" by the power, that is, of the Holy Ghost, to enable them, and give them authority, to go and preach him in all other countries, as well as there, to be the great lord of all.

But instead of such annotations as these, which the world is already well furnished withal (particularly by the learned Dr. Hammond upon this book), I have only, in the argument to each Psalm, given a brief account now and then of

some difficulties; and both there, and in the paraphrase itself, pointed to such parts of the history of David, or others, as I thought the Psalms have a respect unto. Which I have followed so closely as to waver other expositions, when I thought I saw clear warrant to accommodate them to that. For in my judgment (to use the words of that good man Musculus, upon the hundred and thirty-second Psalm, ver. 9), "It is the duty of every pious person, as much as he is able, to prefer that exposition which is approved by most testimonies of the holy scriptures, before all others whatsoever, though in show and appearance never so plausible."

For this reason I have forborne a great many mystical and allegorical senses of the words, and rather adhered to the literal meaning, though accounted trivial and vulgar by many men; who had rather indulge to their own fancies, than be at the pains of making a diligent inquiry after the truth. For, whatsoever is pretended, it is not the easiness and meanness of the literal sense which have made it be despised, and been the cause of allegorizing the scriptures; but the great difficulty and labour that are required to the finding of it out in many places. St. Jerome and St. Austin confess as much, who spent their younger years in mystical interpretations, as more easy studies; but when they grew old, applied themselves to historical explanations. Which St. Jerome, in his preface to the prophet Obadiah, confesses he did not understand when he wrote upon that book in his youth; and in plain terms ingenuously acknowledges those mystical expositions were the work, *puerilis ingenii*, "of his childish wit," at which he blushed and hung down his head, even when others cried them up to the skies; but the historical explications (which then he set out), the work *mature senectutis*, "of his mature age;" when he had at least profited thus far, as to know, with Socrates, that he was ignorant. In short, he begins that preface with the words of the apostle. "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things;" and hopes this would excuse him for interpreting that prophet allegorically in the heat of his youth, whose history he did not know. St. Austin acknowledges as much, in his first volume of *Retractions*, ch. 18, which I will not transcribe, but only set down the words of Martin Bucer, one of the first reformers, upon the sixth of St. Matthew; where he says, that "it would be worth a great deal to the church, if, forsaking allegories and other frivolous devices, which are not only empty, but derogate very much from the majesty of the doctrine of Christ, we would all simply and soberly prosecute that which our Lord intends to say to us."

This hath been my rule, though I have not so followed (I must add) the strict literal sense as to make a mere Judaical paraphrase (which Theodoret complains, in his preface to this book, was the fault of some that went before him), but have improved the words in all places to a sublimer

sense, where I had any direction from our Saviour or his apostles to apply them to the things belonging to Christ's kingdom. But where I wanted their guidance, I have not taken upon me to do it (unless it be very sparingly, where the church hath thought it probable there was something intended beyond the letter), because I did not know whether the Holy Ghost, which indited the words, had respect to these times, as well as to those histories, to which I thought I saw a clear warrant to apply them.

And where there is no title to the Psalm (which St. Jerome, or one under his name, calls the *key*, to let us into the sense of it), it is not easy to tell to what history it relates: but must be acknowledged to be *ἔργον μέγιστον*, &c. (as Origen upon the first Psalm speaks, Philocalia, cap. 2, from some learned Hebrew), a work of very great labour, to find the keys which lie scattered up and down in several parts of the scripture, and then to fit them to the places which they are to open. In this I have taken some pains, as may be seen in the arguments to the several Psalms; in some of which, if I differ from those that have gone before me, I hope none will be so perverse as to make it a fault; for (as the true St. Jerome speaks in his preface to the Psalms, according to the Hebrew verity) since they are still desiring new pleasures, and the neighbouring seas cannot satisfy men's gluttony, *cur in solo studio scripturarum, veteri sapore contenti sunt?* "why in the study of the scriptures alone can they relish nothing that is new, but content themselves merely with that which tastes of antiquity?" Which I do not speak, as he proceeds, to reflect upon my predecessors, or detract from their excellent labours (to which I thankfully acknowledge I am exceedingly beholden), but only to give an account to the readers of what I have done, that they may not think I have only transcribed what I found before said in this argument, and brought no further light to it.

Why, may some be forward to say, do you pretend, after so many monuments of learning, both ancient and modern, to bring forth anything which hath not been said before, and said better? I answer, as Muculus doth in the like case (*Præfat. ad Lectorum*), if the treasure of the holy scriptures be such that it can be drawn so dry by the diligent searches of pious and learned men, as nothing shall remain to exercise the studies of those that succeed them; if there be at any time such an effusion of God's Holy Spirit that after that time it is in vain to labour in finding out its mind in the holy scriptures; if there have been in the church, after the prophets, Christ, and his apostles, men of such perfect accomplishments, that to them was imparted such a universal fullness of divine knowledge as to make their writings absolutely complete, so that we need do nothing but night and day study them alone; then truly I refuse not the censure of folly, nay, of madness, for attempting anything new in the holy scriptures after such absolute writers. But if that most rich fountain of the divine oracles be altogether inexhaustible, and no age can be assigned

to which alone the grace of the Holy Spirit was confined, and there were never any doctors at any time in the church, after Christ, the apostles, and prophets, of such esteem, that nothing is wanting in their writings, nothing can be rightly added to them, nothing is in them which may be justly taken away, or changed for the better; then I do not see why we may not profitably travel in the same way that others have done, with hopes of adding more light to that which they have left us.

It is better, indeed, if a man only consults his own worldly ease and tranquillity, not to trouble himself at all about such studies, but to get a reputation merely by censuring those that are thus employed. But if a man look upon himself as consecrated to the service of Christ, and seek not what he thinks will please himself, so much as what will please his master Christ, and from him alone expect his reward, he will not think fit to be discouraged in such endeavours by the hatred or the unkind censures which they may procure him; no, nor by the sense neither of his own infirmities, and the lapses he may have in such writings: which all truly good men will pardon, when they see an honest diligence in us to do as well as we can; and when they remember that no one man can do all things, nor nothing so as to need no correction.

Submitting therefore this work, such as it is, to the correction and amendment of those that are better able, and shall hereafter labour in this argument, I commend it to the perusal of devout Christians; hoping that the light I have given to this admirable book is so clear, if not great, that they will, by God's blessing, receive no small benefit by it. For there is nothing which David or any of the rest say of themselves and their condition, but by an easy accommodation may be made to serve every one of our occasions when we are in any strait, public or private, or when we have received any remarkable deliverance. Athanasius hath said much on this subject, which I must not transcribe, nor show how they are fitted (as Gregory Nyssen observes, lib. i. *De Inscript. Psal.* tom. i. p. 261.) to all persons and ages, to all conditions of life, and all manner of employments, to the state both of sickness and of health, when we are upon the land or upon the water, so wonderful is their useful variety. But I shall conclude this preface, as Theodoret doth his commentaries upon this book:—

"I beseech the readers, if I seem to have expounded it well and aptly, that they would reap the profit of it; and if I have not attained the secret mysteries of the Spirit, that they would not find fault too much; for what I could find I have freely propounded, and what I have learnt of those gone before I endeavour to transmit to posterity; and I have taken the pains, of which others may receive the benefit without any labour. Whom I beseech and entreat to make some compensation for my pains with their prayers, by the help of which I may to words add deeds, and reap the blessedness which belongs to both. For he that doeth and teacheth

shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. v. 19).

"And let us praise the Lord (as St. Chrysostom also concludes) perpetually (as this book instructs us); let us never cease to give thanks in all things, both by our words and by our deeds. For this is our sacrifice, this is our oblation, this is the best liturgy, or divine service, resembling the angelical manner of living. If we continue

thus singing hymns unto him, we shall finish this life inoffensively, and enjoy those good things also which are to come. Of which, may we all be so happy as to be partakers, through the grace and loving kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ; to whom, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be glory, dominion, and honour, now and for ever. Amen."

PART I.

PSALM I.

1 BLESSED is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his

season: his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

4 The ungodly are not so; but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

6 For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

PSALM I.

ARGUMENT.—The collector of these five books of Psalms, or David himself (as Apollinarius and others think), prefaces them by a short discourse about the last end of man; just as the philosophers were wont to do in their books of morality: and as Christ himself doth in the beginning of his sermon on the mount. The end of man is blessedness; and the way to it, observance of God's law; which he lays down here as the foundation (so St. Basil conceives it) of the whole ensuing work. So that we may bestow upon this Psalm the title of ΜΑΚΑΡΙΣΜΟΣ, i. e. *Blessedness*, out of Athanasius's epistle to Marcellinus, and Theodoret's preface to this Psalm.

Ver. 1.] Great is the happiness of that man, unspeakably great, who hath not trod in the steps of the ungodly (who have no other rule of their actions but their own lusts and passions); or, if he hath at any time been seduced by them, timely retracted his folly, and did not persist, like those obdurate wretches, in evil courses; much less persevered so long, and proceeded so far in his impiety, as to resolve to be one of that pestilent company, who deride and scoff at all religion!

Ver. 2.] But his pleasure is to do the will of God, by following his counsels which he hath given in his holy laws; with which he advises and consults continually, and with unwearied study endeavours to be thoroughly acquainted with them.

Ver. 3.] You may behold an emblem of this man's happiness, in those trees which are planted by such trenches as derive their water from a perpetual fountain. As they are green and flourishing all the year, and never fail to reward the gardener's pains at the time he expects to receive their fruit; so shall this pious man be ever prosperous, and in the issue reap a plentiful fruit of his labours; for there are none of his enterprises but shall succeed, according to his heart's desire.

Ver. 4.] Oh, how miserably will those men be deceived, who hope to thrive as well, or better, by their impiety! it is too little to say, that they shall be like trees without any moisture; the light and useless chaff, which is blown away with the wind, is a fitter resemblance of them: for so shall all their counsels, designs, and endeavours, to root themselves in the earth, be scattered and come to nothing.

Ver. 5.] Therefore let them not think to defend themselves when God comes to judge men according to their works: for whatsoever plea they make, or power they have, they shall certainly be overthrown. It is possible, for the present, they may seem to equal or overtop the prosperity of the righteous: but there will be a time when God will make a difference, and give the righteous a happiness wherein they shall have no share at all.

Ver. 6.] For he approves and highly esteems the obedience of the righteous to his holy laws, and therefore will certainly reward it: but that lewd course of life which the wicked lead, he utterly hates, and they shall infallibly perish in it.

PSALM II.

1 WHY do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing ?

2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying,

3 Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

4 He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh : the LORD shall have them in derision.

5 Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.

6 Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.

7 I will declare the decree : the LORD hath

said unto me, Thou art my Son ; this day have I begotten thee.

8 Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron ; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

10 Be wise now therefore, O ye kings : be instructed, ye judges of the earth.

11 Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

PSALM II.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm, under the history of David, whom, from a low and afflicted condition, God raised to a throne, and notwithstanding all the opposition made against it first by Saul, and then by others, settled him in it, contains a most illustrious prophecy of the kingdom of Christ, whom God raised even from the dead, made the King of glory, and, notwithstanding all the scribes and pharisees, Herod and other princes, could do to hinder it, enlarged his kingdom to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Ver. 1.] What frenzy is this, which makes the Philistines, and other neighbouring nations (2 Sam. v. 17, &c. viii. 1, &c.), as I foresee the pharisees and their partakers will do hereafter, storm thus furiously, and bandy together with so much noise and tumult ? why do they contrive to hinder that which the power of God will irresistibly bring to pass ?

Ver. 2.] Their kings and governors are risen up, and lay their heads together, to oppose the design of God, who hath anointed me king over his people : just as Herod, and Pontius Pilate, and the rulers of Israel (Acts iv. 27), will conspire against Christ, and seek to dethrone him, when he is made, by God the Father, King of all the world.

Ver. 3.] Let us not submit, say they, to this new king, who pretends to reign by divine authority ; but resolutely deny to be bound to his obedience, and throw off the yoke which he and his ministers would impose upon us.

Ver. 4.] As if they were stronger than he, whose throne is in heaven : who, as he contemns their vain attempts, so will expose them to the scorn and derision of all those who shall behold their folly.

Ver. 5.] Even then, when they think they have done their business, they shall find the tokens of the divine vengeance against them ; and if they will not desist from their opposition to him, he will utterly confound them with a destruction so terrible and so remarkable, as if he had called to them from heaven, and said,

Ver. 6.] See how madly you set yourselves against my will ; for in spite of all that you can do, I have anointed and set up David, who rules by my authority in the hill of Zion, where I have a peculiar residence ; as in time to come (let all his enemies do what they can to hinder it) I will anoint one of his

posterity to sit upon the throne of glory at the right hand of the majesty on high.

Ver. 7.] Such I am sure is the decree of heaven, which I here promulgate to all the world : for, from a low and poor condition, the Lord hath raised me to the highest dignity. This very day, by his order, I begin to reign, and may call it the birth-day of my kingdom : which is but a slender type of a far more strange and greater exaltation of his son Christ, whom he hath determined to raise again to life after he is dead and buried (Acts xiii. 33. Rom. i. 4), and then to crown with glory and honour in the heavens.

Ver. 8.] If you will not believe this royal edict, you shall shortly see not only this nation of the Jews, but the Philistines, the Edomites, Moabites, Syrians, and other remoter countries as far as Euphrates (whom God, according to his ancient grant, Exod. xxiii. 31, Ezra iv. 16. 20, hath at my request given unto me), subdued under my feet (Ps. lx. 6, &c. 2 Sam. viii.) as all the nations of the earth shall be under his son Christ.

Ver. 9.] They shall never be able to stand before me (much less before him) : for he hath given me a sceptre so powerful (and to him, one infinitely more irresistible), that they who will not bow unto it, and be ruled by it, shall be broken in pieces as easily and irreparably as an earthen pot is with a rod of iron.

Ver. 10.] And therefore let all kings and governors of the earth be advised by me ; take heed what you do, and understand your own interest so well, as not to oppose the decree of Heaven ; or if you have begun to set yourselves against the Lord's anointed, be not so vain as to continue in that folly, but repent, and correct your error.

Ver. 11.] If you would be safe, surrender up yourselves to become his subjects, and be afraid to incur his displeasure by any disobedience. You ought indeed to rejoice, that you may be so happy as to be under the government of so great and so gracious a prince ; but that very thing should make you the more fearful to offend his majesty.

Ver. 12.] To whom I counsel you to go and do your homage, and to pay him all the honour that is due to God's vicegerent ; lest he grow angry at your obstinate refusal to submit unto him, and you perish in that rebellious course, when his wrath breaks out suddenly, like an unquenchable fire, against you. Blessed are all they that follow this advice, and fly to him as their mighty protector and deliverer.

PSALM III.

A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son.

1 LORD, how are they increased that trouble me? many are they that rise up against me.

2 Many *there be* which say of my soul, *There is no help for him in God.* Selah.

3 But thou, O LORD, *art* a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of my head.

4 I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah.

5 I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the LORD sustained me.

6 I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set *themselves* against me round about.

7 Arise, O LORD; save me, O my God: for thou hast smitten all mine enemies *upon* the cheek bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.

8 Salvation *belongeth* unto the LORD: thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah

PSALM III.

ARGUMENT.—Appollinaris calls this *Ἀνυπόμειρος*, “a mournful or lamentable song.” And so it is, if compared with the preceding; otherwise there are in it far greater expressions of faith and triumphant confidence in God, than there are of trouble and dejection of spirit, though David’s condition when he wrote it was very sad and dangerous. For the title, which St. Jerome truly calls the *key of the Psalm* (whereby we are let into the sense), informs us, that it is a meditation composed in his flight from Jerusalem, when his son Absalom conspired against him, and most of the kingdom fell off from him (2 Sam. xv. &c.). Which after his return thither he commanded to be sung in the tabernacle, in commemoration of that disconsolate condition.

And here I must note, once for all, that it cannot be certainly known what is meant by the word *Selah*, which we meet withal thrice in this short Psalm. The most probable opinion is, that it was a note in music. In which David (as Theodoret observes upon this word) being a very great master, he set some of his Psalms himself to be sung to such instruments as he thought were most agreeable to the notes. But that music being now lost, some interpreters have wholly omitted this word *Selah* as I shall also do.

Ver. 1.] O Lord, who changeest not, what an amazing change is this! I who in a divine manner was set by thee upon thy throne, and lately triumphed over so many foreign countries (Ps. ii. 6—8), now see great armies of my own subjects raised against me; and conspiring with my son, not only to pull the crown from my head, but to take away my life.

Ver. 2.] The general cry is, that I am lost, and that thou, who wast wont to be my helper, and in

whom I always made my boast, hast quite forsaken me, as my people have done universally.

Ver. 3.] But this (how sad soever it be) shall never shake my confidence in thee, O Lord, whom I still behold surrounding me with thy almighty protection: and therefore I will not cease to glory, and make my boast in thee; but hope (though now I am in a sorrowful condition) that thou wilt make me joyful again, and raise me out of this dejected estate to my former dignity.

Ver. 4.] Why should I doubt of it when I never yet cried unto the Lord, either in this or any former distress, but he sent me relief from that place, where he, having made his special residence, would have us thither direct our prayers.

Ver. 5.] He hath already so quieted and composed my mind, that in the midst of this dreadful danger I laid me down securely, and slept profoundly, and awaked, as I slept, without any fear, or any disturbance: for the Lord supported and upheld my spirit, in a firm confidence of his careful providence over me.

Ver. 6.] And therefore, were I beset with as many nations, as I see men now encamp themselves on all sides against me, I should not be at all daunted at it.

Ver. 7.] But only address myself to thee, saying, Difer no longer, O Lord, but let them see thou hast not forsaken me. Deliver me, O my God, from these rebellious subjects, whom I beseech thee to discomfit and put to shame, as thou hast done many other powerful enemies, who most impiously have sought with eager desire to devour me.

Ver. 8.] Thou alone art the author of all happiness, and therefore unto thee I flee to save and preserve me from this conspiracy: not that I may live to be revenged, but to do good unto thy people, whose prosperity I wish and will seek, though never so ungrateful and undutiful to me their sovereign.

PSALM IV.

To the chief Musician on Neginoth. A Psalm of David.

1 HEAR me when I call, O God of my righteousness: thou hast enlarged me *when I was in*

distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.

PSALM IV.

ARGUMENT.—We can learn no more from this title, but that David was the author of this Psalm; and that he delivered it to the master of music in the tabernacle, to be sung to the stringed instruments.

But when or upon what occasion he penned it, is not certainly known, though the matter of it makes

it probable, it was in the same (or the like) distress wherein he made the foregoing Psalm.

Ver. 1.] O my God the most righteous judge who knowest the justice of my cause, and art the protector of oppressed innocence, vouchsafe to give me a gracious answer now that I cry unto thee for help against my enemies. Thou hast heretofore made an open

2 O ye sons of men, how long *will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing?* Selah.

3 But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD will hear when I call unto him.

4 Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your hed, and he still. Selah.

way for my escape out of the sorest straits and greatest dangers; which makes me hope thou wilt still take pity upon me, and hear the humble petition which I put up unto thee.

Ver. 2.] I am confident my desire is granted; and therefore do you hearken unto me, O ye rulers of the people, by whose authority such multitudes are drawn into this conspiracy: cease to defame my government (2 Sam. xv. 3, &c.), and break off your vain endeavours to dethrone me. Why do you delight to weary yourselves in the pursuit of such fallacious counsels, and to employ so much industry in inventing calumnies, and spreading lies to draw the people from me?

Ver. 3.] Know that it is not in your power by all these arts to depose me; for I did not come to my kingdom by chance, nor by your choice, but by the special appointment of God; who, having so highly favoured me, that he hath selected me out of all other men, and in a wonderful manner advanced me to be his vicegerent: he will no doubt maintain me in my place, and graciously preserve me when I implore his help from all the enemies that can assault me.

Ver. 4.] Dread his displeasure, I beseech you, though you fear not my power; and let not your anger at me make you any longer offend him, by persisting in this rebellion, into which you have run rashly: but if you will debate the matter calmly within your-

5 Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD.

6 *There be many that say, Who will shew us any good?* LORD, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.

7 Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time *that their corn and their wine increased.*

8 I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety.

selves, and when all the bustle and tumult of the day are over, ask yourselves at night what ground there is for it; I doubt not you will find reason to lay down your arms and be quiet.

Ver. 5.] As for you, my friends, that adhere still to me, though you are driven with me from God's holy place, yet fear nothing: but only take care to observe strictly all the rules of righteousness, which are the most acceptable sacrifices you can offer to the Lord; and then confide in him; and though your forces be few, doubt not of the victory.

Ver. 6.] You are desirous, I know, to see peace and settlement restored; of which many are apt to despair, saying, Who shall make us so happy? But do thou, O Lord, look favourably upon us, and bless us, and then I am surer of it, than if I saw the most powerful armies appear, with banners displayed, for my succour.

Ver. 7.] The very thoughts of it, this small glimpse of thy love, hath already filled my heart with such joy, that it far exceeds all the pleasure my enemies can take in seeing their barns full of corn, and their presses overflow with wine.

Ver. 8.] Nor can they take their rest more securely than I; for though encompassed with these dangers, I no sooner lay me down, but I fall asleep; because when I have no other guard about me, thou, Lord, alone art a sufficient defence unto me.

PSALM V.

To the chief Musician upon Nehiloth. A Psalm of David.

1 GIVE ear to my words, O LORD, consider my meditation.

2 Harken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray.

3 My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.

PSALM V.

ARGUMENT.—A Psalm composed by David (but whether when he was persecuted by Saul or by Absalom, I cannot certainly determine), and delivered to the master of music in the tabernacle, after his troubles were over, to be sung in parts to the organ; in commemoration of that sad condition, and the devout confidence he placed in God of deliverance out of it.

Ver. 1.] Thou seest, O Lord, unto what grievous straits I am reduced: let them move thee to grant me my request, and to have regard to the silent groans and sighs, whereby I call upon thee for relief.

Ver. 2.] To thee I appeal as my sovereign Lord and supreme judge; from whose almighty power I earnestly beg protection, and from whose justice I humbly implore the vindication of my innocence.

4 For thou *art* not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee.

5 The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity.

6 Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the LORD will abhor the bloody and deceitful man.

Ver. 3.] And thou wilt be as speedy, I hope, in thy help and succour, as I am early in my prayer: for the first thing I do, is to address myself to thee. I no sooner awake, but I dispose myself to wait on thee (as an humble suitor at the gate of thy mercy), and expect what thou wilt be pleased to do for me.

Ver. 4.] Who wilt not fail, I am confident, to answer my expectations; for thou art a most righteous judge, who art so far from approving this unjust persecution of me (or rebellion against me), that thou abhorrest such wicked practices. They may prosper for a little time in these evil courses, but shall have no place in thy favour.

Ver. 5.] Thou wilt condemn them to suffer the punishment of their folly and madness; and banish those from thy presence, who in their blind rage have driven me from my habitation: for all such wicked doers are odious to thee.

Ver. 6.] Thou wilt utterly destroy those that abuse

7 But as for me, I will come *into* thy house in the multitude of thy mercy : and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.

8 Lead me, O LORD, in thy righteousness because of mine enemies ; make thy way straight before my face.

9 For *there* is no faithfulness in their mouth ; their inward part is very wickedness ; their throat is an open sepulchre ; they flatter with their tongue.

10 Destroy thou them, O God ; let them fall

their tongues to tell lies, whereby they defame and calumniate my government : their bloody designs which they seek to compass by fraud and treachery, make them abominable to the divine majesty.

Ver. 7.] But I, whom they have driven not only from my own house, but (which is far worse) from thine, hope, by thine infinite goodness towards me to be restored again to go into thy courts ; and there, with the humblest reverence, to worship thee, towards the place where thou hast set the monument of thy presence with us.

Ver. 8.] And in the mean time, thou wilt be my guide and conductor in the way of thy commandments, which are the rule of righteousness ; that my enemies, who seek for something to colour their hatred to me, may have nothing to object against me. They would gladly see me trip, and they watch for my halting : and therefore do thou make thy way so plain before me, and order my goings so steadfastly, that I may never stumble, much less fall, and give them any advantage over me.

Ver. 9.] For with what triumph would they blaze abroad my real faults, who now stick not to tell all manner of lies of me ? their hearts are perpetually hatching the most malicious and mischievous stories, which they utter with open mouth, gaping for the

by their own counsels ; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions ; for they have rebelled against thee.

11 But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice : let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them ; let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.

12 For thou, LORD, wilt bless the righteous ; with favour wilt thou compass him as *with* a shield.

destruction of the innocent : to whom, when they speak fair, and put on a guise of friendship, it is with an intent to devour them.

Ver. 10.] O thou most righteous judge, pronounce that sentence of condemnation against them which they deserve. Let their own devices, whereby they seek to ruin me, destroy themselves and disperse them, because of their multiplied impieties. For it is thy cause more than mine that is now disputed, while they reject him whom thou hast appointed the king of thy people.

Ver. 11.] This will excite all those who are faithful to thee, and confide in nothing but thy merciful protection, to rejoice and triumph perpetually in thy praise. They will be encouraged by thy wonderful goodness and power appearing in my deliverance, to hope thou wilt protect and succour them also ; and never fail to fill the hearts of all those that truly love thee, with the highest joy in thee.

Ver. 12.] For thou, Lord, who art faithful and true, hast engaged thyself, by thy gracious promise, to do good unto the righteous, whom thou lovest and delightest in, and therefore wilt crown with thy favour, and encircle him, as with an impenetrable shield, against all the darts of his enemies.

PSALM VI.

To the chief Musician on Neginoth upon Sheminith. A Psalm of David.

1 O LORD, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.

2 Have mercy upon me, O LORD ; for I *am* weak : O LORD, heal me ; for my bones are vexed.

3 My soul is also sore vexed : but thou, O LORD, how long ?

4 Return, O LORD, deliver my soul : oh save me for thy mercies' sake.

5 For in death *there* is no remembrance of

PSALM VI.

ARGUMENT.—When David laboured under some grievous disease, he made his complaints to God, and deprecated his displeasure, according to the sense of this Psalm ; which he composed, it is likely, after his recovery, and ordered the master of music in the tabernacle to cause it to be sung to the harp of eight strings. That seems to be the best interpretation of *Sheminith*, which the Chaldee follows ; and it may be justified from what we read 1 Chron. xv. 21. Of *Neginoth*, see Psalm iv. By way of accommodation, the words of this Psalm have been applied to the sickness of the mind ; but, upon the former account also, it may be called one of the penitential Psalms.

Ver. 1.] O Lord, who delightest in mercy, moderate, I beseech thee, thy sharp correction ; and do not proceed to inflict upon me the severest marks of thy displeasure.

Ver. 2.] I am brought very low already, my strength

faileth me, and every joint in my body trembles ; and therefore now, O Lord, thy mercy will come very seasonably. Good Lord, from whom alone I expect a cure, let it be sufficient that I have suffered so much already, and vouchsafe to heal me.

Ver. 3.] For this sore affliction, and the dread of thy farther displeasure, have struck into my soul also an exceeding great consternation ; and how long it will continue, thou, Lord alone knowest.

Ver. 4.] My enemies think thou hast quite forsaken me : convince them of their error, O Lord, by being reconciled, and restoring to me the kindness thou wast wont to show me. Deliver me from this anguish and fear, and (though not for my merits, yet) for thy mercy save me from going down into the grave.

Ver. 5.] For there I can have no opportunity to do thee service ; the dead being utterly unable to commemorate thy wonderful works, and propagate the memory of them to posterity. As long as I live I will show forth thy praise ; but who can celebrate thy name, and instruct thy people, in the grave ?

thee : in the grave who shall give thee thanks ?

6 I am weary with my groaning ; all the night make I my bed to swim ; I water my couch with my tears.

7 Mine eye is consumed because of grief ; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies.

Ver. 6.] To that silent place I shall soon descend, unless thou makest haste to deliver me ; for I am tired out with these pains under which I groan. The night which is wont to quiet all men's grief, and lay their troubles asleep, is to me so restless and uneasy, that the incessant agonies I am in dissolve me into sweat, and I do nothing but pour out floods of tears.

Ver. 7.] Which have made such furrows in my face, that my countenance hath lost all its beauty, and looks like that of a consumptive man, who is dropping into his grave. I am worn away with the mere grief and indignation of seeing all mine enemies insulting over me, and with joy waiting for my death.

Ver. 8.] But why am I thus concerned at their behaviour, and torment myself as if my life depended on their pleasure, which is in the hand of God alone,

8 Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity ; for the LORD hath heard the voice of my weeping.

9 The LORD hath heard my supplication ; the LORD will receive my prayer.

10 Let all mine enemies be ashamed and sore vexed : let them return and be ashamed suddenly.

who pities my mournful condition, and will grant me that which I have sought with so many tears ? And therefore go your way, ye evil-doers, and stay no longer here expecting my death. Desist from all your wicked contrivances against me, and be not so vain as to hope to triumph over me.

Ver. 9.] The Lord hath not rejected me, as you imagine ; but is graciously pleased both with my deprecation of his displeasure, and with my petitions to him for his favour.

Ver. 10.] And therefore I tell my enemies once more, that they shall all be ashamed of their vain hopes to see me dead. I shall live to disappoint them, and make them terribly afraid : nay, they shall make a sudden retreat, and be confounded to see themselves so shamefully defeated.

PSALM VII.

Shiggaion of David, which he sang unto the Lord, concerning the words (or business) of Cush the Benjamite.

1 O LORD my God, in thee do I put my trust : save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me :

2 Lest he tear my soul like a lion, rending it in pieces, while there is none to deliver.

3 O LORD my God, if I have done this ; if there be iniquity in my hands ;

4 If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me ; (yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy :)

5 Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it ; yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust. Selah.

6 Arise, O LORD, in thine anger, lift up thy-

PSALM VII.

ARGUMENT.—An excellent Psalm, composed by David to commemorate the loving-kindness of the Lord upon occasion of some calumnies and false accusations ; wherein Cush, one of the same tribe with Saul (and probably one of his courtiers or captains, if not one of his kinsmen), had charged David with some very great crime ; of treason, it is likely, and conspiracy against Saul. Athanasius, indeed (as we find in some fragments of his upon the Psalms), thinks that David made this *χαριστήριον ᾠδῆν*, as he calls it, when Hushai (whom he takes for Cush) had defeated the good counsel of Ahithophel, by a discourse he made to show it was not safe to set upon so warlike a prince as David, without a greater force than Absalom had at present ; whereby he saved David from certain ruin. But I see nothing in the Psalm to give a colour to this conjecture ; for the words therein mentioned were against David, not in his favour. The name of Hushai also is otherways written, and he is called an Archite, not a Benjamite ; which St. Basil (whose opinion this was) endeavours to solve, by saying he was called Benjameni, because he managed his matters so dexterously in overthrowing the counsel of Ahithophel. But that is only a piece of wit ; and the conjecture of Valentine Schindler seems to me more probable ; that by Cush, he secretly notes (by a change of letters) Saul himself, the son of Kish ; who could no more alter his mind, full of hatred to David, than a man of Cush, or an Ethiopian, could his skin or complexion.

Ver. 1.] O Lord, who hast hitherto been my most

gracious God, and defended my innocence against those that have falsely accused me, I ought not to doubt of thy continued care and love towards me ; and therefore fly unto thee, with an humble confidence in thy almighty goodness, that thou wilt preserve and deliver me from this new persecution which is raised against me.

Ver. 2.] For if thou dost not protect me, I am no more able to stand before Saul than a lamb before a lion : so great is his power, and so implacable his rage, that if thou sufferest me to fall into his hands, there is no creature can rescue me, but he will infallibly destroy me.

Ver. 3.] And let him destroy me, O Lord, if I be guilty of that whereof I am accused. Thou art the most righteous judge of all, and to thee I here again most solemnly appeal, as I have done before him (1 Sam. xxiv. 12. 15), desiring that thou wilt judge between us. If I have conspired against him, or had any design to do him hurt (as he was made to believe, 1 Sam. xxiv. 9), if any such thing hath so much as entered into my thoughts.

Ver. 4.] If I have either injured him when he was kind to me, or sought to be revenged of him since he has injured me : (no, I abhorred to take revenge, so far was I from seeking it, when he fell into my hand, and spared him twice when it was in my power to have killed him, who causelessly endeavoured to kill me, 1 Sam. xxiv. xxvi.)

Ver. 5.] Then I beg no mercy ; let him go on to be my enemy ; let him pursue me till he apprehend me, and execute his desire upon me. I refuse not to die ; nay, to be trodden under foot like dirt with the greatest contempt ; and to be as much reproached when I am dead, as I have been honoured alive.

self because of the rage of mine enemies : and awake for me to the judgment *that* thou hast commanded.

7 So shall the congregation of the people compass thee about : for their sakes therefore return thou on high.

8 The LORD shall judge the people : judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity *that* is in me.

9 Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end ; but establish the just : for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins.

10 My defence *is* of God, which saveth the upright in heart.

11 God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry *with the wicked* every day.

Ver. 6.] But if I be innocent in this matter (as thou, Lord, knowest I am), then I beseech thee to show thy displeasure at this unjust proceeding. Let my enemies know that thou art the sovereign Lord of all, by suppressing them now that they rage thus furiously. Thou hast appointed judges upon earth to distribute justice and relieve the oppressed ; but hast reserved the supreme judgment to thyself, even over them as well as others : and therefore I beseech thee to take cognizance of my cause, and issue out thy orders speedily for my deliverance from this persecution.

Ver. 7.] Which will draw all the people to make their resort to thee, and wait upon thee, till thou dost them justice. For that reason ascend thy judgment-seat again, and, as thou hast done formerly, vindicate me from these calumnies, and assert my innocence.

Ver. 8.] The sovereign of the world will not fail to dispense equal justice unto all, according to their works. Of which I beseech thee, O Lord, to give an example in me, who desire no greater favour than to be disposed of according to my innocence in this matter. Thou hast designed indeed a kingdom for me, but let me lose it, if ever I entertain a disloyal thought against him who now enjoys it.

Ver. 9.] I leave it to thee to perform thy own purposes, who hast long borne with the wicked in their unjust proceedings, but wilt at last put a stop to them, and settle the righteous, whom they injuriously persecute from place to place, in a peaceable possession of what thou hast promised. For thou, Lord, discernest the most secret thoughts and desires of them both ; and as thou canst not be deceived with specious shows, so thou wilt not be corrupted, either by fear or favour, to pronounce an unrighteous sentence.

Ver. 10.] That is my comfort, none but God, the judge of all, can either absolve or condemn me ; and he knows so well the sincerity of my heart, that I assure myself from him of protection and deliverance.

12 If he turn not, he will whet his sword ; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready.

13 He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death ; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors.

14 Behold, he travaileth with iniquity, and hath conceived mischief, and brought forth falsehood.

15 He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch *which* he made.

16 His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate.

17 I will praise the LORD according to his righteousness : and will sing praise to the name of the LORD most high.

Ver. 11.] For he is so just a judge, that he will defend the cause of the righteous, and never be persuaded to take part with the wicked ; with whom he is highly displeas'd all the time that he forbears to strike him, and cut him off in his evil courses.

Ver. 12.] And if he will not repent, as he is invited by that forbearance, he shall be punished at last with so much the greater severity ; because he would take no warning, but went on confidently, notwithstanding the vengeance he was told was preparing for him.

Ver. 13.] Vengeance, which will certainly come, though it stay long, and not fail to do execution : for it is decreed in heaven (if they do not repent), and will pierce through the very heart of Saul, and all the rest of my fierce and outrageous persecutors.

Ver. 14.] See here the folly of this calumniator, who wickedly plots my ruin, and hath formed most mischievous designs against my life ; which shall all miscarry, and deceive his expectation.

Ver. 15.] And he shall not escape so neither ; for beside the shame of not being able to compass his design, he shall suffer that himself which he laboured to do to me. Just as you see sometimes a man fall into the pit which was digged with his own hands ; so shall he fall upon the sword which himself hath drawn (1 Sam. xxxi. 4).

Ver. 16.] The mischief which with so much pains he contrived against me, shall be retorted upon that head which projected it : all his violence and cruel persecutions, wherewith he thought to oppress me, shall fall down (like a stone thrown into the air) upon himself, and crush him to pieces.

Ver. 17.] Which shall afford matter of perpetual praise to me ; who will most thankfully acknowledge not only the power, but the just judgment of God, and his faithfulness to his word. With the greatest delight and joy shall my songs celebrate the glorious majesty of the Lord, which far surmounts our highest thoughts and thanksgivings.

PSALM VIII.

To the chief Musician upon Gittith. A Psalm of David.

1 O LORD our Lord how excellent *is* thy name in all the earth ! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.

PSALM VIII.

ARGUMENT.—The Targum takes the word *Gittith* to denote that this Psalm was to be sung to a harp

2 Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.

which David brought with him from Gath. Others think it to be only a note in music, or to have relation to the time of vintage. But Theodoret look-

3 When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him?

5 For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

6 Thou madest him to have dominion over the

ing upon it (as indeed it seems to be) as *ὑμνος ἠνθιστος*, "a psalm of triumph to God," the author of some great victory he had gotten, I take it to have been composed by David, and delivered to the master of the music in the tabernacle, after he had overthrown that haughty insolent giant, Goliath of Gath; which is very agreeable to the matter of the Psalm, and a lively emblem of Christ's conquest over our great enemy the devil.

Ver. 1.] O Lord, the sovereign of the world, who art graciously pleased to own us in a peculiar manner to be thy subjects, who can behold the wonders of thy works, and the wisdom of thy providence, and not be astonished at the incomparable greatness and splendour of thy majesty? which all the earth proclaims with the highest praises, but cannot be contained within the spacious bounds of the heavens, whose glorious brightness it far surpasses.

Ver. 2.] What an amazing wonder is it, that thou shouldst enable the weakest of men to do the greatest and most praiseworthy things! and particularly hast now assisted me (who, in comparison with Goliath, am but an infant) with power and strength to subdue that mighty giant! It is enough to confound all the enemies, and to stop the mouths of the most pernicious opposers of thee and of thy people: as the far more to be celebrated works of the Messiah and his disciples, when they shall but speak the word, shall confound even the devil himself, that great enemy of thine, and tormentor of mankind.

Ver. 3.] Who are extremely stupid if they do not most thankfully acknowledge thy singular love to them. For when I seriously look up to thy celestial habitation, and consider the vastness of that admirable structure, and behold also those lights which thou hast placed there in beautiful order.

Ver. 4.] I know not what to say, but am perfectly astonished to think that thou, whose greatness I see so visibly in the heavens, shouldst condescend so far as to show such grace and favour as thou dost to this wretched creature man: particularly to me, who am

works of thy hands; thou hast put all *things* under his feet:

7 All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field;

8 The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.

9 O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!

the meanest of my brethren. Lord, what am I, that thou shouldst work such salvation by my hands? Nay, what is the greatest prince in the world, that thou shouldst thus honour him? But that thou shouldst advance our mortal nature so highly in *that* Son of man, the Lord Christ, whom the world will vilify and despise, exceeds all wonder, and ought to be the matter of our perpetual admiration.

Ver. 5.] Thou hast raised man to such a dignity, and honoured him so highly (particularly me, whom thou hast used as thy minister to punish that insulting giant who defied thy armies, 1 Sam. xvii.), that he is not much inferior to the celestial hosts: as shall be more clearly seen in thy Son Christ, whom thou hast determined to advance far above the highest angels in heaven, after he hath for a short space been much beneath them, by submitting himself to a poor condition in our flesh, that he might lay down his life for man (Heb. xi. 6, 7, &c.).

Ver. 6.] Whose glory is great, even in the dominion thou hast given him over all thy creatures in this lower world (though this be nothing comparable to the exaltation of the great Son of man, under whose feet thou hast put in subjection all creatures whatsoever, even those in the highest heavens). There is nothing here but he hath a power over it, and finds means to make it subject to his pleasure.

Ver. 7.] Not only the beasts that are tame, such as sheep and oxen, but those that are wild, even tigers, bears, and lions.

Ver. 8.] Yea, and the fowls of the air cannot fly so high but he hath ways to reach them; nor can the fishes in lakes or rivers, or those in the deepest ocean, exempt themselves from his dominion.

Ver. 9.] All which moves me again to cry out, and conclude as I began, in the highest admiration of thy most powerful wisdom and goodness, saying, O mighty Lord, our most gracious governor, who can comprehend the excellent greatness of thy majesty? O how transcendent is thy loving-kindness in all thou hast done, and wilt do for man! How loudly ought the whole world to sound forth thy praise!

PSALM IX.

To the chief Musician upon Muth-labben. A Psalm of David.

1 I WILL praise thee, O LORD, with my whole heart; I will shew forth all thy marvellous works.

PSALM. IX.

ARGUMENT.—A Psalm which David composed and delivered to the master of music in the tabernacle, when he was in some great distress (ver. 13): wherein he commemorates God's former deliverance of him; both when he killed Goliath, and got frequent victories afterward over the Philistines, and other enemies of Israel (ver. 11, 15). I mention Goliath, because, among the various opinions about *Muth-labben*, I find none so probable as theirs

2 I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most high.

who think it hath some relation to him: to whom there are three ways of applying those Hebrew words. All of them by *almuth*, understand to be meant upon the death: and then *labben*, some think, signifies the son, that is, a great man, as I have expounded in my preface to this work. Others render it the white; that is, an illustrious, noble person, or one famous in arms, as Goliath was. Others render it *intermediate*; which agrees also to that champion, who came out and stood between the two armies, and defied Israel (1 Sam. xvii. 4,

3 When mine enemies are turned back, they shall fall and perish at thy presence.

4 For thou hast maintained my right and my cause; thou satest in the throne judging right.

5 Thou hast rebuked the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name for ever and ever.

6 O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end; and thou hast destroyed cities; their memorial is perished with them.

7 But the LORD shall endure for ever: he hath prepared his throne for judgment.

8 And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness.

9 The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.

10 And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.

11 Sing praises to the LORD, which dwelleth in Zion: declare among the people his doings.

12 When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them: he forgetteth not the cry of the humble.

13 Have mercy upon me, O LORD; consider my trouble *which I suffer* of them that hate me, thou that liftest me up from the gates of death:

14 That I may shew forth all thy praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion: I will rejoice in thy salvation.

15 The heathen are sunk down in the pit *that* they made: in the net which they hid is their own foot taken.

&c.). Thus the Chaldee paraphrase here interprets. But that this Psalm was not made just after David's victory over him, with respect merely to his death, is apparent from the mention of Zion, ver. 11. 14, which was not then in the hands of Israel; and therefore he only calls to mind (as I said in the beginning) this deliverance upon some fresh occasion he had to implore the mighty assistance of the Divine power, which then first began to appear to him.

Ver. 1.] I will acknowledge, O Lord of heaven and earth, thy omnipotent goodness, with the heartiest devotion and entire affection to thee. Nor will I content myself to praise thee for this last victory alone, but on this occasion commemorate all the wonders thou hast formerly done for me.

Ver. 2.] The thoughts of which are so pleasing and delightful to me, that I cannot but be exceeding glad and leap for joy, while I celebrate with my songs thy supreme majesty, whose power infinitely excels the united force of all creatures upon earth.

Ver. 3.] It was thou who madest my enemies turn their backs, and seek for safety in flight (1 Sam. xvii. 51): and the dread of thee so pursued them, that they stumbled and fell down wounded (ver. 52), and were destroyed, because they saw thee appear against them.

Ver. 4.] For in that great controversy between us and the Philistines (1 Sam. xvii. 9), wherein I stood up against Goliath, thou didst take my part (as thou hast done since in many other battles), asserting the cause which I defended, and openly giving judgment on my side.

Ver. 5.] Thou hast given a terrible rebuke to the audacious insolence of those nations; thou hast cut off their daring champion, who so impiously defied thy armies, and cursed me by his gods: thou hast put them to shame, and made their names infamous to all generations.

Ver. 6.] O thou insulting enemy, who in thy own thoughts hadst completely devoured us, where are the utter desolations thou threatenedst to our country, and the cities which thou intendest to lay even with the ground? how vain were thy hopes of leaving no remembrance of them but in their ruins.

Ver. 7.] Such shall be the end of all the rest of my enemies, who can never prevail against the Lord. For though earthly thrones may tumble down, he and his throne cannot possibly be disturbed, but remain fixed for ever; and his justice is as immutable, which he will equally dispense to all.

Ver. 8.] For his jurisdiction is not limited, nor can

his justice be corrupted; but the whole world is under his government, and no wicked man is so powerful that he should be able to escape his vengeance, which shall pursue every one of them, and render to him exactly according as he deserves.

Ver. 9.] And as he will punish the wicked, be their authority never so great, so he will preserve the righteous, be they never so helpless. They may safely fly unto him for sanctuary against the unjust persecutions of their mighty oppressors, and he will give them seasonable relief in all their distresses.

Ver. 10.] All they that are acquainted with thee, and with the merciful and just methods of thy providence, will consent to this; and, abhorring all undue ways of saving themselves in troublesome times will heartily confide in thee: for it was never known that thou, Lord, hast left any man destitute of thy help, who hath piously made his constant addresses to thee.

Ver. 11.] Let them join, therefore, their songs with mine, and praise the Lord, who dwells among us by his special presence in the sanctuary. Let us make all the world know what wonderful things he hath done for us, that they may also learn to trust in him.

Ver. 12.] Who, though he may seem to wink for a time at the cruelty of violent men, yet will call them at last to a strict account for all the innocent blood they have shed, and for their unjust and unmerciful usage of meek and humble persons; whose cry he never forgets (though he doth not presently answer it), but takes a fit time to be avenged of their oppressors.

Ver. 13.] In confidence of this, I cry unto thee now, O Lord, for my seasonable relief, in this necessitous condition to which my enemies have reduced me. O merciful God, who hast delivered me from the greatest dangers, from the lion and the bear, from Goliath, who thought to give my flesh to the birds and the beasts (1 Sam. xvii. 44), from Saul, and all others who were ready to swallow me up; cast a gracious eye upon my present distress, and bring me out of it.

Ver. 14.] That I may go into thy sanctuary (which now thou hast placed in Zion), and there, in the most frequent assemblies of thy people, add this to all the rest of thy praises, that thou hast heard my cry. O how joyful shall I be! how shall I triumph, when I magnify thy power in my deliverance!

Ver. 15.] Which the experience I have had of thy goodness makes me comfortably expect: for I have often seen, all the designs and contrivances of the Philistines and other nations against thy people, to conclude in nothing but their own utter ruin; their

16 The LORD is known *by* the judgment which he executeth: the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Higgaion. Selah.

17 The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.

18 For the needy shall not alway be forgotten :

engines recoil upon themselves, as Goliath was slain by his own sword.

Ver. 16.] This is a thing notorious to all, and for which thou art renowned. By this thou convincest the minds of those that deny thy providence. Nor is there anything more admirable, and worthy of our meditation, than this thy righteous judgment upon the ungodly; when they are entangled in their own devices, and, contrary to all expectation, bring upon themselves that destruction which they had prepared for others.

Ver. 17.] This makes me confident that I am not deceived, when I look to see these wicked men, who now seek my ruin, precipitate themselves into the pit of destruction. Nay, so shall all those people perish (though never so numerous), who, forgetting what God had done to others, proceed on in the same impious designs against the innocent.

the expectation of the poor shall *not* perish for ever.

19 Arise, O LORD: let not man prevail: let the heathen be judged in thy sight.

20 Put them in fear, O LORD: that the nations may know themselves to be but men. Selah.

Ver. 18.] For the Lord, in due time, will show that he doth not neglect them when they are poor and helpless, though for the present he defer to relieve them. Let them patiently wait upon him under their affliction, and he will not fail their expectation.

Ver. 19.] And may I desire thee, O Lord, to delay no longer! O suffer not weak and wretched man to domineer on this fashion, nay, boast of his victories; but call all those nations that oppose thee to an account, and condemn them to that punishment which they deserve.

Ver. 20.] Strike a terror into them, O Lord, by some sharp vengeance inflicted on them. Shake out of their mind the vain opinion they have of themselves and of their power; and make the nations sensible they are but frail and miserable men.

PSALM X.

1 WHY standest thou afar off, O LORD? why hidest thou *thyself* in times of trouble?

2 The wicked in *his* pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined.

3 For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, *whom* the LORD abhorreth.

4 The wicked, through the pride of his coun-

tenance, will not seek *after* God: God is not in all his thoughts.

5 His ways are always grievous; thy judgments are far above out of his sight: as for all his enemies, he puffeth at them.

6 He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved: for *I shall never be* in adversity.

7 His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud: under his tongue is mischief and vanity.

PSALM X.

ARGUMENT.—It is not known by whom, or on what occasion, this Psalm was composed: but it is a most lively description of the insolency of wicked atheistical men, when they have power, and are in authority; which they abuse to the oppression of the meaner or weaker sort, and make no conscience by what arts they bring their designs about. Against whom the Psalmist humbly beseeches the divine vengeance, and rests confident they shall be suppressed.

Ver. 1.] It is strange, O Lord, to see thee, who hast done us the peculiar honour to say we have thee nigh unto us on all occasions (Deut. iv. 7), now withdraw thyself to such a distance from us, that there is no sign of thy coming to our relief. It perplexes our thoughts, and we cannot find the reason of it, that now, in these grievous straits, which seem to us the fittest opportunity, thou dost not appear for our deliverance.

Ver. 2.] If our great affliction do not move thy pity towards us, yet the intolerable pride and insolent rage of the wicked, we are prone to expect, should meet with a rebuke from thy just indignation. Especially since he oppresses the poor, who have no friend but thee alone; whose glory also it is to humble arrogant men, by making those very devices cast them down, whereby they thought to ruin others, and exalt themselves. O that we might see them fall in this remarkable manner!

Ver. 3.] For whilst the wicked prospers thus in all his designs, he is not only encouraged in those evil courses, but glories in them, and brags that he can do what he lists. Nay, it doth not suffice him to do evil himself, but he commends and praises the unjust extortions and rapines of other violent men; whom he accounts happy, though the Lord abhors them.

Ver. 4.] But it is to no purpose to tell him how the Lord abhors them; for, scornfully rejecting all such good admonitions, he will not do so much as inquire and consider whether there be a God or not; but rather boldly concludes there is no God, or, if there be, that he cares not what we do.

Ver. 5.] And therefore, though all his business be to molest and torment his neighbours, and he is always bringing forth some mischief or other, yet that thou wilt judge him for it is the farthest thing from his thoughts: and as for those men that are his adversaries, he contemns them all, and values them not a straw.

Ver. 6.] He confidently promises himself that none shall be able to disturb him, and rests secure he shall always be thus prosperous, which makes him resolve he will never alter his wicked course of life, let God or man do what they can against him.

Ver. 7.] Nor sticks at anything that may serve his ends; for he makes no conscience to call for one curse after another upon himself, to confirm those oaths or promises which he never intends to keep; but by this impious means to deceive and cheat those that rely upon his word. He speaks very fair; but it is only

8 He sitteth in the lurking places of the vil-
lages; in the secret places doth he murder the
innocent: his eyes are privily set against the
poor.

9 He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his
den; he lieth in wait to catch the poor: he doth
catch the poor, when he draweth them into his
net.

10 He croucheth, and humbleth himself, that
the poor may fall by his strong ones.

11 He hath said in his heart, God hath for-
gotten: he hideth his face; he will never see it.

12 Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up thy
hand: forget not the humble.

13 Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God?

to hide the mischievous wickedness which lurks in
his heart.

Ver. 8.] And if he cannot this way compass all his
designs, he makes no scruple to rob and kill upon the
highway; near unto which he lurks, and in covert
places, where nobody sees him, shoots at the innocent
traveller: especially when he sees he is defenceless,
and hath none to help him.

Ver. 9.] He lies as close as a lion in his den; and is
as cruel when he hath caught his prey. A fowler is
not more cunning to draw the birds to his net, than he
to get poor helpless men into his power, that he may
devour them.

Ver. 10.] For he can counterfeit himself (if occa-
sion serve) to be a harmless traveller: and look so
humbly and innocently, that the poor man, on whom
he intends to seize, suspecting no danger, will lie the
more open to his sudden and violent assault.

Ver. 11.] From which God himself, he thinks will
not protect him. They call him (saith he within his
heart) the omnipotent, and the poor commit them-
selves unto him: but what cares he for them? he re-
gards them not, and will never call me to any ac-
count for what I have done against them.

Ver. 12.] Confute these blasphemies, O Lord; and
delay no longer, O thou omnipotent judge of the
world, to appear in just displeasure against them.
Stretch forth thy hand to confound these violent op-
pressors, and to relieve all thy afflicted servants.

Ver. 13.] What is it, but thy long-suffering, and
bearing so much with them, that makes the wicked
thus insolently despise thee? He concludes, thou

he hath said in his heart thou wilt not requir-
e it.

14 Thou hast seen it; for thou beholdest mis-
chief and spite, to requir- e it with thy hand: the
poor committeth himself unto thee; thou art the
helper of the fatherless.

15 Break thou the arm of the wicked and the
evil man: seek out his wickedness till thou find
none.

16 The LORD is King for ever and ever: the
heathen are perished out of his land.

17 LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the
humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt
cause thine ear to hear:

18 To judge the fatherless and the oppressed,
that the man of the earth may no more oppress.

wilt never punish him, because thou art so patient
with him.

Ver. 14.] I doubt not, indeed, that thou takest
notice of their villany, and that thou wilt requir- e them
in their kind, for all the mischief and vexation of which
they have been the authors. The poor have reason to
commend their cause to thee; and to expect that thou
wilt do them right, who art the protector of the weak
and friendless, who have nothing to rely upon but thy
goodness.

Ver. 15.] But the wicked will never believe this,
as long as they are able to do mischief; and therefore
I beseech thee to despoil them of all their power to
hurt and oppress thy people. Be avenged on them
for their wickedness, after which they fancy thou wilt
not inquire, and let there be no footsteps of it re-
maining.

Ver. 16.] Thou canst easily do it, being the same
everlasting King, by whose authority and power the
seven impious nations were expelled out of this
land.

Ver. 17.] And I believe thou wilt do it, O Lord,
who hast so often since granted the desire of the af-
flicted. Thou wilt dispose their heart humbly to wait
upon thee, and then vouchsafe them a favourable
audience:

Ver. 18.] When they pray thee to assert the right
of the fatherless, and other poor helpless people, and
to punish their insolent oppressors: that those tyrants
sprung out of the earth, and who deserve to be tum-
bled down thither again, may be no longer terrible to
them.

PSALM XI.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

1 IN the LORD put I my trust: how say ye to
my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?

2 For, lo, the wicked bend their bow, they

make ready their arrow upon the string, that
they may privily shoot at the upright in
heart.

PSALM XI.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm, the title tells us, was com-
posed by David: and very likely (as Theodoret and
others conjecture) when Saul persecuted him, and
some advised him to seek his safety in flight: or
rather, when Saul began to have evil designs against
him; and he was invited by some, who pretended
friendship to him, to a place of safety in the moun-
tainous country of Judea. When he came to the
crown, he delivered it to the master of music in the
tabernacle, to be sung there in remembrance of

what then passed between his friends, him, and God
Almighty, in whom he placed his hope.

Ver. 1.] It is not in fortresses or friends that I place
my confidence, and hope for safety, but only in the
LORD, who hath anointed me his king. On him I rely;
and therefore do not put me in fear, and bid me fly
away thus speedily, like a timorous bird before the
fowler, to your place of security.

Ver. 2.] Behold, say you, the danger wherein thou
art is no less imminent, than when a fowler hath bent
his bow, and fitted his arrow upon the string, and, ly-

3 If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?

4 The LORD is in his holy temple, the LORD's throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.

5 The LORD trieth the righteous: but the

ing close, hath the bird in his eye, whom he means to shoot: for just so have Saul and his wicked counselors laid their plot on a sudden to destroy thee.

Ver. 3.] And if men have no regard to laws and public decrees, which are the foundation of human society, but will boldly violate all known and standing rules of justice and truth, what security can an honest man have? or what should he do, but make haste away from this court, where they act so arbitrarily, and are so perfidious!

Ver. 4.] My answer is, that the world is not governed by chance, nor can men carry things just as they please: but the Lord, into whose holy palace no unjust counsels can possibly enter, and whose throne is infinitely above that of the highest king on earth: he, I say, is the supreme and most righteous ruler of all affairs; and no mischief can be so secretly contrived, no wicked design so artificially dissembled, but it lies open before his eyes, and he sees through it; nor need he take any pains to discover it; for at the first glance, as we speak, he perfectly discerns how all men are inclined, and looks to the very bottom of their hearts.

Ver. 5.] And he may think fit to try the fidelity of him whom he knows to be upright, by many adversi-

wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hath.

6 Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest: *this shall be the portion of their cup.*

7 For the righteous LORD loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright.

ties; that he may afterward give him the more illustrious testimonies of his approbation and love. But whatsoever success the wicked, and he that delights in doing mischief, may have for the present, he is most hateful to God; and he will without fail severely punish him, for abusing his power to oppression and violent dealing.

Ver. 6.] The wicked may think themselves very secure, because they are so cunning and so strong; but how can they defend themselves against the Lord, who hath innumerable ways to ensnare them when they least think of it; and can as unexpectedly overthrow all their forces, as, when the heavens are most serene, a sudden storm of thunder, and lightning, and tempestuous blasts arises, and tears up the trees by the roots? Thus the Sodomites, thus the Egyptians perished; and such measure will the wise Dispenser of all punishments mete to these violent oppressors.

Ver. 7.] For the Lord, who is just in his own nature, and in all his ways, loves none but those who are like himself; and therefore he will plague all injurious persons, but with special favour defend and reward all upright men, who steadfastly keep (notwithstanding all the injuries they receive) in the paths of righteousness.

PSALM XII.

To the chief Musician upon Sheminith. A Psalm of David.

1 HELP, LORD; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men.

2 They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.

3 The LORD shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things:

4 Who have said, With our tongue will we

prevail; our lips are our own: who is lord over us?

5 For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.

6 The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.

PSALM XII.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm was composed by David, and delivered to the master of music in the tabernacle, to be sung as the sixth psalm, upon the harp with eight strings. The occasion of it is not expressed, but it is a sad complaint of the corrupt manners of that age (especially of the court of Saul, ver. 3), in which it was hard to find an honest, plain-dealing man, in whom one might confide. Some think it aims partly at Doeg, and such like courtiers; partly at the Ziphites, and such perfidious people in the country, who, promising him their friendship (as Theodoret understands it), would have most basely betrayed him unto Saul, his declared enemy.

Ver. 1.] Lord, be thou my safeguard, for there is no such thing as kindness and friendship to be found among men: I dare trust myself with none of them; for there is not so much as any truth and honesty left in the world.

Ver. 2.] One neighbour cannot with safety believe

another; they are all liars and dissemblers, pretending fair in words, but meaning quite otherways.

Ver. 3.] This vice hath spread itself so universally among us, that it cannot be rooted up, but only by the hand of Heaven: which will destroy these pestilent deceivers; who speak also big and blasphemous words, whereby they daunt those that are below them.

Ver. 4.] We will have the better, say they, of all those that oppose us; and our tongues are the weapons whereby we will get the victory. They are our own; who shall hinder us from employing them to supplant whom we please! whether it be true or false which we say, what is that to anybody; or who shall call us to an account for it?

Ver. 5.] That will the Lord; whom the sighs, and tears, and miserable groans of those poor wretches who are oppressed by your calumnies, have moved to resolve to take a speedy vengeance on you. He hath absolutely determined to rescue and deliver them from your snares and fraudulent practices: you may puff and storm as much as you please, but shall not be able to hinder it.

Ver. 6.] For the promises of God are not deceitful

7 Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.

like yours, but sincere, and void of all guile: the purest silver, refined to the greatest perfection, is not more free from dross than they are from all mixture of falsehood.

Ver. 7.] I am confident, O Lord, thou wilt perform them, and not suffer thy words to fail. Thou wilt ever preserve him that confides in thee from this per-

8 The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted.

verse generation, how oft soever they renew their attempts against him.

Ver. 8.] Which will make the wicked not know which way to turn themselves; but be ready to burst with anger and vexation, when they see those poor men whom they contemned and vilified not only preserved, but exalted by thy favour to dignity and honour.

PSALM XIII.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

1 How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?

2 How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? how long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?

3 Consider and hear me, O LORD my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death;

PSALM. XIII.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm was composed by David, and delivered to the master of music in the tabernacle. It is not known to what time it relates, but by the matter of it we understand he was in some great distress when he indited it, either by the persecution of Saul or of Absalom. Theodoret thinks the latter, and gives this reason for it: that the trouble which Saul gave him was before his great sin, and so he was full of confidence; but that of Absalom was after it, which made him cry out in this doleful manner.

Ver. 1.] What a sad condition is this, O Lord, into which I am fallen, and in which thou seemest to neglect me! I have waited a long time for some glimpse of thy favour, but can see no sign of deliverance, nor tell how long thou intendest to delay it.

Ver. 2.] O how afflictive is it, that there is no end of my anxious thoughts! but I am always casting in my mind, with a heavy heart, where I shall shift for my life, and can think myself in no place secure. The power of my enemy is very great, and threatens, like a tempest hanging over my head, every moment to fall upon me. O when shall I see it dispersed!

4 Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him; and those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved.

5 But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.

6 I will sing unto the LORD, because he hath dealt bountifully with me.

Ver. 3.] Thus I sigh perpetually to thee, O Lord, the omnipotent ruler and just judge of the world; beseeching thee to commiserate my affliction, and, as thou hast done often, to answer my prayer. Thou seest with what dangers I am encompassed, and how forlorn and dismal my condition is: endue me with wisdom and circumspection, that I may escape these dangers; and revive and cheer me under these sad afflictions, lest my spirit sink within me, or the enemy destroy me.

Ver. 4.] Let not him that persecutes me boast of his success, as he certainly will, unless thou affordest me thy conduct and comfort; which I humbly again implore, that they who join with him may not have the pleasure to see me fall, and insult over my misery.

Ver. 5.] I am unworthy, indeed, of thy favour; but hope thou wilt magnify thine own mercy, in which I have placed such an entire confidence, that I persuade myself I shall have the joy to see thee deliver me out of all these distresses.

Ver. 6.] Which shall be acknowledged with the most cheerful hymns of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord, who hath dealt so well with me, as to render to me not according to my merits, but according to thy hope and trust in his inconceivable mercy.

PSALM XIV.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

1 THE fool hath said in his heart, *There is no God.* They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, *there is none that doeth good.*

PSALM XIV.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm (which was composed, as the foregoing, by David, and delivered by him to the master of music in the tabernacle) may probably refer, though it be not in the title expressed, to the universal apostasy of the people, in the rebellion of Absalom, from the allegiance they owed to him, and from the duty they owed to God.

Ver. 1.] Though the wicked are not yet so impu-

2 THE LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.

3 They are all gone aside, they are all together

ident as openly to deny God with their mouths, yet such is their abominable filthiness, so shameless are they in their wickedness, so universally depraved, that their secret thoughts sure are, God takes no notice what they do, or that he will not judge them for it.

Ver. 2.] But let them know that he exactly observes them; and that all the ways of the sons of men are naked and bare before his eyes: though, alas! there is nothing now to be seen but ignorance and contempt of his majesty.

become filthy : *there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

4 Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people *as they eat bread,* and call not upon the LORD.

5 There were they in great fear : for God *is* in the generation of the righteous.

Ver. 3.] The whole nation hath lost all sense of their duty; and, like a body without a spirit, is so rotten and putrefied, that it is hard to find so much as one that hath any sense of goodness in him.

Ver. 4.] Strange! that they should all be thus senseless; as not only to injure and oppress my poor innocent people, but to be cruel and void of all pity towards them, and to throw off likewise all religion.

Ver. 5.] What a terror will it be to them to see the divine vengeance seize on them when they think themselves most secure! for he who is the righteous judge will not desert those who are faithful to him, but graciously deliver them.

Ver. 6.] Your confusion, O ye atheistical fools,

6 Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor, because the LORD *is* his refuge.

7 Oh that the salvation of Israel *were come* out of Zion! when the LORD bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, *and* Israel shall be glad.

will be the greater, because you mocked and jeered at that poor despicable party of men who resolved to adhere to piety and virtuous loyalty, and to wait patiently upon God, and trust in him alone for safety:

Ver. 7.] Who is mighty to save, whatsoever you think, and resides by a special token of his presence in mount Zion. O that it might please him to send us deliverance from thence, and to restore us again to the happy enjoyment of that place from whence we are banished! it would turn our sad lamentations into the most cheerful thanksgivings, and fill not only Judah, but all the tribes of Israel, with joy and gladness (2 Sam. xix. 9, &c.).

PSALM XV.

A Psalm of David.

1 LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?

2 He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.

3 *He that* backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.

4 In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. *He that* sweareth to *his own* hurt, and changeth not.

5 *He that* putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. *He that* doeth these *things* shall never be moved.

PSALM XV.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm, in which he excites the people to the study of solid virtue, was composed by David, either when he brought the ark to mount Zion (2 Sam. vi.), or when he was restored thither again (as he desired in the conclusion of the foregoing Psalm), after the rebellion of Absalom (2 Sam. xix.). Then it was very seasonable to admonish them to live better, as became those who were under the government of God (as Theodoret excellently speaks), and had received such a great deliverance from him.

Ver. 1.] Lord, what a happiness is it, that thou wilt be pleased to dwell among us in this mountain wherein thou hast pitched thy tabernacle! but who shall have the honour to be admitted into thy society, and enjoy all the privileges of a true worshipper of thee?

Ver. 2.] I hear thee answer (methinks) as if a voice came from thy holy oracle, saying, Not all that are descended of Abraham, nor every one that offers me sacrifices and observes my appointed rites; but he

who completely endeavours to please me in all the parts of a holy life, exercising justice and mercy to his neighbour, as well as piety to me; and taking care he wrong not his neighbour in words no more than in deeds.

Ver. 3.] He that doth not abuse his tongue to calumny and detraction, nor is any other way injurious to his neighbour; who neither reproaches his neighbour himself, nor lightly believes, increases, or spreads the reproaches which are begun by others.

Ver. 4.] Who never courts men for their riches and power, if their wickedness makes them despicable; but honours those who are truly pious, though never so poor: and who hath such a respect to religion, that whatsoever he promises by oath he will perform, though he loses never so much by keeping his faith.

Ver. 5.] He who orders his private affairs so exactly, that he makes no gain of the money he lends to his poor brethren (Exod. xxii. 25. Deut. xxiii. 19, 20), and behaves himself so well, when he is in public office, that no gift can corrupt him to condemn the innocent or absolve the guilty. He that lives after this manner need never fear to fall from my favour.

PSALM XVI.

Michtam of David.

1 PRESERVE me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust.

PSALM XVI.

ARGUMENT.—A most excellent Psalm of David, more precious than any jewel, and worthy to be inscribed

2 *O my soul,* thou hast said unto the LORD, *Thou art my LORD* : my goodness *extendeth* not to thee ;

on a marble pillar, to endure to all posterity. For beside admirable expressions of his faith and confidence in God (though he was most violently perse-

3 *But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.*

4 Their sorrows shall be multiplied *that hasten after another god*: their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips.

5 The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: I will maintainest my lot.

6 The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.

7 I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons.

cuted by Saul, and forced to fly into foreign countries), it contains a prophecy of the resurrection of our Lord Christ from the dead.

Ver. 1.] Thou seest, O most mighty God, with what dangers I am encompassed: defend and protect me, I beseech thee, for I depend upon thee alone for safety.

Ver. 2.] I ever did so, as my conscience testifies; and therefore I hope thou wilt still continue my gracious God. Not that I can merit any favour of thee, or by any good that I can do requite thy kindness to me:

Ver. 3.] But if thou wilt be pleased to protect me, I will employ all my power, (when I come to the throne) to protect the pious in the land: worthy men, who excel in virtue, shall be preferred and honoured; for they are the persons who are most dear to me, and in whose company alone I delight.

Ver. 4.] They multiply idols (here in this place whither I am driven, 1 Sam. xxvi. 19), and are zealous in the service of another god: but I will never forsake thee, by partaking with them in their abominable sacrifices, in which the blood of men is offered, nor by swearing by the name of any of their false gods.

Ver. 5.] The Lord of heaven and earth is the God whom I serve: he who is the supreme dispenser of all things hath given me a kingdom for my portion, where he himself is worshipped; and he will defend and maintain my title to it while I adhere to him:

Ver. 6.] As I am resolved to do: for there is no place so pleasant as that where he is worshipped, no country comparable to that (for all manner of good things) which he hath settled upon me, though I am not yet possessed of it.

8 I have set the LORD always before me: because *he is at my right hand*, I shall not be moved.

9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.

10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption.

11 Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand *there are pleasures for evermore.*

Ver. 7.] I will therefore praise the Lord, and acknowledge his love; who hath hitherto guided me to behave myself so prudently, that my enemies have not been able to surprise me. In the darkest night of affliction, when I could not see my way, he hath secretly inspired my mind with wise thoughts, and admonished me what course to take for my preservation.

Ver. 8.] This hath ever been my practice, to conceive God always present to me: and since he is still nigh to support and defend me, the fiercest assaults of my enemies shall never be able to deject me from that dignity which he has designed for me.

Ver. 9.] In confidence of which, I feel not only a perfect satisfaction, but joy and triumph of heart. My tongue cannot but boast of it, and he my condition never so weak and low, I shall rest in hope to be raised up again.

Ver. 10.] For thou wilt not suffer me to remain always in this forlorn condition, nor let him whom thou hast anointed to be thy king be destroyed by Saul: "much less let that great king perish (whom thou hast promised of my seed); but though they kill him and lay him in his grave, thou wilt take him from thence, and raise him from the dead, before his body be in the least corrupted."

Ver. 11.] Thou wilt show me the way to escape out of all these dangers ("and do much more for the Messiah, who, being raised from the dead, shall live eternally"); and not only preserve my life, but satiate me with joy, when thy favour hath settled me on the throne, by that almighty power which is able to dispense everlasting happiness; "and will certainly exalt the Messiah to reign at thy right hand in endless joy and pleasure, after all his grievous sufferings."

PSALM XVII.

A Prayer of David.

I HEAR the right, O LORD, attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer, *that goeth not out of feigned lips.*

2 Let my sentence come forth from thy pre-

PSALM XVII.

ARGUMENT.—A prayer of David; wherein he humbly represents to God his innocence in those things whereof he was accused (of affecting the kingdom, I suppose, and seeking the life of Saul, 1 Sam. xxiv. 9); and therefore beseeches him to grant him deliverance from his persecutors and calumniators (Saul, it is most likely, and those that set him on). See Theodoret.

Ver. 1.] I am oppressed, O Lord, with such false accusations, that I have no way but to appeal to thee,

sence; let thine eyes behold the things that are equal.

3 Thou hast proved my heart; thou hast visited *me* in the night; thou hast tried me, *and*

who art the righteous judge of the world; beseeching thee to deal with me according to the justice of my cause. It is my most earnest request to thee; and I desire no favour of thee if these lips have spoken any deceitful words against Saul, or do now dissemble with thy majesty.

Ver. 2.] Who hast long suspended thy sentence and let my enemies pursue me as if I was guilty: but I humbly entreat thee at last openly to acquit me, and to show that thou regardest the greatness of no man's person, but only his uprightness and integrity.

Ver. 3.] Thou art privy to the inmost thoughts of my heart; in the greatest retirements thou seest what

shalt find nothing ; I am purposed *that* my mouth shall not transgress.

4 Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept *me* from the paths of the destroyer.

5 Hold up my goings in thy paths, *that* my footsteps slip not.

6 I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me, O God : incline thine ear unto me, *and* hear my speech.

7 Shew thy marvellous lovingkindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust in *thee* from those that rise up *against* them.

8 Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings,

9 From the wicked that oppress me, *from* my deadly enemies, *who* compass me about.

I design ; and hast tried me also (as gold in the fire) by many afflictions, which thou didst never find to make me think of any unlawful courses for my preservation ; but still I have been what I pretended, and my words and secret thoughts have always agreed together.

Ver. 4.] I know what men are apt to do in such circumstances ; but the respect I bear to thy commandments hath preserved me from those murderous practices which the violent man would have boldly attempted (1 Sam. xxvi. 8).

Ver. 5.] And I beseech thee, still confirm me in this resolution, that no temptation may make me forsake that track of virtue in which I have hitherto persisted ;

Ver. 6.] And in which I doubt not to be safe : for I have never yet cried unto thee but thou hast granted my request, and wilt not now, I hope, refuse to condescend unto it ; but admit of this appeal which I make to thee, and do me right.

Ver. 7.] Thy mercy will appear most wonderful in my preservation from this imminent danger wherein I am. Magnify it, therefore, O thou whose property it is to interpose thy mighty power, for the deliverance of such as confide in nothing but thy omnipotent goodness, from those who rise up against them to destroy them.

Ver. 8.] I commend myself to thy watchful providence, beseeching thee to defend me with the same care that we do that tender part in the midst of our eye. As a hen covers her chickens under her wings, from the ravenous bird that hovers over them to devour them :

Ver. 9.] So do thou, O Lord, protect me (who fly unto thee for safety) from the wicked that are about to seize on me and spoil me ; from those deadly enemies which have beset me round with eager desires and hopes to destroy me.

10 They are inclosed in their own fat : with their mouth they speak proudly.

11 They have now compassed us in our steps : they have set their eyes bowing down to the earth ;

12 Like as a lion *that* is greedy of his prey, and as it were a young lion lurking in secret places.

13 Arise, O LORD, disappoint him, cast him down : deliver my soul from the wicked, *which* is thy sword :

14 From men *which* are thy hand, O LORD, from men of the world, *which* have their portion in *this* life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid *treasure* : they are full of children, and leave the rest of their *substance* to their babes.

15 As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness : I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.

Ver. 10.] Who are so stuffed with worldly goods, and have thriven so long in their ungodly courses, that they are grown extremely proud of their power : and not only haughtily threaten my destruction, but presumptuously brag as if they had already accomplished their desire.

Ver. 11.] And, indeed, they have now gotten me and my followers into a very great strait (1 Sam. xxiii. 26) : and which way soever we turn ourselves, we are in danger to fall into the hands of those who have stedfastly resolved our utter ruin.

Ver. 12.] No lion can be more desirous to tear a lamb in pieces, than Saul is to make a prey of me. Like a young lion in his den, he watches when an opportunity will offer itself that he may fall upon me (1 Sam. xxiii. 7, 8. xxiv. 2, &c.).

Ver. 13.] Delay no longer, therefore, O Lord, but speedily appear to defeat him. Throw him down to the ground, when he thinks to fall upon me ; and though thou hast suffered the wicked to wound me sorely, yet let him not kill me, who depended upon thy power, which is able to deliver me.

Ver. 14.] He hath many, I know, that join with him to destroy me ; but they are only mortal men, O Lord, who can do nothing but what thou permittest them for my correction : worldly men, who look no farther than this present life ; and desire no other satisfaction but to be very rich, to have a numerous posterity, and to leave them great estates when they can enjoy them no longer.

Ver. 15.] Which prosperity I do in no wise envy them, but think myself happy that I can approach into thy presence, and, with a good conscience, wait for thy favour ; nothing doubting, but when thou shalt show thyself in thy majesty and power, it will be abundantly to my satisfaction.

PSALM XVIII.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David, the servant of the Lord, who spake unto the Lord the words of this song, in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul : and he said,

1 I WILL love thee, O LORD, my strength.

2 The LORD *is* my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer ; my God, my strength, in whom I

will trust ; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, *and* my high tower.

3 I will call upon the LORD, *who* is worthy to

PSALM XVIII.

ARGUMENT.—A Psalm composed by David (whom the Lord chose to serve him in governing the children

of Israel), and delivered by him to the master of the music in the tabernacle, for a perpetual commemoration of God's gracious care over him, and

be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.

4 The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid.

5 The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me.

6 In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, *even* into his ears.

7 Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth.

8 There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it.

9 He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness *was* under his feet.

10 And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind.

preservation of him, through the whole course of the long persecution and opposition he met withal, before he could get the kingdom. For which singular providence, he still gave particular thanks to God after every deliverance or victory which he vouchsafed him: but, at last (so great was his piety), he made one general acknowledgment of God's goodness to him, when he was peaceably settled upon his throne, in delivering him from the Philistines, the Syrians, and other nations, who rose up against him (and that in a miraculous manner, as he describes it, ver. 13, 14, &c. where Theodoret observes, that, in his time, God scattered the enemies of Christians by the like dreadful tempests); but especially from Saul who (as he was the first, so) was the most violent, implacable, and dangerous of all his enemies.

The sense of the Psalm is this:

Ver. 1.] I love thee, O Lord, to whom I owe my safety and preferment, with the most passionate and ardent affection: and I will never cease to love thee thus, as long as ever I live:

Ver. 2.] For it was not the caves and lurking-places (1 Sam. xxii. 1. 5. xxiii. 23), nor the thickets and strong holds (xxiii. 14. 19. 29), the rocks and impregnable forts (xxiv. 2), the high mountains and steep hills to which I fled (xxvi. 1), that preserved me from my enemies; but the Lord Almighty, whom I made my refuge, and whom I acknowledge for my deliverer: to his gracious providence, and powerful protection, I ascribe my safety, and will never confide in any other security; he defended me in the most dangerous assaults of my enemies, he repelled all their forces, and placed me out of the reach of their violence.

Ver. 3.] Praised therefore be the Lord, unto whom I humbly commended myself by prayer (as I mean to do always) in my distresses, and he delivered me from all my enemies.

Ver. 4.] When there appeared no way for my escape, but they thought they had me as sure as a bird taken in a net; when whole troops of ungodly men came pouring in upon me as a torrent, that threatened to sweep me quite away;

Ver. 5.] When I had no more power to help myself than a dead man bound hand and foot in his grave; (so suddenly was I entangled in their deadly snares, 1 Sam. xxiii. 26).

Ver. 6.] This was my belief in such grievous straits:
Voc. II.—104.

11 He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him *were* dark waters and thick clouds of the skies.

12 At the brightness *that was* before him his thick clouds passed, hail stones, and coals of fire.

13 The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail stones and coals of fire.

14 Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them.

15 Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.

16 He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters.

17 He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me.

I made my usual addresses to the Lord, and with great earnestness supplicated my most merciful God, who had so often delivered me: and, though he be so infinitely above us in his heavenly palace, he did not despise my petition, but it was admitted into his presence, and found a gracious audience.

Ver. 7.] For he instantly appeared in a sensible manner to confound my enemies; who saw his wrathful displeasure in the dreadful tempest which fell upon them, and made the very earth tremble under them.

Ver. 8.] There was nothing to be seen but fuming smoke and devouring fire; which, at his command, shot out burning coals among them.

Ver. 9.] His glorious majesty also visibly showed itself, bowing the heavens (the place of its residence), and coming down in a thick cloud, which was spread as a carpet under it.

Ver. 10.] Some of the principal angels were its chariot, wherein it rode very swiftly; and a rapid wind was a token of their presence (2 Sam. v. 24).

Ver. 11.] A great darkness obscured it; for round about it were the rest of the heavenly ministers disposed to attend upon it in watery vapours and thick clouds of the sky.

Ver. 12.] Who, going forth from his glorious presence, sent hail-stones and coals of fire (as in the days of Joshua, x. 11), in the face of my enemies.

Ver. 13.] Which were followed with such terrible thunder (like that in the days of Samuel, 1 Sam. vii. 10), mixed with more hail-stones and fiery exhalations, as declared the greatness of his majesty, and the mightiness of his power.

Ver. 14.] These were the arrows wherewith he scattered them: there needed no other darts to discomfit them.

Ver. 15.] For even the earth itself was rent and torn by them; they cleft it asunder, and penetrated so deep, that the secret abysses of it were discovered through the breaches that were made; when thou, O Lord, in great indignation didst rebuke my enemies.

Ver. 16.] Nothing but such a power from above could have preserved me, which the Lord was pleased graciously to extend to me: he laid hold on me, and kept me from sinking; he snatched me out of many and great dangers, which, like a deluge, were ready to overwhelm me.

Ver. 17.] He delivered me first from that mighty giant Goliath, and then from Saul, whose power I

18 They prevented me in the day of my calamity : but the LORD was my stay.

19 He brought me forth also into a large place ; he delivered me, because he delighted in me.

20 The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness ; according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.

21 For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God.

22 For all his judgments were before me, and I did not put away his statutes from me.

23 I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity.

24 Therefore hath the LORD recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his eyesight.

25 With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful ; with an upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright ;

26 With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure ; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward.

was not able to withstand ; and afterward from the Philistines and Syrians, and many other nations, whose forces were far superior unto mine, and whose hatred instigated them to do all they could to destroy me.

Ver. 18.] When I was weak and unable to resist, they suddenly invaded me ; but the Lord would not suffer them to overthrow me (1 Sam. xxiii. xxiv. &c.).

Ver. 19.] But brought me out of those straits into a state of perfect liberty. He delivered me (when they thought they had pent me up so close that I could not escape them) because he had a kindness for me.

Ver. 20.] He knew also that I was unjustly persecuted ; and therefore rewarded me according to the integrity of my heart, and the purity of my actions ; which were never guilty of that whereof they accused me.

Ver. 21.] For I never took any unlawful courses for my deliverance ; but when Saul fell into my hands, I would not kill him, because he was the Lord's anointed (1 Sam. xxiv. 10).

Ver. 22.] For I laid his precepts before me, as the rule of my actions ; and did not bid them stand aside, when it seemed to be my interest not to observe them :

Ver. 23.] But chose rather to suffer anything than lose my integrity : and how unjustly soever my enemies dealt with me, I would not imitate them ; but, though I could not hinder theirs, kept myself from mine iniquity.

Ver. 24.] And therefore hath the Lord, who administers all things with the exactest justice, and the greatest goodness, heard my prayer (1 Sam. xxvi. 23) : and dealt with me according to my innocent intentions, which would not let me defile my hands with the blood of Saul, when it was in my power to be revenged of him.

Ver. 25.] Such is the gracious method of thy providence, O Lord, who wilt do good to those who do good to others, and do them justice also (against their oppressors and calumniators) who preserve their integrity.

Ver. 26.] And keep thy promises faithfully with those whose piety is unfeigned and who immovably keep their fidelity to thee. But if any will take crooked ways to obtain their ends, thou wilt ensnare them

27 For thou wilt save the afflicted people ; but wilt bring down high looks.

28 For thou wilt light my candle : the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.

29 For by thee I have run through a troop ; and by my God have I leaped over a wall.

30 As for God, his way is perfect : the word of the LORD is tried : he is a buckler to all those that trust in him.

31 For who is God save the LORD ? or who is a rock save our God ?

32 It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect.

33 He maketh my feet like hinds' feet, and setteth me upon my high places.

34 He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms.

35 Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation : and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great.

36 Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip.

in their own devices ; and by such means as they least think of, lead them to destruction.

Ver. 27.] For thou art wont to deliver those who are poor and miserable, when they humbly wait on thee ; and to lay those low, who (proud of their power) insolently oppress them.

Ver.] 28. I myself am an instance of it, who owe all my prosperity and joy to thee ; by whom (when my hopes were ready to expire, 1 Sam. xxvii. 1), I was brought out of a calamitous estate into this splendour and royal greatness which now I enjoy.

Ver. 29.] For the strongest and most numerous enemies were not able to stand before me : I easily scaled the highest walls, wherein they thought themselves most securely defended against me (2 Sam. v. 7, &c.).

Ver. 30.] God is not like to men, for he never deserts his servants (as men are wont to do those that depend upon them) in difficult and dangerous affairs : his promises are freer from deceit, than the most refined gold from dross ; and none shall be able to hurt those that rely upon them.

Ver. 31.] For who is there that can frustrate his intentions, or resist his will ? What power is there above or equal to his whom we worship, that can injure those whom he will protect, or defend those whom he will destroy ?

Ver. 32.] It was this mighty Lord that inspired me with courage, and removed all obstacles out of my way, to the completing my conquests (2 Sam. v. 10).

Ver. 33.] If swiftness was necessary, he made me as nimble as a hind, to pursue mine enemies even into those places, which, for their height and cragginess, were thought inaccessible.

Ver. 34.] If there was need of dexterity or strength, he bestowed it on me to such a degree, that I was able to wrest the strongest bow out of my enemy's hand, and break it in pieces.

Ver. 35.] If at any time I fell into the thickest troops of them, I was safely protected by thee and delivered. Thy mighty power upheld me from being oppressed by their numbers ; and by thy goodness, with a handful of men, I got great victories.

Ver. 36.] Thou didst open a wide passage to me in my greatest straits, and in the most uneven and difficult ways I never stumbled :

37 I have pursued mine enemies, and overtaken them: neither did I turn again till they were consumed.

38 I have wounded them that they were not able to rise: they are fallen under my feet.

39 For thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle: thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me.

40 Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies; that I might destroy them that hate me.

41 They cried, but *there was none* to save them: *even unto the Lord*, but he answered them not.

42 Then did I beat them small as the dust before the wind: I did cast them out as the dirt in the streets.

43 Thou hast delivered me from the strivings of the people; and thou hast made me the head of the heathen: a people *whom* I have not known shall serve me.

Ver. 37.] But having routed my enemies, I pursued them so closely, that I overtook them in their fight, and did not return to my camp till I had destroyed them.

Ver. 38.] I gave them such a blow, that they were not able to renew the fight, but were so perfectly subdued that they lay at my feet.

Ver. 39.] Which is all to be ascribed to thy mighty power, O God; who gavest me both the courage to fight, and success in the encounter, with such numerous enemies as hoped to destroy me.

Ver. 40.] To thy praise I again mention it (not to magnify my own prowess), that they who hated me submitted their very necks to me, that I might kill them, or impose what yoke I pleased on them.

Ver. 41.] They sought for help of their allies and confederates; but it was beyond their power to deliver them; for they were deserted by the Lord, who regarded not their cries unto him;

Ver. 42.] But left them to be beaten and dispersed by me, till they were as weak as the small dust, which is tossed up and down with every wind; and as contemptible as the dirt in the street, which every body tramples under foot.

Ver. 43.] Thus hast thou continued thy kindness to me, till thou seatedst me on the throne, both of Israel and Judah; whose contentions are ceased, and both united in me (2 Sam. v. 1). And, since that time, thou hast not only delivered me from those dangerous rebellions (2 Sam. xviii.), and seditious motions (2 Sam. xx.), which have been raised among my own people to dethrone me; but made foreign nations subject to me, and people whom I had no knowledge of to become my tributaries.

Ver. 44.] The very report of me and of my victories made some of them heartily submit themselves

44 As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey me: the strangers shall submit themselves unto me.

45 The strangers shall fade away, and be afraid out of their close places.

46 The Lord liveth; and blessed be my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted.

47 *It is God* that avengeth me, and subdueth the people unto me.

48 He delivereth me from mine enemies: yea, thou liftest me up above those that rise up against me: thou hast delivered me from the violent man.

49 Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name.

50 Great deliverance giveth he to his king; and sheweth mercy to his anointed, to David, and to his seed for evermore.

to me; and others dissemble their hostility, and offer me their service.

Ver. 45.] They trembled and fell, like withered leaves, at the sound of my name: and, distrusting their strong holds, came creeping out with fear, to surrender them into my hands.

Ver. 46.] Blessed be the Lord (to whose eternal glory and honour I speak all this): let him be everlastingly praised, who hath preserved me in so many dangers: let him, who not only preserved but exalted me, be magnified and exalted with the highest praises.

Ver. 47.] For he is that mighty God (I can never say it often enough), who hath many and many a time executed vengeance for me on those who were injurious to me; and hath brought many nations under my empire.

Ver. 48.] It is he to whom I owe my life (which my enemies, if he had not rescued me, would have taken from me): and, which is more, thou hast made me superior to them all, and set me on a throne, in spite of the fierce and violent persecution of Saul; from which thou didst mercifully deliver me.

Ver. 49.] And therefore I will everywhere make my thankful acknowledgments unto thee, O Lord: those strange nations shall know that I ascribe my victories unto thee; in honour of whose great name I will sing this perpetual song.

Ver. 50.] The Lord hath granted wonderful and manifold deliverances to me; who reign not by usurpation, but by his special appointment; and the same mercy, by which alone I was advanced to this dignity, shall be continued to me, and to my posterity, till the coming of that great King, whose kingdom shall have no end.

PSALM XIX.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

1 THE heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.

2 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.

CHAP. XIX.

ARGUMENT.—A Psalm composed by David (and delivered by him to the master of the music in the tabernacle), declaring that no man could be igno-

rant of God who would consider his admirable works; much less could the Jews, whom he had instructed by his law, and therefore justly expected their greater care not wilfully to offend him.

3 *There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.*

4 *Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,*

5 *Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.*

6 *His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.*

7 *The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.*

8 *The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.*

Ver. 1.] There is no part of this great fabric of the world which doth not direct us to a most mighty being, by whom it was made: but above all the rest, the heavens, which are so vastly extended, and wherein we see so many glorious bodies, proclaim aloud to all mankind the immense greatness, and power, and wisdom, and goodness of God; which shine most brightly there.

Ver. 2.] By their settled and orderly revolution the day and the night are made; from whose constant succession, and commodious variations, there issues forth (as water from a fountain) perpetual instruction, and matter of praise and thanks to his most wise goodness.

Ver. 3.] They cannot speak, indeed, as we can do; nor do we hear any words they utter: and yet, without these, they are understood by all nations; even by the most barbarous, who understand not a word of any other language.

Ver. 4.] They all read here, as in a book, the wonderful art and skill of that almighty being, who framed this regular structure; though they be never so remote, they hear them preach (as the apostles hereafter shall preach more fully) how great and how good he is: especially if they hearken to that universal minister of his, the sun, which hath its habitation fixed for it here;

Ver. 5.] And comes forth every morning decked with such a radiant light, that no bridegroom looks so cheerfully, or is so adorned, on his marriage-day. Its swiftness also is as admirable as its beauty, for the mightiest champion can but weakly imitate it, in the speediness, evenness, and unweariedness of its course.

Ver. 6.] It runs from the east to the west every day; and, in its yearly revolution, visits the southern and northern parts: so that all the earth feels the benefit of its quickening heat.

Ver. 7.] Thus is God visible to all the world in the face of the heavens; but to us he is conspicuous in a more excellent manner, by the revelation he hath made of himself in the law of Moses: which is a more perfect light to guide us, than the sun itself; restoring and comforting the most drooping souls, more than the sun cheers our bodily spirits. For it is a sure testimony of God's will and of his love, and preserves ignorant souls from being seduced to worship the sun as a god: for it makes them, at the first word, so wise, as to understand that "the Lord created the heavens, as well as the earth."

9 *The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.*

10 *More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.*

11 *Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.*

12 *Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.*

13 *Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.*

14 *Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.*

Ver. 8.] And from thence delivered to us a complete rule of life for all sorts of men among us: who see with great joy all officers and rulers, both sacred and civil, directed how to manage all for the public good; and every private man taught to keep himself pure from all manner of wickedness: it being as clear as the sun what he ought to do, and what to avoid.

Ver. 9.] The true worship of God is here unalterably settled (Deut. xii. 32), free from all profane mixtures of superstition: and all our transactions with men are prescribed to be in perfect truth and righteousness.

Ver. 10.] We are happier in this than in all the gold and precious treasures which are brought from other countries; or in the most delicious pleasures which he hath provided for us in our own.

Ver. 11.] I say nothing but what I have tried: for, by following the admonitions of thy holy laws, both in my private and my public capacity, thy servant is become thus illustrious: and in their observance there is not only much satisfaction at present, but a far greater reward in the conclusion.

Ver. 12.] All our unhappiness is, that we do not observe them so strictly as we ought. They are a perfect rule; but our obedience, alas! is so exceedingly imperfect, that we cannot so much as number our wanderings from it: many of which we never observed; and therefore are so far from meriting any reward for obedience, that I must humbly beg thy pardon for the demerits of my negligence:

Ver. 13.] And the assistance of thy grace likewise (without which I shall still farther swerve from thy law), to preserve me from all wilful sins against thee. I am devoted to thy service, O Lord; therefore I beseech thee so to strengthen my will to please thee, that no temptation may prevail with me to consent deliberately to offend thee. Then shall I (notwithstanding my infirmities and ignorances) be accounted upright before thee; and be free from a great deal of guilt, which otherways, by manifold transgressions, I shall draw upon me.

Ver. 14.] And I shall have the confidence also then to address myself unto thee, both openly and in secret, with hopes that all my sacrifices (offered from a heart that sincerely studies to be obedient to thee) shall be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord; to whom I fly for safety and deliverance, in all the assaults which the enemies, either of my body or my soul, make upon me.

PSALM XX.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

1 THE LORD hear thee in the day of trouble ; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee.

2 Send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion.

3 Remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice. Selah.

4 Grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel.

5 We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners : the LORD fulfil all thy petitions.

6 Now know I that the LORD savoth his anointed ; he will hear him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand.

7 Some trust in chariots, and some in horses : but we will remember the name of the LORD our God.

8 They are brought down and fallen : but we are risen, and stand upright.

9 Save, LORD : let the king hear us when we call.

PSALM XX.

ARGUMENT.—A Psalm composed by David (and by him delivered to the master of the music in the tabernacle), wherein the people are taught to pray for his good success in some great expedition : it is probable (from ver. 7) against the Ammonites and Syrians, who came, with great numbers of horsemen and chariots, to fight with him (2 Sam. x. 6. 8. 1 Chron. xix. 7).

Ver. 1.] The Lord, who never fails those that seek him, hear thy prayer, when the enemy distresseth thee in the day of battle (2 Sam. x. 9, &c.) : the mighty God, who hath made a gracious covenant with Jacob and his posterity, protect thee, and make thee victorious.

Ver. 2.] O God, who hast pitched thy tabernacle among us, and dwellest in mount Zion by a visible token of thy presence, succour our sovereign in the time of need, and support him in all assaults of such numerous enemies as are combined against him.

Ver. 3.] Show, by some signal token from heaven, that thou art pleased with all his oblations and burnt-sacrifices, whereby he made his supplication to thee, for thy blessing on him in this undertaking.

Ver. 4.] Make me as prosperous as he himself wishes ; and enable him to accomplish whatsoever he designs.

Ver. 5.] In confidence of thy help we will shout when we set upon our enemies ; in thy power and might we will advance courageously against them : for the Lord will not fail to grant the petitions of our sovereign ; whose cause is so just, and who hath been so insolently treated by them (2 Sam. x. 3, 4).

Ver. 6.] This is the assured hope of every soul of us ; we are as certain as if he had already obtained it, that the Lord will make him victorious : for he reigns by his special appointment : who as he infinitely excels in strength, and commands all the host of heaven ; so will declare the exceeding greatness of his power, in giving him an illustrious deliverance.

Ver. 7.] We are not daunted at the vast numbers of our confederate enemies ; some of which boast of their chariots, others of their horses : but to all these we oppose the mighty power of the Lord, who hath heretofore done such great things for us.

Ver. 8.] And we triumph beforehand, saying, they are thrown down from their chariots and fallen from their horses, wherein they trusted : but we, whom they despised, are erect and stand unmoveable, merely by our confidence in the Lord.

Ver. 9.] Let it be unto us, O Lord, according to our desires and our hopes : preserve our king : and, in the day when we cry unto thee for help, make our armies victorious.

PSALM XXI.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

1 THE king shall joy in thy strength, O LORD ; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice !

2 Thou hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not withholden the request of his lips. Selah.

PSALM XXI.

ARGUMENT.—Theodoret truly observes, that in this Psalm as well as the former, David (who was the author of it, and delivered it to the master of the music in the tabernacle) speaks in the person of the people : whom he instructs how to give God, thanks (not for Hezekiah's recovery from his great sickness, and the lengthening of his days, as Theodoret takes it, but) for granting him those victories which they prayed for in the Psalm foregoing. And it is generally looked upon as describing, under that figure, the exaltation, glory, and majesty of Christ, which he obtained by his bloody death and passion. Many of the Hebrews themselves apply it to the Messiah. So that it may be called a Psalm

of triumph, after the victories which David got over his enemies ; which were a type of Christ's victory over death, and of the triumph that ensued. And truly there are some things in it which are more literally fulfilled in Christ than in David, as ver. 4—6.

Ver. 1.] Thou hast heard the prayers of thy people, O Lord, when they cried unto thee, saying, *Lord, save the king* (xx. 9) : who will never cease, therefore to thank thee with the greatest joy and gladness, for that extraordinary strength and courage wherewith thou didst endue him. O how much beyond all expression are his joy and thankfulness for thy wonderful deliverance of him !

Ver. 2.] Thou hast granted all that his heart de-

3 For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness; thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head.

4 He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever.

5 His glory is great in thy salvation: honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him.

6 For thou hast made him most blessed for ever: thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance.

7 For the king trusteth in the LORD, and through the mercy of the most High he shall not be moved.

8 Thy hand shall find out all thine enemies: thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee.

9 Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger: the LORD shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them.

10 Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men.

11 For they intended evil against thee: they imagined a mischievous device, which they are not able to perform.

12 Therefore shalt thou make them turn their back, when thou shalt make ready thine arrows upon thy strings against the face of them.

13 Be thou exalted, LORD, in thine own strength: so will we sing and praise thy power.

sired (xx. 4), as well as that which he openly requested with his lips.

Ver. 3.] Yea, more than his heart desired. For when he thought of no such thing, thou wast graciously pleased to anoint him to a kingdom: in which having settled him, thou hast added a new glory to him, and set an illustrious crown upon his head (1 Chron. xx. 2).

Ver. 4.] He desired only to escape with his life, when he was encompassed with inevitable dangers: and thou moreover didst promise to prolong his days (2 Sam. vii. 12); and to continue the crown to his posterity for many generations (2 Sam. vii. 16. 19), as thou wilt do to his Son Christ for ever and ever.

Ver. 5.] Great is the fame, also, which he hath won by the many victories thou hast given him (2 Sam. vii. 9): all nations honour him (as they shall much more do the Messiah), and reverence that royal majesty to which thou hast exalted him (1 Chron. xiv. 2. 17).

Ver. 6.] And, which is a far greater glory, thou hast not only bestowed extraordinary benefits upon himself; but made him a blessing to future generations, whom thou wilt bless for his sake (1 Kings viii. 15. 20. 56). By which special favour and token of thy love to him, thou hast raised him to the highest pitch of joy as well as of greatness.

Ver. 7.] Which shall never cease to cheer and refresh his spirit, because he confides in him who never fails to perform his promises: through his kindness, who is superior to all, the throne of David shall stand

fast, though all the power on earth shall combine to overturn it.

Ver. 8.] They are thy enemies, O Most High, as well as his, who endeavour to disturb him; and they shall never escape thy vengeance: whosoever they skulk or fly for safety, thy vengeance shall pursue them, and punish their spiteful opposition to thee.

Ver. 9.] Wo be to them, when the time comes wherein thou wilt call them to an account for their hatred to thee. They shall as certainly perish, as if they were cast into a fiery oven: the Lord who is justly incensed against them, shall utterly consume them with a sharp and unavoidable destruction.

Ver. 10.] They shall be so far from finding any favour, that thou shalt quite extinguish their families, and wholly abolish such a wicked generation:

Ver. 11.] Who intended to destroy thy anointed, and root out thy religion. Their design was so mischievous, and therefore they deserve to be thus punished; though they were not able to effect it.

Ver. 12.] It may most justly provoke thee to set thyself against them: and, as their aim, and the bent of their heart, was to throw him down whom thou hast advanced; so to make them the mark of thy severest displeasure, till they fall down wounded, and rise no more.

Ver. 13.] Whereby all good men shall be excited to extol thy power; and therefore show the greatness of it, O Lord, and magnify thyself before their eyes: and then, whatsoever others do, we, who are delivered by thee, will set forth thy mightiness in our songs, and celebrate it with perpetual praises.

PSALM XXII.

To the chief Musician upon Aijeleth Shahar (hind of the Morning). A Psalm of David.

1 My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?

2 O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.

PSALM XXII.

ARGUMENT.—A Psalm composed by David and (directed to the master of music in the tabernacle), wherein, under his own person (who was persecuted as a hind is by the hunters early in the morning, ver. 16), he makes a large description of the sufferings of Christ; and, in conclusion, of his exaltation, and the propagation of his kingdom to the utmost ends of the earth. Some of which things are delivered in such expressions, that they are more literally fulfilled in our Saviour, than ever they were in David: to whom they belong,

but in a metaphorical sense. I shall note the particulars in their proper places, underneath the paraphrase, which I would not too much enlarge, or interrupt, by inserting them here.

Ver. 1.] O my God, my most gracious God, whose power no creature can resist, how strange doth it seem, that I, who have been thy care so long, am now left without any visible means of escaping those that seek my life; and that the loudest cries which I pour out of a heart laden with sorrow and grief, are far from prevailing for any relief (Mat. xxvi. 46).

3 But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.

4 Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.

5 They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.

6 But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.

7 All they that see me laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying,

8 He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.

9 But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts.

10 I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly.

Ver. 2.] O my God (for so I will still call thee, even in the greatest distresses), there is no day, no night, passes, wherein I do not, with incessant cries, most importunately call upon thee; but can obtain no rest from my persecutions.

Ver. 3.] Yet thou art he that hateth all those who unjustly persecute thy servant; and keepest thy word most faithfully with them that depend upon thee: as appears by the many deliverances thou hast sent them from thy holy place, where they celebrate thy name with their perpetual praises.

Ver. 4.] They that are gone before us have left us many remembrances of thy mercy to those that piously relied on thee: in all their straits they applied themselves unto thee as their only deliverer; and by thy help they escaped the greatest dangers.

Ver. 5.] Their fervent prayers prevailed with thee (though mine can now obtain no audience): they were confident thou wouldst preserve them in safety, and their hope did not make them ashamed.

Ver. 6.] Whereas I, who have waited on thee also after their example, am so disappointed in my expectation, that my adversaries are ready to tread me under their feet: so weak I am, and thereby so contemptible, that not only the great men, but the baser sort and dregs of the people, publicly reproach and despise me.

Ver. 7.] All that see the straits to which I am reduced openly deride me: they make mouths at me, and, in a scornful manner, shake their heads, and jest upon me, saying,

[This was most exactly and literally fulfilled in our Saviour Christ, Matt. xxvii. 39. 43.]

Ver. 8.] This is he that talked so much of the favour of God to him, and depended upon him that he would deliver him: let us see now what he will do for him: let him deliver him out of our hands, and show thereby that he is so dear, as he pretends, unto him.

Ver. 9.] This insolent language is very grievous to my soul, but it shall not cast me into utter despair of thy mercy: I will rather continue to wait upon thee, who, without my knowledge, and when I could not call upon thee, didst grant me a greater deliverance than this which I now ask of thee: for thou broughtest me out of my mother's womb, and then providest nourishment for me; tookest a singular care of me while I hung upon her breast.

Ver. 10.] In my infancy thou didst preserve me from all the mischiefs to which that weak estate is incident; and ever since has been my gracious protector: for, from my first coming into the world

11 Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help.

12 Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.

13 They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.

14 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.

15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.

16 For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.

17 I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me.

till this moment, I have had nothing to trust unto but only thy good providence; which all along declared (though I was the youngest of my brethren) what a large share I had in thy loving-kindness.

Ver. 11.] And shall I think thou wilt now forsake me, when I call upon thee, and acknowledge thy former care, and hope for thy future? Go on, O God, to conclude as thou hast begun, and continue to do me good. And now that there is an appearance of the sorest distress, and I am no more able to help myself than when I was an infant, and have less help and succour from others; be thou pleased to exert thy power, as thou hast ever done, for my deliverance.

Ver. 12.] It must be thy work alone; for my enemies are not only very numerous, but so mighty and formidable in their power, so insolent also and furious, and have enclosed and hemmed me in so strictly, that it is impossible without thy miraculous providence to escape them.

Ver. 13.] A hungry lion is not more fierce nor more dreadful, when he is just ready to seize on his trembling prey, than these my persecutors; whom I hear roaring and thundering out their threats, and see coming with open mouth to fall upon me, greedily desiring and aiming to devour me:

Ver. 14.] Which have struck me with such consternation, that I am as weak as water; my bones are so loosed, that they are not able to support my body; my heart fails me, and my spirit dissolves and faints away, as wax melts before the fire.

Ver. 15.] Fear, sadness, and sorrow, have quite dried up my vital moisture: I have scarce strength enough left to complain: but am just upon the point to expire, and to be laid in my grave.

Ver. 16.] For that malicious company which have combined together to persecute me, are as greedy and as cruel as the hungry dogs, who have hunted down a hind (see the title), and are all gathered about her to tear her in pieces: they use me most shamefully, as well as cruelly, and have bored through my hands and my feet.

[There is nothing like this in the history of David; of whom it can be only spoken poetically by a hyperbole.]

Ver. 17.] Grief and sorrow have so consumed my flesh, that my bones stick out through my skin, and may be distinctly numbered: and they that behold my misery are so far from having compassion on me, that they feed their eyes, and are exceedingly satisfied with this lamentable sight.

18 They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.

19 But be not thou far from me, O LORD: O my strength, haste thee to help me.

20 Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog.

21 Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.

22 I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.

23 Ye that fear the LORD, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.

24 For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard.

25 My praise shall be of thee in the great con-

gregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him.

26 The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live for ever.

27 All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.

28 For the kingdom is the LORD's: and he is the governor among the nations.

29 All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul.

30 A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the LORD for a generation.

31 They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done *this*.

Ver. 18.] They make themselves sure I shall never recover; no more than the poor hind, whose skin the hunters have divided, or cast lots to whose share it shall fall. For so have they parted my upper garments among them, and cast lots who shall have my inner.

[This also was more literally fulfilled in Christ than in David; in whose story we find nothing like it: and therefore it can signify nothing more (if applied to him) than that they looked upon him as utterly undone; and rifled his house, and despoiled him of all when he fled from Saul, 1 Sam. xix.]

Ver. 19.] Once more, therefore, I humbly beseech thee, O Lord, to interpose, by thy power, in this grievous strait, for my deliverance: it is easy for thee to effect it, who art almighty, and I depend merely on thy aid: which I entreat thee to send speedily for my relief, or else it will come too late.

Ver. 20.] Rescue my life from the sword, which the enemy hath drawn to despatch me: it is all I have left, and it is left without all defence but thine; who, I hope, will preserve it from the power of him, that, with the rage and fury of a dog, maliciously persecutes me.

Ver. 21.] Thou hast done as great things heretofore, and sent me relief when the fiercest and strongest enemies were pushing at me, and insulting over me: which makes me presume of thy favour now in this sore exigence, when the most violent men are ready to fall upon me, and tear me in pieces, if thou dost not save me.

Ver. 22.] Save me, O Lord, and it will rebound to thy praise, and not merely to my own satisfaction: for I will tell all my brethren how good and gracious thou art; and publicly proclaim the greatness of thy power, and wisdom, and justice (as well as of thy love), in the midst of thy faithful people.

[This David did in the eighteenth Psalm; and this our Saviour did by his apostles, Heb. ii. 12, who preached his resurrection, &c. everywhere to the praise and glory of God's grace, Eph. i. 6.]

Ver. 23.] I will call upon all the devout worshippers of the Lord to join with me in praising and giving thanks unto him (1 Chron. xvi.). Let the whole posterity of Jacob (and whosoever hath anything of his spirit in him) set forth the glory of his most excellent perfections, which shine in his marvellous works: let them all, I say, whom he hath chosen to be his peculiar people, most humbly worship and adore his majesty, and learn to give him faithful obedience.

[All that follows is as applicable to Christ as to David; and some passages more fulfilled in him.]

Ver. 24.] For that poor despicable person (whom men contemned and scorned, ver. 6, 7), he hath not disdained to look graciously upon, in his lowest and vilest condition. But, though he seemed to neglect him for a time, hath seasonably appeared in his favour, and granted the earnest prayers which he put up unto him in his distress.

Ver. 25.] Which shall be openly acknowledged, when I return to thy house with the heartiest praises to thee; from whom, I am sensible, I receive all the blessings I enjoy. And as I have been forward in my trouble to vow thee many sacrifices, if thou wouldest restore me; so I will certainly offer them in the presence of those that devoutly worship the divine majesty.

Ver. 26.] I will invite also those poor people, who were partakers with me in my sufferings, to come and feast with me on that plentiful provision I will make for them; and thereby encourage all those that seek the Lord sincerely, and depend upon him, to hope that they shall also praise him. Let me assure all such faithful souls, your hearts shall be always full of comfort and joy, which nothing shall be able to take away from you.

Ver. 27.] Nor shall the fame of thy wonderful works, O Lord, be confined within the narrow bounds of this one country; but spread itself to the farthest parts of the earth; where they shall, with thankful commemorations of thy goodness, universally prostrate themselves before thee, and become thy subjects.

Ver. 28.] For the Lord is the sovereign of the whole world: and therefore as all nations are under his dominion, so they shall all submit unto his government.

Ver. 29.] All they that are rich and powerful shall partake of his altar, and humbly worship him that bestows such benefits upon them [as they that ate of the sacrifices did, 1 Cor. x. 18]: and so shall all the poor and miserable also think themselves happy in his service. For he is the protector of them all; and the greatest, as well as the meanest, must acknowledge, that of him alone cometh their salvation.

Ver. 30.] Their posterity likewise shall devote themselves unto him, and propagate his religion unto future generations; whom the Lord shall adopt into his family.

Ver. 31.] They shall join themselves to the society of his people; and publish to those that shall succeed them the loving-kindness and the faithfulness of the Lord, in this wonderful deliverance, which he alone hath wrought for me.

PSALM XXIII.

A Psalm of David.

1 THE LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou

art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

PSALM XXIII.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm seems to have been composed by David, after God had brought him out of that great distress, of which he complained in the foregoing, and settled him in a prosperous condition: wherein he was confident God would continue him.

Ver. 1.] There is no shepherd exercises a more tender and constant care over his flock than the Lord doth over me: and therefore I am confident I shall not want anything that is necessary, either for my sustenance or for my defence, against those who would bereave me of my happiness.

Ver. 2.] For, as a good shepherd leads his sheep in the violent heat to shady places, where they may lie down and feed (not in parched, but) in fresh and green pastures; and in the evening leads them (not to muddy and troubled waters, but) to pure and quiet streams: so hath he already made a fair and plentiful provision for me; which I enjoy in peace without any disturbance.

Ver. 3.] And lest I should lose so great a happiness, his goodness is pleased (for to nothing else can I ascribe it) both to direct and guide me in the right course of pious living, and to reduce me when I go astray; just as a shepherd brings back his wandering sheep from those craggy, untrodden paths, where-

in they would lose themselves; and leads them into plain and easy ways, wherein they find rest and safety.

Ver. 4.] Which makes me resolve to take a good courage, though I should fall again into the most dismal dangers (as a poor sheep sometimes doth into a deep pit): it shall not terrify me, when I remember that thou art present with me, to protect and defend me: thy royal power and pastoral care shall be my support and comfort.

Ver. 5.] But (such is thy extraordinary kindness to me) thou hast not merely provided food, but a feast for me; a most sumptuous feast, which, with great care and order, thou hast set before me, to the astonishment of my enemies: who with shame and grief behold me, whom they lately despised, rejoicing in thy royal bounty towards me, which entertains me even with superfluity of all good things.

Ver. 6.] And therefore I am bold to hope, that the same bounteous goodness and tender mercy which hath without my desert done all this for me, and pursues me as zealously with its favour as my enemies do with their malice, will still most graciously attend me to the end of my days, and settle me in a quiet enjoyment of his house (as well as my own); where I will never cease to praise his wonderful love towards me, and to give him thanks for all the benefits he hath bestowed upon his unworthy servant.

PSALM XXIV.

A Psalm of David.

1 THE earth is the LORD's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

PSALM XXIV.

ARGUMENT.—As the foregoing Psalm seems to have been made by David presently after his settlement in his kingdom, so this, it is most likely, was penned by him, when he brought the ark from the house of Obad-edom, and settled it (after many flittings and removals) in mount Zion. Which place, upon that account, he prefers before all the rest of the world; and excites the people, who attended the ark thither with extraordinary pomp and solemnity, not to content themselves merely with that sort of piety, but to add the practice of all moral virtue; that so they might enjoy the blessings which might be expected from the divine presence with them, and comfortably wait for the coming of the Messiah. Whose ascension to heaven is represented by the carrying of the ark up into mount Zion; which was a type of heaven, as the ark was of the Lord Christ.

The Hebrews (from whom some copies of the LXX. VOL. II.—105.

2 For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.

add in the title, *της μιας των σαββατων*) were wont to sing this Psalm on the first day of the week; (see the Argument of Psalm xciii.), because, as some fancy, there is mention in the beginning of it of the creation of the earth; which Moses says was on that day; but rather, I should think, because therein their prophets and wise men saw a prophecy of Christ: whose first step to the throne of his glory was upon the first day of the week, when we constantly commemorate his resurrection. And there is so remarkable a difference between the eighth verse and the tenth, that we may justly think some new thing is intended in the ninth and tenth verses, which are a repetition of the seventh and eighth; viz. the ascension of our Lord Christ: for, in the beginning of the verse, the question is put with great emphasis, *Who is this king of glory?* and in the latter end, the words, *mighty in battle*, are omitted: because, in the days of Christ, as Aben Ezra himself gives the account, "Men are to turn their swords into ploughshares," &c.

3 Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?

4 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

5 He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

6 This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O JACOB. Selah.

Ver. 1.] What a favour is this, that the divine majesty will vouchsafe to take up his special residence here among us! when the whole earth is his, and all the creatures wherewith it is filled, this great world, and all the people that inhabit it.

Ver. 2.] For by his almighty power it was formed, and therefore he hath a just propriety in it. He hath settled it also so firmly, that, though the seas and the rivers beat against it, they cannot overwhelm it; but, together with it, make a convenient dwelling for those that live in every part of it.

Ver. 3.] And blessed be God, we dwell in that part of the earth where he himself hath fixed his royal palace. (For this is the mountain that he hath chosen and separated from all other, to be the place of his special presence.) But who is worthy to appear before him? Who may hope to be admitted to a gracious audience with him.

Ver. 4.] Not every one that lives in this happy country (though chosen to be his peculiar people), but he that carefully keeps his commands in thought, and deed, and word. He, I say, who not only preserves his hands pure from murder and theft, and such-like injurious actions, but his heart also from so much as designing them; who uses no lies, much less false oaths, to deceive his neighbour, and enrich himself; but religiously observes all his promises, especially those that are made in God's presence, though it be to his own detriment.

Ver. 5.] This is the worshipper, and he alone, who shall receive a blessing, not only from the priest (when he comes out of the sanctuary), but from the Lord

7 Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

8 Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.

9 Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

10 Who is this King of glory? The Lord of host, he is the King of glory. Selah.

himself; who will faithfully keep his promises with them, and amply reward them, who are thus faithful to him.

Ver. 6.] This is the genuine people of God, whose prayers are like to prevail with him. Such should all those proselytes be, who seek the favour of being received into your communion, O ye children of Jacob.

Ver. 7.] And let all those who thus follow the Lord (not merely with their bodies, but with their hearts), in this solemn entrance he now makes into the holy place, join with me, and say, Be ye open, O ye gates of the sanctuary; stand wide open, ye durable doors: and the king of incomparable majesty will enter, and, by the special token of his presence, dwell among us.

Ver. 8.] And if any ask, who this king is, whose majesty we proclaim to be so transcendent, let them know it is the Lord, who made and governs the world: that most mighty and invincible Lord, by whose presence with me I have been victorious in so many battles.

Ver. 9.] Therefore make no delay, O ye gates of the [heavenly] sanctuary; be ye open, wide open, O ye doors, which never shall decay; and the king of incomparable majesty, as I said, shall enter, and fix his seat in this holy place.

Ver. 10.] And if you ask again (as there is reason) with greater admiration, Who is this (see the argument), the king of incomparable majesty? know that the Lord of the sun, moon, and stars, yea, of all the angelical powers; he is the king, whose transcendent majesty is come to make his residence here.

PSALM XXV.

A Psalm of David.

1 UNTO thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul.

2 O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me.

PSALM XXV.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm seems to have been penned by David after the commission of some great sin (ver. 11), and in some great distress, whereinto he was fallen (ver. 15, 16), probably after the matter of Uriah, and when Absalom rebelled against him. Which brought to mind all the offences of his youth (ver. 7), and made him an earnest supplicant for the pardon of them, and for deliverance from his enemies. He began to make this petition with an extraordinary art; but the method is presently disturbed, by the ardency of his desires, and his passionate sorrow, which would not let him follow exactly the order of the letters of the alphabet, in the beginning of every verse, as he first designed.

Ver. 1.] O Lord, my constant and only refuge in

3 Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.

all my troubles, I look up unto thee in this distress; most humbly waiting on thee, and hoping in thee that thou wilt deliver me.

Ver. 2.] Thou knowest, O my God, that I place no confidence in anything but thine almighty goodness, upon which I profess entirely to depend: and therefore do not fail to relieve me, lest I hang down my head in confusion of face, and my enemies insult over me, when they see me disappointed of the help which I have so often declared I expect from thee.

Ver. 3.] Yea, for their sakes, who, by my example, wait upon thee, do not deny me: let not those who take my part, and place the same confidence in thee that I do, be disappointed of their hopes; but let them be utterly defeated, who, against all law and all obligations, have broken their faith with me, and without any provocation vainly labour to destroy me.

4 Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths.

5 Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day.

6 Remember, O LORD, thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses; for they have been ever of old.

7 Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me for thy goodness' sake, O LORD.

8 Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way.

9 The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.

10 All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.

11 For thy name's sake, O LORD, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.

Ver. 4.] It is hard to know what to do in these difficult times, especially in this great agitation of thoughts wherein my troubled mind is tossed up and down, therefore do thou be pleased, O Lord, to show me the course thou wouldest have me take; and govern my actions so, that they may be pleasing unto thee.

Ver. 5.] I have as much need of thy guidance, as a little child hath of its parents'; and I cry as earnestly to thee, that thou wilt direct me in every step: and especially that thou wilt preserve me as faithful to thee, as I doubt not thou wilt be to me; for thou art the author of all the deliverances I have received, and on thee I have, with a constant and perseverant hope, depended in all my trials.

Ver. 6.] Who art so ready to help the miserable, when they humbly seek thee, that all ages have left us remembrances of thy most compassionate bounty towards them. And therefore I beseech thee to do to me as thou hast ever done: I beg no new thing of thee, but implore that clemency and mercy which thou never yet deniedst to any pious supplicant.

Ver. 7.] I am a sinner indeed, and began to be so very early; for in my youth I childishly and foolishly went astray from thee, and since that time have committed much more grievous offences. But thy goodness is so great, that thou art not wont to punish us according to our deserts, but to pardon us according to thy tender mercies; to which I now betake myself, beseeching thee not to consider the greatness of my sins, but only the largeness and freeness of thy mercy, which gives me hope thou wilt be graciously reconciled to me.

Ver. 8.] For such is the loving-kindness of the Lord, such is his love to rectitude and holiness; that he will rather choose to reduce sinners, and instruct them in the way of virtue, than destroy them because they have wandered from it.

Ver. 9.] If they repent, that is, and, being troubled for what they have done amiss, meekly submit to his will and pleasure; he will sweetly direct them to discern what is acceptable to him. Such humble souls will be apt to learn, and therefore he will not fail to teach them the way to recover his favour.

Ver. 10.] And when they carefully observe the covenant wherein they stand engaged to him (by obeying his laws, which testify what his will and pleasure are), he will order and dispose all things for their good, and faithfully perform the promises he hath made to such dutiful servants.

Ver. 11.] I beseech thee therefore again, by this

12 What man is he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose.

13 His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth.

14 The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.

15 Mine eyes are ever towards the LORD; for he shall pluck my feet out of the net.

16 Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted.

17 The troubles of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me out of my distresses.

18 Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins.

19 Consider mine enemies; for they are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred.

20 O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee.

mercy and faithfulness of thine, which shall be always celebrated and praised by me, to grant me a gracious pardon; for which I am the more earnest, because my sin is so foul, so heinous, and such a multiplied wickedness, that I can have no rest till thou art reconciled to me.

Ver. 12.] Which if thou wilt be, O how happy shall I think myself! For he that fears to offend thy majesty (as I in all reason ought hereafter to do, both because I on no other terms expect thy merciful pardon, and have felt also the sad burden of being a sinner), him will the Lord instruct, and lead into those ways which are conformable to his blessed will, and which will prove most grateful to him that walks in them.

Ver. 13.] He shall be at ease within himself, or rather filled with joy, and all manner of satisfaction: none of the blessings of this life shall be wanting to him, and he shall leave them as an inheritance to his posterity after him.

Ver. 14.] Or if he fall into any straits and difficulties, the greatest comfort of all is, that the Lord is present to them that fear to do anything displeasing to him (though it were to deliver themselves from danger), to counsel and secretly suggest good advice unto them; for he hath engaged himself to show them what is best for their safety and preservation.

Ver. 15.] In confidence of which my mind is fixed in a constant dependence upon the Lord: I expect no help from any one else, but on him will I patiently wait; for I believe he will wind me out of these perplexities, and deliver me from the snares which my enemies have laid for me.

Ver. 16.] Behold, O Lord, how entirely I trust in thee; have a respect to my faith, and hope, and patience, and take pity upon me, now that thou seest I am in a manner forsaken by all, and reduced from the estate of a king to the condition of a beggar.

Ver. 17.] Great are the oppressions that lie upon my heart, and they are still growing into new cares, and fears, and vexatious thoughts: O deliver me out of such grievous straits, which press so sore upon me.

Ver. 18.] Have compassion upon the miserable and toilsome life which I lead, and remove all my sins out of thy sight, which I know are the cause of it.

Ver. 19.] Discontinence my enemies, who (as they are very numerous, so) bear an implacable hatred to me; which disposes them to do all the mischief imaginable, though I have not been in the least injurious to them.

Ver. 20.] O preserve me from falling into their

21 Let integrity and uprightness preserve me ; for I wait on thee.

hands, for they seek my life, and rescue me from the danger I am now in of losing it : and let not (I again most humbly beseech thee) the trust and confidence which I repose in thee be turned into shame and confusion, as they will be if thou dost not deliver me.

Ver. 21.] I have grievously offended thy majesty, it is true, and I have sorrowfully bewailed it ; but as for them that rise up against me, they have so little reason to accuse me, that I desire thee to deal with

22 Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.

me according to my uprightness and integrity, in all my administrations . let my innocence be my guard, and my honest dealing my protection ; for I depend on nothing but thy favour in such courses.

Ver. 22.] Nor do I plead my own private cause alone, but beseech thee to have mercy upon the whole nation, who are lamentably distracted by these divisions, and to restore them to peace and quietness, by delivering me from this rebellion that is raised against me.

PSALM XXVI.

A Psalm of David.

I JUDGE me, O LORD ; for I have walked in mine integrity : I have trusted also in the LORD ; therefore I shall not slide.

2 Examine me, O LORD, and prove me ; try my reins and my heart.

3 For thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes : and I have walked in thy truth.

4 I have not sat with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers.

5 I have hated the congregation of evil doers ; and will not sit with the wicked.

6 I will wash mine hands in innocency : so will I compass thine altar, O LORD :

7 That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works.

8 LORD, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.

9 Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men :

10 In whose hands is mischief, and their right hand is full of bribes.

11 But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity : redeem me, and be merciful unto me.

12 My foot standeth in an even place : in the congregations will I bless the LORD.

PSALM XXVI.

ARGUMENT.—In this Psalm David asserts that uprightness and integrity, to which he pretended in the twenty-first verse of the foregoing Psalm ; and appeals to God as the judge of his sincerity, who was privy to his most secret intentions. But it seems to relate to former times, when he was persecuted by Saul, and looked upon as a public enemy (1 Sam. xxiv. 9). Thus Theodoret understands it : and thinks he was now among the Philistines, or in some other strange country, into which he was some time forced by that persecution.

Ver. 1.] I am accused of grievous crimes by those that persecute me ; but I am not afraid to appeal to thee, O Lord, as the judge of that matter : nothing doubting that thou wilt acquit me, and punish my false accusers and persecutors. For, thou knowest, I kept a good conscience when I was at court (1 Sam. xix. 4), and since I have been banished thence, have taken no wicked course to deliver myself (1 Sam. xxiv. 11, 12,) but entirely depended upon thee alone for safety : in which resolution nothing shall shake me.

Ver. 2.] Thou seest into the secret thoughts of my mind, and inclinations of my will : if I have not sufficiently approved myself, to have not so much as designed any such evil as I am charged withal, go on, good Lord, to make a farther search ; and if thou wilt still expose me to the fiery trial of sorer afflictions, I hope it will only still discover more of my integrity.

Ver. 3.] For I trust to nothing but thy loving-kindness, which is the pattern I have set before my eyes to imitate : I ever designed good, not hurt, to them ; and have ever kept my faith, and punctually performed my promises to them ; after the example of thy truth, by which I have squared all my actions.

Ver. 4.] I never loved the company of false and treacherous persons ; nor have had anything to do with those, who, under specious shows, cover ungodly designs.

Ver. 5.] No, I perfectly hated their meetings, where they laid their heads together to contrive some evil thing or other ; I never did, nor ever will, sit in consultation with those quiet and turbulent spirits, who are restlessly hatching mischief.

Ver. 6.] I never satisfied myself with the mere ceremony of washing my hands, before I went to offer thee any sacrifice : but sincerely endeavoured, O Lord, to keep myself free from all impurity (as by that token I testified), and so presented myself, with due reverence, at thy altar :

Ver. 7.] Not merely to pray to thee, when I was in any distress ; but to praise thee also, and to give thee thanks ; proclaiming to all thy people those stupendous things which thy admirable goodness hath done for me.

Ver. 8.] And thou knowest, O Lord, with what affection I attended upon this employment ; and how glad I was to go into thy tabernacle, (which thou hast been pleased to make the place where thy glory dwells among us), to offer those devout sacrifices unto thee.

Ver. 9.] And therefore, I hope, thou wilt not let me suffer with those, from whose society I have always separated myself ; O let me not perish, as if I was a murderer ;

Ver. 10.] Or a companion of those that live by rapine and spoil of others (1 Sam. xxv. 15, 16), or obtain their ends by bribery and corruption of justice.

Ver. 11.] For I am none of that number ; but have always preserved, and will still continue, an upright endeavour to keep myself pure in all things : therefore, I beseech thee, to deliver me, now that they seek to destroy me as an evil-doer ; and show that thou judgest otherways of me.

Ver. 12.] Why should I doubt of it, when, notwithstanding all the assaults of mine enemies, I stand firm and unshaken ? Surely the time will come when I shall publicly praise the Lord, my protector and deliverer, in the assemblies of his people ; from whence this unjust persecution hath driven me (1 Sam. xxvi. 19).

PSALM XXVII.

A Psalm of David.

1 THE LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

2 When the wicked, *even* mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell.

3 Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this *will* I be confident.

4 *One thing* have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple.

5 For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.

6 And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD.

7 Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice: have mercy also upon me, and answer me.

8 *When thou saidst*, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek.

9 Hide not thy face *far* from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.

10 When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up.

11 Teach me thy way, O LORD, and lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies.

PSALM XXVII.

ARGUMENT.—A Psalm composed by David, when he was, or had been lately, in some great distress. It is not easy to resolve, whether it were when he was persecuted by Saul before he was crowned (as the LXX. now say, though Theodoret could find no such thing in the Hexaplus); or when he was forced to fly from Absalom; or, as some of the Jews think (which seems most probable, because it agrees very well with several passages in the Psalm), when, in fight with the Philistines, he had engaged himself so far among the enemies, that he was in danger of being killed by a giant, if Abishai had not seasonably stepped in and relieved him. This was in his declining years, when the same courage remained, but not the same strength, which he had in his youth. And therefore the people came and swore to him, saying, "Thou shalt go out no more with us to battle, that thou quench not the lamp of Israel" (2 Sam. xxi. 17).

Ver. 1.] The Lord still bears a favour to me, and fills me with joy by his wonderful preservation of me. What enemy then is so terrible, that I should not dare to engage him? He defends my life in the most dangerous assaults; of whom then, though he be never so great a giant, should I stand in fear?

Ver. 2.] When malicious men, full of hatred and rage, made their approaches so near me, that they hoped, like so many savage beasts, to tear me in pieces and devour me; they quite missed their aim, and fell down dead at my feet.

Ver. 3.] And therefore, though I should see myself besieged with a great army of enemies, it shall not dismay me; though I were to fight a battle with the most numerous forces, I shall not, after such a demonstration of God's love and careful providence over me, despair of victory.

Ver. 4.] Not that I am greedy of glory and fame by such marvellous successes: no, I can stay at home, as my people desire me (2 Sam. xxi. 17), and give God thanks for what he hath done for me. Nothing in the world agrees so much with my desires: this is the only thing I have sought (even by my wars), and will still make the end of all my endeavours, that I may perpetually attend upon the service

of God in the holy assemblies; and enjoy the sweet pleasure the Lord is pleased there to impart to his people, and receive directions from him when I wait upon him every morning in his tabernacle.

Ver. 5.] For there I shall think myself as secure in troublesome times as if I was environed with the strongest bulwarks, or lay obscured in the most secret hiding-places: the most impregnable rock I should not take to be a place of greater safety.

Ver. 6.] And now I have felt the happy fruit of my love towards it; for the Lord hath given me a glorious victory, and made me triumph over all my enemies on every side. For which cause I will go thither, and offer sacrifices of thanksgivings with the highest expressions of joy: I will compose songs of praise, and therein set forth the power and loving-kindness of the Lord.

Ver. 7.] On whom I still depend for my future preservation; beseeching thee, O Lord, to give me a gracious audience: whensoever I address myself unto thee, show then the kindness thou hast for me by granting my desire.

Ver. 8.] Which I do not presume to offer to thee without thy invitation; but have still thy own words in my mind, whereby thou exhorted us to come unto thee, saying, *Seek ye my face*: to which my heart answers, Behold, O Lord, in obedience to thy command, and by thy gracious motion, I will never cease to seek it.

Ver. 9.] And thou, I hope, will look favourably upon me; and not withdraw thy presence from me, when I beg thy protection or assistance. Do not then in anger reject my suits, because I am a sinner; but accept them because I am thy servant: whom in former times thou hast so often relieved, that from thence also I am emboldened to beseech thee not to desert me, O Lord; but (as thou hast begun, so) continue to give me diligence and safety.

Ver. 10.] The indulgence of my parents is not to be compared with thy most tender affection; but though they, and all the friends I have, should abandon me, I would hope the Lord would take me into his care, and not suffer me to perish:

Ver. 11.] As I certainly shall, if thou leavest me to myself. For, alas! I know not what course it is best for me to take for my safety: and therefore beseech thee to vouchsafe me thy direction; and en-

12 Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies : for false witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty.

13 *I had fainted*, unless I had believed to see

able me to walk so circumspectly and evenly, that they who narrowly pry into all my actions, and watch for my halting, may have no advantage against me.

Ver. 12.] Let not those have their will of me, who love to trouble me, and give me perpetual disturbance; as too many still do, notwithstanding all the wonderful things thou hast wrought for me. They cease not to calumniate and defame my government; and he that heads them, and sets them on, speaks of open force and violence, if he had opportunity.

Ver. 13.] Good God! how had it been possible for me to support myself under so many troubles and fears, which follow one upon another; if I had not

the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.

14 Wait on the LORD : be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart : wait, I say, on the LORD.

firmly trusted in thee, that, notwithstanding the restless malice of my enemies, I shall enjoy thee, in a prosperous and happy condition, even here in this present life!

Ver. 14.] And let me admonish thee, whosoever thou art that shalt hereafter fall into any such straits, to learn, by my example not to be impatient, nor despond presently, much less despair of relief, if the Lord do not send it just when thou expectest it : but wait upon him still with a steadfast hope, and fortify thyself with a strong faith in him. Let not thy heart fail thee in the greatest danger; but, as I said, wait upon the Lord, and confidently expect that in his good time he will relieve thee.

PSALM XXVIII.

A Psalm of David.

1 UNTO thee will I cry, O LORD my rock ; be not silent to me : lest, if thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit.

2 Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto thee, when I lift up my hands toward thy holy oracle.

3 Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity, which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief is in their hearts.

4 Give them according to their deeds, and ac-

ording to the wickedness of their endeavours ; give them after the work of their hands ; render to them their desert.

5 Because they regard not the works of the LORD, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up.

6 Blessed be the LORD, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications.

7 The LORD is my strength and my shield ; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped : therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth ; and with my song will I praise him.

PSALM XXVIII.

ARGUMENT.—Theodoret thinks this Psalm was composed by David during Saul's persecution, when he was betrayed by those whom he took for friends, or not for his enemies: such as Doeg, the Ziphites, and many others. But the matter of this Psalm inclines me to consider it as a meditation on some such occasion as moved him to pen the foregoing. For he blesses God in the latter part of it (ver. 7, 8), for the victories he had got over his enemies, and for the peace he enjoyed: and yet complains in the beginning of it, of some men who molested him, and sought an occasion to do him a mischief. See 2 Sam. xxi. 18—20, where we read of three battles between his forces and the Philistines, after that mentioned in the argument of Psalm xxvii. when, it is likely, some of his own subjects took an opportunity to give him some disturbance.

Ver. 1.] O Lord, to whom alone I betake myself for safety, and under whose protection nothing can hurt me; I make my most earnest prayer unto thee, that thou wilt defend me. Do not deny me, I most humbly beseech thee; lest while I am so importunate with thee, and confide so entirely in thee, and yet thou takest no notice of me, I look like one that is abandoned by thee to destruction.

Ver. 2.] Grant my desires, therefore, when with ardent affection I seek thy favour, and, renouncing all dependence on human succour, implore thy help; which thou art wont to send from thy holy place.

Ver. 3.] Let not that destruction seize on me, which is the portion of the wicked: nor suffer me to be involved in the same punishment with those pernicious wretches, who make no conscience what villainies they commit; and yet pretend the greatest friendship to their neighbours, when they design and are contriving their ruin.

Ver. 4.] It is fit that they suffer as they have done, and reap the fruit of their manifold wickedness: dispense a reward to them according to their works; and deal with them (which is the measure whereby I desire thou wilt proceed with me) as they have dealt with others.

Ver. 5.] I know thou wilt: because they regard not the wonderful things thou hast done for me, and by me; particularly that great work (which is to be ascribed to thy power alone) of making me their king; thou wilt utterly overturn them without any hope of their being raised up again.

Ver. 6.] And I ought never to forget (that which they neglect) the singular providence of the Lord over me; whom I therefore bless and praise, because he heard my prayer when I was in distress; and desire all ages may ever praise him.

Ver. 7.] The Lord is to me instead of a fortress and shield, when my enemies assault me: I heartily confided in him, that he would defend me; and, behold, he sent seasonable succour to me (2 Sam. xxi. 17), which fills my heart with such exceeding joy, that (as I cannot express it, so) I am not able to contain myself; but I must compose a hymn in his praise, and say,

8 The LORD is their strength, and he is the saving strength of his anointed.

Ver. 8.] It is the Lord that gives courage and strength to those that are on my side: he is the fortress that preserves in safety him whom he hath appointed to be the king of his people:

Ver. 9.] Whose good and happiness I seek; beseeching thee, O Lord, to preserve thy people, and

9 Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever.

to pour down thy blessings upon those whom thou hast appropriated to thyself, out of all other nations: take care of them, as a shepherd doth of his flock; and make them victorious over all their enemies, both now and in all future generations.

PSALM XXIX.

A Psalm of David.

1 GIVE unto the LORD, O ye mighty, give unto the LORD glory and strength.

2 Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

3 The voice of the LORD is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the LORD is upon many waters.

4 The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty.

5 The voice of the LORD breaketh the cedars; yea, the LORD breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.

6 He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.

7 The voice of the LORD divideth the flames of fire.

8 The voice of the LORD shaketh the wilderness; the LORD shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.

9 The voice of the LORD maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests: and in his temple doth every one speak of his glory.

10 The LORD sitteth upon the flood; yea, the LORD sitteth King for ever.

11 The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace.

PSALM XXIX.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm seems to have been composed by David after some extraordinary great thunder, lightning, and rain; whereby (it is probable) God had so discomfited his enemies, and put their forces into such disorder, that he easily got the victory over them. Whereupon he exhorts them in this Psalm to submit to that glorious majesty, from whom that thunder came: and who can so easily strike a sudden terror into the heart of his stoutest and most resolved opposers. Theodoret applies it to the destruction of Sennacherib's army, in Hezekiah's time; for which I see no foundation: nor for the title which is now in the LXX. (but Theodoret could not find in the Hexaplus); which makes the occasion of it to be David's bringing the ark to the place he had prepared for it.

Ver. 1.] O ye princes and rulers of the world, who so readily receive the lowest prostrations from your subjects; give unto the Lord of all that honour which he justly expects from you: acknowledge his supreme power, which you have so lately felt; and submit to his authority.

Ver. 2.] Do him honour suitable to the excellence of his majesty: and, as a sign you have him in great veneration, come and cast down yourselves before him in the sanctuary; where he hath fixed his glorious residence among us.

Ver. 3.] Whose voice was it but his, which you heard in the clouds? (whether the voice of no earthly monarch can reach). From thence his glorious majesty thunders: and makes not only the earth, but the great ocean, tremble, at that token of his presence.

Ver. 4.] You think there is great power in your words: but as they can be heard but a little way, so they are of little force, in comparison with this mighty

voice; wherein the Lord expresses how potent he is; and strikes a dread and horror into all that hear it.

Ver. 5.] It makes the strongest trees of the forest quake; nay, breaks them into shivers: the cedars, as hard and tall as they are; even the cedars of Libanus, which are famed for their durableness and goodly bulk, are thrown down and shattered by it.

Ver. 6.] It lifts them up into the air when it hath torn them in pieces; and makes the mountains themselves leap like the young creatures which live upon them.

Ver. 7.] Flashes of fire break out together with it; and, cutting their way through the clouds, are scattered, with a wonderful swiftness, into all quarters.

Ver. 8.] The force of it is felt in the most desert places, even in that vast and horrid wilderness of Kadesh: which, by overthrowing trees and rocks, it renders still more horrid.

Ver. 9.] It opens the wombs of hinds, which otherwise bring forth with the greatest difficulty: and it lays bare the covers of the wild beasts in the forest, whom it frightens into their dens, while his temple remains unshaken by these tempestuous blasts, and all his pious worshippers there securely sing the praises of his glorious majesty and power, saying,

Ver. 10.] The Lord is the great king, who governs even the clouds, and orders the thunder-showers to do what execution he pleases. When all other monarchs fail, the Lord still remains the same throughout all generations; and the thunder doth not more easily tear the trees and rocks, than he can break in pieces the proudest princes; who ought therefore to tremble before him, and to dread his judgment.

Ver. 11.] But as for all those that are sincerely devoted to his service, though never so weak and feeble, the Lord will be their support: they may depend upon his power to defend them in the greatest dangers, and against the mightiest enemies: the Lord will not only preserve them from evil, but bless and prosper them with all manner of happiness.

PSALM XXX.

A Psalm and Song at the dedication of the house of David.

1 I WILL extol thee, O LORD; for thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me.

2 O LORD my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.

3 O LORD, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.

4 Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.

5 For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

6 And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved.

7 LORD, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.

8 I cried to thee, O LORD; and unto the LORD I made supplication.

9 What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth?

10 Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me: LORD, be thou my helper.

11 Thou hast turned for me my mourning into

PSALM XXX.

ARGUMENT.—The title of this Psalm differs from all the foregoing; it being the first that is called a *Psalm and Song*, or a *Psalm-song*: as others, we shall see in due place, are called a *Song and Psalm*, or a *Song-psalm*. The difference of which it is hard to find out (see argument of Ps. lxxvii.). But here the words may be otherwise construed; for they run currently enough in the Hebrew; thus, "A Psalm, A Song of Dedication of the House made by David;" who would not eat in his house till he had first in a solemn manner, addressed himself to God, at his entrance into it; either after it was newly built (2 Sam. v. 11), or (which agrees best with a great part of the Psalm) when he returned to it again, after he had been driven from it by the rebellion of Absalom, who defiled it (2 Sam. xvi. 21). Then he gave God thanks for his being restored to a peaceable possession of his palace; and made a feast for his friends (as the manner was, at their coming to dwell in a new-built house), with extraordinary piety and devotion, acknowledging God's goodness, who had graciously reinstated him in his throne. The Talmudists generally understand by the *house* here mentioned, the house of the sanctuary (see Mr. Selden, lib. iii. De Synedr. cap. 13); but I see no ground for it: for David did not build God a house, nor do the words of the Psalm (as Theodoret observes), agree to that matter.

Ver. 1.] O Lord, to whose powerful providence I ascribe my late wonderful deliverance, I will give thee the highest praises, and never cease to magnify thy name; who hast drawn me up out of that depth of misery into which I was plunged, and filled me with that joy which my enemies hoped to have had in my destruction.

Ver. 2.] O Lord, my gracious God, I was in a most forlorn and languishing condition; like a sick man who cannot help himself: but I addressed myself in earnest prayer to thee; and thou hast restored me to my former estate again.

Ver. 3.] Which mercy is the more to be admired, because there seemed to be no more hope of my restoration, than there is of the resurrection of a dead man out of his grave; or, at best, of a sick man's recovery, that is just at the point of death.

Ver. 4.] Join with me then, all ye that are sen-

sible of the divine benefits, in this duty of praise to him who hath called me from death unto life again: give thanks together with me (for my single praises and thanksgivings are not sufficient), and gratefully commemorate his power, and goodness, and wisdom, and truth, which he has shown in my restitution.

Ver. 5.] Wherein you may see his clemency towards his faithful servants: whom he may correct very sharply, for a little time; but is soon reconciled, and then extends his favour to them without any end, and sends them deliverance so unexpectedly and suddenly, as well as seasonably, that where nothing but lamentations were heard over night, there nothing but shouts of joy are heard in the morning.

Ver. 6.] Yet that must not make them secure, nor confident in anything but his goodness alone. For therein I was to blame, that when I was delivered from the persecution of Saul, and settled peaceably in my kingdom, I fancied vainly that now I should never be any more disturbed.

Ver. 7.] But I soon found that that was more than I could promise myself; and that it depended solely on thy favour, O Lord, by whom my throne was established in the strong fortress of Zion (2 Sam. v. 7. 9). For thou, being offended with me, didst withdraw thy gracious presence from me; and presently I was involved in new troubles and dangers.

Ver. 8.] And had no way to relieve myself, but by making my addresses to thee, O Lord; and earnestly beseeching thee to pardon me, and restore me to thy favour.

Ver. 9.] For what service, said I, can I do thee when I am dead? shall my ashes be able so much as to praise thy goodness, or declare thy faithfulness to thy promises? Will they not rather seem to fail, and lose their credit, together with me? Spare me therefore, O Lord, and deliver me from those that seek my life: let me live to tell how good and how true thou art.

Ver. 10.] Do not deny me, O Lord, but take compassion upon my sad estate. Lord, be thou my helper; who art able to restore me to my former happiness, without any other assistance; as thou alone, I am sensible, not the strongest guards, canst preserve me in it.

Ver. 11.] In this manner I humbly besought thy mercy, and obtained a gracious answer: for joy and gladness are returned again, after a short time of sadness and sorrow.

dancing : thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness ;

12 To the end that *my* glory may sing praise

Ver. 12.] Which engages me to do thee all the service I am able ; and in the most magnificent manner, to sing thy praises without ceasing. O Lord, my

to thee, and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.

most gracious God, I will be as good as my resolution ; and spend my whole life in giving thanks unto thee, for thy faithful mercy towards me.

PSALM XXXI.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

1 IN thee, O LORD, do I put my trust ; let me never be ashamed : deliver me in thy righteousness.

2 Bow down thine ear to me ; deliver me speedily : be thou my strong rock, for a house of defence to save me.

3 For thou *art* my rock and my fortress ; therefore for thy name's sake lead me, and guide me.

4 Pull me out of the net that they have laid privily for me : for thou *art* my strength.

5 Into thy hand I commit my spirit : thou hast redeemed me, O LORD God of truth.

6 I have hated them that regard lying vanities : but I trust in the LORD.

7 I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy : for thou hast considered my trouble ; thou hast known my soul in adversities ;

8 And hast not shut me up into the hand of the enemy : thou hast set my foot in a large room.

9 Have mercy upon me, O LORD, for I am in trouble : mine eye is consumed with grief, *yea*, my soul and my belly.

10 For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing : my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed.

PSALM XXXI.

ARGUMENT.—A Psalm composed by David, and delivered to the master of music in the tabernacle : wherein he describes his confidence in God, notwithstanding a grievous strait, wherein he was ; when (as I understand it), after his escape from Keilah, Saul, with three battalions (as we now speak) pursued him so close in the wilderness of Maon, that without an extraordinary providence of God over him, he had certainly fallen into his hands. To that strange deliverance, and not that from Absalom (to which Theodoret refers it), it is the more probable he hath a respect in this Psalm (in the latter end of which it is thankfully commemorated), because the haste, which the Psalmist here saith (ver. 23), he made in that sore distress, is expressed by the very same word (and used nowhere else in any other part of David's history), when the great fright he was in, and his sudden speedy flight from one place to another, is described, 1 Sam. xxiii. 26.

Ver. 1.] Thou seest, O Lord, that in all these persecutions which I endure, I have no confidence in anything, but only thy power and goodness ; which if they should fail me, I should be lamentably ashamed ; prevent that confusion, O Lord, and magnify thy own mercy and fidelity, by preserving me in and delivering me out of these dangers which now encompass me.

Ver. 2.] Graciously incline to favour my request, now that I am so sorely pressed by my enemies, that they are ready to seize on me ; haste thy relief, for it is not this rock or strong hold wherein I am (1 Sam. xxiii. 25), that can protect me, but only thou, O Lord ; to whom I resort as a more sure defence, than the most impregnable fortress in the world :

Ver. 3.] For so I have hitherto found thee, in all my distresses, and therefore I still flee to thee for safety ; beseeching thee to glorify thyself (I have no other argument whereby to move thee) in leading me out of this strait, and guiding my steps so, that I may not fall into the hands of my enemies :

Ver. 4.] Who have now so circumvented me, and, by the secret treachery of the Ziphites, brought me into such perplexities (1 Sam. xxiii. 19, 20, &c.), that I am undone, unless thou extricate me : as I hope thou wilt ; for I profess again, that I depend on thee alone for help and deliverance.

Ver. 5.] Unto thy care and custody I commit myself, and deposit my very life with thee.* Who hast so often rescued me, when I was like to lose it ; and wilt still, I doubt not, show thyself my most gracious God, as well as powerful Lord ; who never deceivest those that rely upon thy faithful word.

*Our Saviour used these words in a more proper and literal sense than they can be applied to David.]

Ver. 6.] There is nothing else that I rely upon, for I never inquired of diviners, wizards, soothsayers, or fortune-tellers ; nor consulted the necromancers (or any of those vanities wherewith the gentile world is cheated), which way I should flee, or how I should provide for my safety : no, I have hated all such practices, and those that observe them ; confiding entirely in the Lord, and his directions.

Ver. 7.] In whose merciful providence over me I will be glad and rejoice, even when I am in straits : for it is most delightful to remember how thou hast taken care of me in my afflictions ; and never neglected, but still owned me, and provided for my security, in the greatest distresses.

Ver. 8.] And very lately didst not suffer me to be shut up in Keilah (1 Sam. xxiii. 7), whose inhabitants would have delivered me into the hand of Saul : but admonished me by thy oracles, at which only I inquired (ver. 9, &c.), to depart from thence, where I was in danger to be enclosed : and gavest me a larger compass, to seek the means of my preservation.

Ver. 9.] Go on, good Lord, to perfect thy mercy to me ; and now that I am fallen into a new difficulty, and closely begirt on every side by my enemy, take some pity upon me, and speedily deliver me : for the continual anguish and vexation which these returning dangers give me, together with the hunger and thirst which at present sorely pinch me, have in a manner quite dispirited me.

11 I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance : they that did see me with-out fled from me.

12 I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind : I am like a broken vessel.

13 For I have heard the slander of many : fear was on every side : while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life.

14 But I trusted in thee, O LORD : I said, Thou art my God.

15 My times are in thy hand : deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.

16 Make thy face to shine upon thy servant : save me for thy mercies' sake.

17 Let me not be ashamed, O LORD : for I have called upon thee : let the wicked be

Ver. 10.] I cannot subsist long, unless thou relieve me ; for I am wasted away with sorrow and sighing ; the punishments of my sins are so heavy, and I am so weak, that I cannot support myself under their burdens.

Ver. 11.] My enemies also mock at my confidence in thee, now that they have thus distressed me : and my neighbours, who have been witnesses of my integrity in all my actions, are too prone to join with them in those reproaches ; and, which is still sadder, my familiar friends are afraid to be seen in my company, or to send me the least relief : they dare not entertain me into their houses ; for when they have met me in the highway, they fled, and would not come nigh me.

Ver. 12.] They look upon me as a man utterly lost, and so never think of me no more than if I were in my grave : they despair of my restitution, and despise me as much as an earthen vessel when it is broken in pieces, which nobody minds, because it cannot be repaired.

Ver. 13.] The calumnies and slanders also where-by the greatest persons defame me are come to my ears. They say I am a seditious fellow ; that the life of the king cannot be in safety till I be destroyed : and so they have held consultation together against me ; wherein they have debated nothing else but how to find a way to take away my life.

Ver. 14.] But how great soever their cunning and their power be, and how dejecting soever my fears, I do not quite despond : but still repose a sure confidence in thee, O Lord, saying, Thou art a judge of my innocence ; thou art my defender and protector, who hath hitherto always done me right.

Ver. 15.] It is not in their power to dispose of my life at their pleasure ; no more than it is mine to appoint the time of my deliverance, which I leave to thy wisdom, O Lord, to whom it belongs : only beseeching thee, at present, to rescue me from falling into the hands of my enemies ; and at last, when thou judgest it most fit, to free me from their persecution.

Ver. 16.] Disperse these black clouds of affliction, which have so long kept me in such a mournful condition, that my enemies fancy thou hast abandoned me ; and show the favour thou bearest to me, who am faithfully devoted to thy service ; and therefore, though I am unworthy of it, yet hope thou wilt magnify thy own mercy in delivering me from these dangers, and making me as happy as now I am miserable.

ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave.

18 Let the lying lips be put to silence ; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.

19 Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee ; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men !

20 Thou shalt hide me in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man : thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.

21 Blessed be the LORD, for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city.

22 For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes : nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.

23 O love the LORD, all ye his saints : for the

Ver. 17.] Let not thy humble supplicant, O Lord, who testifies by his daily prayers that he wholly depends upon thy favour, be shamefully disappointed in his expectation of relief from thee : but let the wicked be confounded, to see all their contrivances against me come to nothing ; let them be laid in their graves and give me no farther disturbance.

Ver. 18.] Stop the mouths of those bold calumniators who insolently threaten utter ruin to the innocent : whom they charge with the most grievous crimes, and deride all that he can say or do in his own defence.

Ver. 19.] Oh what a comfort is it, when they thus insult, to think of thy kind intentions towards those that fear to offend thee, though for the present they are most miserably abused ! How great are the blessings thou hast treasured up in store (as shall in time appear openly before all the world), and prepared for those that religiously avoid all unjust ways of preserving themselves, and trust to thee alone !

Ver. 20.] They are forced to hide themselves sometimes in caves and dens of the earth, (1 Sam. xxiii. 14. 19. 23. xxiv. 2. 3. 8), but there thou art present with them ; and it is thy gracious providence that preserves them from him that furiously persecutes them : thou dost keep them as safe as if they were in thy dwelling-place, from the mischiefs which contentious men, by their false accusations, seek to bring upon them.

Ver. 21.] Of which I myself (for ever praised be the Lord) am a remarkable instance : for he hath magnified his mercy to me in assisting my escape, when I was shut up in a fortified city that had gates and bars (1 Sam. xxiii. 7. 13.)

Ver. 22.] And presently after that, when I fell into such a strait, that I had no hope of evading it, but (so vehement was my fear) said in my precipitous flight (1 Sam. xxiii. 26), I am lost ; I shall never be able to save myself, though I make never so much haste : yet even then, upon my humble supplication to thee, thou didst instantly send a most seasonable and wonderful deliverance to me, (ver. 27).

Ver. 23.] What an encouragement is this to all truly pious souls ! Let them love the Lord, and steadfastly cleave unto him : for the Lord taketh care of their safety, who continue faithful to him in all their troubles : and plagueth those who proudly insult over them, till he hath left none of their race remaining.

Ver. 24.] Be not dejected, therefore, much less disheartened in the course of piety, all ye that place

LORD preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.

your hope and confidence in the Lord; but let that fill you with courage; and make you firmly resolved

24 Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord.

to adhere to him, and never shrink from your duty under the sorest afflictions.

PSALM XXXII.

A Psalm of David. Maschl.

1 BLESSED is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

2 Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

3 When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.

4 For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.

5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my

transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.

6 For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.

7 Thou art my hiding-place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah.

8 I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.

PSALM XXXII.

ARGUMENT.—A Psalm composed by David, when the calamities into which he fell by his son's rebellion taught him how evil and bitter a thing it was to offend God; and how infinitely he was beholden to him, that he was so merciful as not to take such a vengeance on him as his sins deserved. There are those who think it was intended for public use, upon the great day of expiation, when the whole nation made a general confession of their sins: and called *Maschl*, either because it contains an excellent instruction (as that word signifies), concerning the means to obtain true blessedness; or because it was set to the tune of a song, in vulgar use in those days, which began with the word *Maschl*. This is the more probable of the two, because there are twelve Psalms besides this that have the same title, to all of which the former reason cannot be applied.

Ver. 1.] Happy is that man, thrice happy, to whom God will be pleased, out of his own free grace and mercy (for no man can merit such a favour by any services that he can do him), to remit not only his common errors and weaknesses, but also his grosser sins, whether committed against the divine majesty, or against his neighbour.

Ver. 2.] It is impossible to express the happiness of that man, to whom the Lord will be so gracious, as not to exact the punishment due to his former offences, for which he is most heartily afflicted (for to none else this happiness belongs): and doth not only seem, by his sorrowful confessions, to hate and abhor them, but is unfeignedly resolved to forsake them.

Ver. 3.] He that hath felt the smart of them, as I have done, will be sensible what a pleasure it is to be eased of such a sting. For when I seriously reflected upon the grievous sin I had committed, but not bewailed it as I ought, it filled me with such anguish and horror, that I lost all appetite to my meat, and pined away till I was not able to go or stand; but lay roaring perpetually (like a lion that hath received a deadly wound), under the miserable torture of my mind.

Ver. 4.] So heavy was the sense of thy displeasure,

wherewith I was struck, that I could find no means to throw it off, either by business or diversions in the day: nor would it suffer me to take my rest in the night, but still pressed down my spirit, and scorched me so vehemently with its raging heat, that my body (which heretofore was fat and fresh) was consumed and parched like the grass of the earth in the midst of the driest summer.

Ver. 5.] But at last I bethought myself of that remedy which I had too long neglected; and humbled myself before thee in a sorrowful confession of all my sins, both great and small: I laid open all those wounds which were so full of anguish, and acknowledged I deserved to be still far more miserable. I resolved I would never hereafter palliate or excuse my sins; but ingenuously charge myself home with them, and condemn myself before thee for them. And straightway thou (who sawest the sincerity of my repentance) was pleased to grant me a gracious pardon, and to release me from all my pain; though my guilt, which was the cause of it, was exceeding great.

Ver. 6.] Which should encourage every one that hath any sense of God, and of the blessedness of being in his favour, and the misery of lying under his displeasure, to apply himself speedily to him, by unfeigned repentance, as soon as ever he hath offended him: for that is the surest way of finding mercy with him; and the way of preventing those great calamities, which otherwise may overtake him, when the Lord sends a deluge of miseries, as he did in the days of Noah, upon the world of the ungodly.

Ver. 7.] Then he may say, Thou, Lord, art my refuge, to whom I fly for safety; and I trust that thou wilt preserve me (though I have been a grievous sinner) from those distresses which surround me; and thereby give abundant cause to me, and all that are about me, to bless and praise thee for thy merciful deliverance of me.

Ver. 8.] Harken therefore unto me, whosoever thou art who hast any care of thy salvation; and I will bestow some good advice upon thee, and direct thee into the wisest and safest course of life: trust thyself with me to be thy guide, and I from my own experience will give thee faithful counsel, and take care thou do not go amiss.

9 Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, *which* have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.

10 Many sorrows *shall be* to the wicked: but

Ver. 9.] God hath endued you with reason, both to tell you what you ought to do, and to check you when you do not as you ought; and hath made you capable also of receiving good admonitions from others: do not therefore follow your own unbridled lusts and appetites, much less be refractory and untractable, when God would reduce you from the error of your ways, as if you were not men, but headstrong horses and mules, who can by no means be curbed, nor made to come near thee, that thou mayest manage them at thy pleasure.

Ver. 10.] Let such ungovernable, obdurate sinners, expect to be handled like those brutes, for they shall

he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about.

11 Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all *ye that are* upright in heart.

receive many and grievous strokes, which shall make their hearts to ache. But he that entirely commits himself to the Lord, to be ruled and disposed of according to his will, shall be not only secured by his good providence, but enriched with abundance of his blessings.

Ver. 11.] And therefore whatsoever your present troubles may be, let your heart be glad, O ye that are obediently led and governed by him: rejoice in the confidence you ought to have of his favour towards you: triumph in his loving-kindness, all ye that sincerely study to do his will; and shout for joy, as if you were already victorious over all your enemies.

PSALM XXXIII.

1 REJOICE in the LORD, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright.

2 Praise the LORD with harp: sing unto him with the psalter and an instrument of ten strings.

3 Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise.

4 For the word of the LORD is right; and all his works are done in truth.

5 He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.

6 By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.

7 He gathereth the waters of the sea together as a heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses.

8 Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.

9 For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.

10 The LORD bringeth the counsel of the hea-

PSALM XXXIII.

ARGUMENT.—It is not recorded by whom this Psalm was composed, nor upon what occasion. But there is little question it was a pious meditation of David (of whose spirit it savours), and, as we may guess, upon occasion of some special benefit received from God (though not particularly mentioned); which makes him call it (ver. 3), *a new song*. (Of which see more-Ps. cxlix.) Wherein he desires all the faithful to join with him in joyful praises of the Lord; considering his excellent nature, and his admirable works, both of creation and providence; especially over good men, who piously trust in him, and expect all good from him; and therefore ought to think themselves blessed that they have relation to him.

Ver. 1.] Bless the Lord with joyful hearts, triumph in his praise, all ye that are just and good: for nothing is more becoming them that sincerely do the will of God, than to praise him, from whom they have received, and hope for, so many benefits; and nothing is more desired than to have your hearts perpetually filled with delightful thoughts of him.

Ver. 2.] Extol therefore his glorious perfections in psalms and hymns, composed in praise of him: and let all the instruments of music accompany the voices, to express and excite your joy in him.

Ver. 3.] Let not the ancient songs of praise suffice you, but indite a new hymn, to testify your singular love and gratitude to him: employ your best skill to make the sweetest music; and sing as cheerfully as you are wont to do at your most solemn feasts.

Ver. 4.] For the Lord hath graciously revealed his will unto you, and shown you the right way, in which, if you walk, you cannot miss of being happy; and

whatever he doeth, hath the same scope with what he saith; for in all that befalls you, he faithfully designs your good.

Ver. 5.] Let this therefore be part of your song, The Lord governs the world with perfect justice and equity; these he loves, and in these he delights: his goodness and mercy also are so conspicuous, that we can look nowhere but we see innumerable proofs of his bounty towards us; which spreads itself over the face of the whole earth.

Ver. 6.] And who can doubt of the greatness of his power, when he beholds the spacious heavens; with the sun, moon, and all the stars, which are placed there like an army in excellent order; and considers that all these he made with the same ease that we speak a word, only by commanding them to be?

Ver. 7.] Nay, the earth itself declares how mighty he is: for when it lay covered with the waters, being far heavier than they, he commanded it to appear (Gen. i. 9, 10), and, cutting a deep channel for them, he laid them up there as in cellars; where they swell and rise up in round heaps, higher than the shore, but cannot overflow the earth.

Ver. 8.] Let all mankind, therefore, in whatsoever part of the world they dwell, dread this almighty Lord: let them not dare to disobey him, who thus tamed even the raging sea.

Ver. 9.] For as then he did but signify his pleasure, and the thing was done, and remained fixed and firm according to his appointment: so, whatsoever he will have now to be done (whether for a blessing on those that submit to him, or a punishment of the disobedient) it shall certainly come to pass; and none can resist or alter his orders.

Ver. 10.] Let men lay their designs never so deep, let whole nations combine together, and in their

then to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect.

11 The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.

12 Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.

13 The LORD looketh from heaven; he holdeth all the sons of men.

14 From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth.

15 He fashioneth their hearts alike; he considereth all their works.

16 There is no king saved by the multitude of

gravest assemblies consult how to compass their ends; the Lord (such is his wisdom, as well as his power) easily disappoints them all: and makes the most likely contrivances, which oppose his will, to be in vain and without success.

Ver. 11.] Whereas that which he resolves none can defeat; but shall certainly obtain its effect. One generation passes away and another comes in its stead; but his purposes are still immovably the same, and can no more in future ages than now be overthrown.

Ver. 12.] Most happy then is that nation which worships this Lord, the creator of heaven and earth; unspeakably happy are they who live under the care of so just, so good, so powerful, and wise a being, and are so highly in his favour, that he hath chosen them (though all mankind be his) to be a peculiar people to himself; among whom, in a special manner, he will reside, and hath engaged himself by a gracious covenant to do them good.

Ver. 13.] How careful ought they to be to please him, and approve their very hearts unto him! for though he be in heaven, as the place of his most special and most glorious presence, yet there is not a man upon earth but he sees and observes him.

Ver. 14.] They are all exposed to his view; and from thence he takes a strict and exact account, not only of all their open actions, but of their most secret designs and contrivances.

Ver. 15.] For they are every one of them, without exception, his creatures: and as he is equally the former of them all, so he formed their souls as well as their bodies; and therefore must needs see into their very hearts, and be perfectly acquainted with every one of their thoughts.

Ver. 16.] And to him a king is no more than an

a host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength.

17 A horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength.

18 Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy;

19 To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.

20 Our soul waiteth for the LORD: he is our help and our shield.

21 For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name.

22 Let thy mercy, O LORD, be upon us, according as we hope in thee.

other man; but if he sees that he regards not his majesty, nor depends upon him, he will make him find, that it is not in the power of the greatest army he can raise to secure and defend him: nor shall the mightiest and most valiant man in that army be able to deliver so much as himself, though he hath a giant-like strength.

Ver. 17.] Though he should be mounted upon the stoutest horse (which is a most warlike creature), he will but deceive himself, if he rely either upon his courage, or his strength, or his agility, or his swiftness, for preservation.

Ver. 18.] It is the Lord only from whom comes salvation; and he hath regard to none but those that fear to offend his majesty, and placing their confidence and hope in his love, more than all human force, look up to him for safety. Over such he will watch with a very careful providence.

Ver. 19.] To rescue them when they are in danger by the sword or the plague; and to supply their necessities in time of scarcity and dearth.

Ver. 20.] What shall we do therefore in all straits, but desire him to take care of us? For this is our peculiar privilege, that we may confidently expect and wait for his seasonable relief, who is our only helper and defender.

Ver. 21.] For we may be sure he will not fail our expectations, but at the last fill our hearts with joy, as a reward of the pious trust we have reposed in him; whose unspotted purity and faithfulness shall be ever famed.

Ver. 22.] O Lord, thou seest we depend upon thee alone, and have placed all our hope, all our comfort and contentment, in thy care and good providence over us: let us prosper accordingly; deal with us according as we trust in thee, and not in any strength, wisdom, or contrivance, of our own.

PSALM XXXIV.

A Psalm of David, when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech: who drove him away, and he departed.

1 I WILL bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

PSALM XXXIV.

ARGUMENT.—The title tells us this Psalm was penned by David, after the escape he made from Achish, king of Gath (in which country all their kings were called by the common name of *Abimelech*, i. e. *My father the king*; as in Egypt, anciently, they were all called Pharaoh, and afterward Ptolemy), who he was afraid would seize on him, when he heard it commonly reported that he was the person that

2 My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.

killed Goliath, and pretended to the sovereignty over all those countries (1 Sam. xxi. 11): and therefore he put on the behaviour of a man beside himself; hoping that when Achish saw this he would despise him: and looking upon him as a useless man, that could do neither good nor harm, think fit to thrust him out of his court, where he had been entertained, and send him packing from thence. And accordingly it succeeded (1 Sam. xxi. 14, 15). But though he was preserved by this artifice, the

3 O magnify the LORD with me, and let us extol his name together.

4 I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.

5 They looked unto him, and were lightened : and their faces were not ashamed.

6 This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.

7 The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.

8 O taste and see that the LORD is good : blessed is the man that trusteth in him.

9 O fear the LORD, ye his saints : for there is no want to them that fear him.

10 The young lions do lack, and suffer hun-

ger : but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing.

11 Come, ye children, hearken unto me : I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

12 What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good ?

13 Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.

14 Depart from evil, and do good ; seek peace, and pursue it.

15 The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.

16 The face of the LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

17 The righteous cry, and the LORD hearth,

deliverance notwithstanding is piously ascribed unto God's great mercy, who prospered the device. To whom therefore he would have all pious men commit themselves, and depend upon his favour in well-doing : which he declares is the sure course to be happy. The Psalm is curiously composed, according to the number and order of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, in the beginning of every verse ; which shows it was contrived, when he reflected upon his escape, in some place of safety.

Ver. 1.] I will never forget how gracious the Lord hath been to me in this remarkable deliverance ; but, whatsoever my condition be, will still have my mind and my mouth perpetually filled with his praise.

Ver. 2.] This shall be my glory ; in this I will think myself happy, that the Lord is with me, where-soever I am, to guide and defend me : and I will let all those that humbly depend on him know what he hath done for me ; that they may likewise joyfully hope for his mercy.

Ver. 3.] Oh that they would all join with me in declaring the greatness of his goodness, in this miraculous providence over me ! Let them with the same devout affection extol him in all his glorious attributes ; who hath given me such a deliverance, and them such hope in the greatest danger.

Ver. 4.] I was sore afraid (1 Sam. xxi. 12), when I found they had discovered me in the court of Achish who I was ; and many a sad thought and dreadful apprehension began then to trouble my mind : but committing myself to thee by hearty prayer, and desiring thee to be my guide and my protector ; thou wast pleased presently to rid me of them, by inclining his heart to look upon me as I appeared, and to make no stricter inquiry after me.

Ver. 5.] From which all pious men should take courage in all their straits, and when their hearts are ready to sink, look up unto God : who will revive and comfort them, and never suffer them to be ashamed of the hope they repose in him.

Ver. 6.] Let them fix their eyes on me, and excite one another to a cheerful dependence on him, saying, Behold that man : he was in a miserably poor condition, destitute of all human help ; but commending himself to the Lord by earnest prayer, the Lord took care of him, and delivered him out of all his distresses.

Ver. 7.] Why should we then despair of his mercy, who sends an invisible host (as appeared to Elisha), to guard those who fear nothing so much as to offend his majesty ; and to preserve them as securely as if they were surrounded with an invincible army from all the assaults of their enemies ?

Ver. 8.] Oh that men would not be so negligent,

but seriously consider this, and make a trial, by steadfast fidelity to God in all their troubles, how gracious and kind he is ! They shall soon find that there is no man so happy as he that piously confides in him.

Ver. 9.] Continue therefore, O ye devout worshippers of the Lord (whatsoever other men do), to fear nothing, but lest you be false to him. Never betake yourselves to any sinful ways to provide for your safety, or to supply any of your necessities : but religiously observe his command ; and you shall never be reduced to such straits, as to be utterly destitute of what is needful for your preservation.

Ver. 10.] The young lions (an emblem of those that seek to enrich themselves by rapine, or by injurious practices), who are most ravenous in their appetites, as well as swift to pursue, and bold to seize, and strong to tear in pieces, their prey, are many times disappointed, and cannot meet with satisfaction to their hungry desires ; but they that seek their food from the Lord in pious and honest ways, shall certainly be blessed with everything that is good for them.

Ver. 11.] Come hither then, all ye that are disposed to learn, and hearken to the instruction which, out of a most tender affection to your welfare, I shall give you concerning the fear of the Lord.

Ver. 12.] Who is there among you that desires to live happily ? that would fain prolong his life to a great number of years, and have them all prosperous and pleasant ?

Ver. 13.] Let him be very careful, in the first place, to bridle his tongue ; and never employ it to speak evil of others, or to deceive them with fair words and false promises.

Ver. 14.] Let him in all his actions also eschew what God hath prohibited, and do what he hath commanded : and, more particularly, avoiding all hatreds and enmities, strife and contention, study to maintain love and friendship with all his neighbours, and to make peace among them when they quarrel ; and though they be averse to it, not to cease his importunities, till, if it be possible, he hath reconciled them.

Ver. 15.] Such men will feel great contentment in their own hearts, and be exceedingly beloved by others : and (which is the greatest happiness of all) the Lord will have a special care of them ; and, when they are in distress, most readily hear their cry, and help them.

Ver. 16.] But as for all those that take the contrary course (besides that they are ill at ease in themselves, and hated by their neighbours), the Lord is their enemy, and in his heavy displeasure will utterly destroy both them and theirs.

Ver. 17.] Experience hath taught us this (and

and delivereth them out of all their troubles.

18 The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.

therefore let them not be disheartened if they fall into any trouble, but still expect good days), that the Lord graciously answers the prayers of those who adhere unto him in the ways of piety and peaceableness, and sends them seasonable relief and deliverance.

Ver. 18.] Though he may seem to absent himself, by suffering them to be sorely bruised and crushed under their burdens: yet he is really present to them to support and comfort their drooping spirits; and at last to ease them of their burdens after they have humbly and patiently submitted to them.

Ver. 19.] Many of these afflictions there may be (for such prosperity they must not promise themselves, as will exempt them from troubles, for a trial of their fidelity): but in this they ought to think themselves happy, that they know the Lord will put an end to them when he hath sufficiently proved them.

20 He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.

21 Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.

22 The LORD redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.

Ver. 20.] And while they lie under them, he sustains, upholds, and defends them: so that they receive not the least hurt by any of those sufferings, which otherwise would crush them in pieces.

Ver. 21.] Whereas the wicked, who for the present flourish, shall at last be seized by some calamity or other, which shall stick to them, till it hath destroyed them: they that spitefully persecute the righteous bring such a guilt upon themselves, that they shall not escape without their justly-deserved punishment.

Ver. 22.] And by that very means the Lord oft-times rescues his faithful servants from those mischiefs which their enemies intended to them; and, you may be sure, will not suffer any of them, since they rely entirely upon him, to perish, like those ungodly wretches.

PSALM XXXV.

A Psalm of David.

1 PLEAD *my cause*, O LORD, with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me.

2 Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for my help.

3 Draw out also the spear, and stop *the way* against them that persecute me: say unto my soul, I *am* thy salvation.

4 Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul: let them be turned back and brought to confusion that devise my hurt.

5 Let them be as chaff before the wind: and let the angel of the LORD chase *them*.

6 Let their way be dark and slippery: and let the angel of the LORD persecute them.

7 For without cause have they hid for me

PSALM XXXV.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm, we are sufficiently informed by the matter of it, was penned by David, when he was fiercely persecuted by Saul. Whose forces, which were unjustly raised against him, he beseeches the Lord to dissipate; and especially to stop the mouth of his false accusers (such as Doeg and the Ziphites), of whom he most heavily complains, in the middle of the Psalm: vowing to God that he should be ever mindful of the benefit, and never cease to give him thanks and praise for his loving-kindness, if he would be pleased to confound them, and deliver him.

There may seem to be here, as in other Psalms, such horrid imprecations against his enemies, as do not become the mouth of a good man. But they must be considered as an appeal to God in a particular case; for justice against those whom no court on earth could or would punish: which made it fit, he thought, to desire the divine majesty to execute the judgment he had enacted in his law against obstinate and incurable offenders, who else would escape the hand of justice; whereby, also, others would be hardened in their wickedness.

Besides, the words may be interpreted, not as a prayer, but as a prediction; and rendered, *not let them be, but they shall be, &c.*

Ver. 1.] Take my part, O Lord, and maintain my cause against those that contend with me, and have

raised a war against me: for I am not able to defend myself, and have none else to appear for me.

Ver. 2.] Be thou my protector, and preserve me under the shield of thy almighty providence! oppose thyself unto them, and keep off all the assaults of my enemies.

Ver. 3.] Strike through them, as well as defend me; let them run upon the spear and the sword, if they continue to pursue me: and confirm my soul in this belief, that thou wilt at last deliver me from this persecution.

Ver. 4.] Disappoint them [*or*, they shall be disappointed] of their hope, which they have to destroy me; and make them blush to see all their warlike preparation against me come to nothing: let them all be put to flight, and make a confused retreat with shame and dishonour, who design my ruin.

Ver. 5.] Let them be dispersed [*or*, they shall be dispersed, *and so of the rest*] as the chaff, when it is blown about by a mighty wind: and let the invisible powers, which thou usest as ministers of thy displeasure (especially when thy ministers on earth do not their duty), drive them forward, and thrust them on in that disorder.

Ver. 6.] Let them not know where they are in their flight; but wander, as men in the dark, up and down in slippery and dangerous ways; and there let the ministers of thy vengeance still pursue them, and press them on with restless fears, till they tumble headlong into destruction.

Ver. 7.] For though I have done them no wrong,

their net in a pit, *which* without cause they have digged for my soul.

8 Let destruction come upon him at un-awares; and let his net that he hath hid catch himself: into that very destruction let him fall.

9 And my soul shall be joyful in the Lord: it shall rejoice in his salvation.

10 All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him?

11 False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge things that I knew not.

12 They rewarded me evil for good to the spoiling of my soul.

13 But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom.

14 I behaved myself as though *he had been*

nor given them any provocation, they hunt and pursue me as if I were some wild beast; and by treachery, as well as open force, endeavour to take away my life.

Ver. 8.] Let him, whose hatred hath armed so many against me (and, when I suspected no danger, sought my ruin, 1 Sam. xviii. 10, 11, 21. xix. 10), meet with unexpected destruction: let him be caught in his own wiles; and, according to the rules of thy righteous judgment, suffer that himself which he thought to do to me.

Ver. 9.] Then shall my soul conceive the highest joy in the love the Lord bears to me, and in his care over me: to him will I give thanks as the author of my deliverance, and rejoice in what he hath done for me.

Ver. 10.] The joy shall spread all over me, and from the inmost sense of my heart, with all the power and strength I have, both of body and soul, I will burst forth in thy praise, and say, Lord, who is comparable to thee in mercy, and wisdom, and power? who rescuest the poor helpless man, in wonderful ways, from him whom he cannot resist; the man who is miserably in want, and hath none to relieve him, from him who by violence and oppression hath undone him.

Ver. 11.] For which they have no pretence at all, but what is founded on calumnies and lies, forged by men of no conscience, who have accused me of the highest crime, and laid to my charge such things as never entered into my mind (1 Sam. xxiv. 9).

Ver. 12.] And (which adds to the sharpness of my persecution) they are men whom I have obliged; who are so detestably ungrateful, as, for all the good I did them when I was in power, to make me no other requital, but to endeavour to deprive me of my life.

Ver. 13.] O how unlike is this to the kindness that I showed to them in their troubles! when they were sick, for instance, I sympathised most heartily with them; and testified my unfeigned grief and sorrow for them, by putting on sackcloth; in which I humbled myself before God, with prayer and fasting, for their recovery: which I often repeated: and in such an affectionate manner poured out my soul to God on their behalf, in my most secret retirements, that I wish myself no better than I desired God to do for them.

Ver. 14.] I walked mournfully; and went to visit them with the same diligence as if I had been in danger to lose a friend or brother; I could not have looked more dejectedly if I had bewailed the death of the dearest mother

my friend or brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for *his* mother.

15 But in mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together: *yea*, the abjects gathered themselves together against me, and I knew it not; they did tear *me*, and ceased not:

16 With hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth.

17 Lord, how long wilt thou look on? rescue my soul from their destructions, my darling from the lions.

18 I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise thee among much people.

19 Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me: *neither* let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause.

20 For they speak not peace: but they devise deceitful matters against *them* that are quiet in the land.

21 Yea, they opened their mouth wide against me, and said, Aha, aha, our eye hath seen it.

Ver. 15.] But these very men (such was their inhumanity) could not dissemble the joy they conceived, when the news was brought of any evil that befell me; but ran to tell one another, and assembled themselves together, that they might publicly testify how glad they were to hear it. The very scum of the people, who were so vile, that I did not so much as know there were such men in the world, met together, by their example, to revile me; and there was no end of their reproaches.

Ver. 16.] They joined themselves to the profane flatterers and trencher-buffoons; who, maintaining themselves by saying anything which they think will please their lords and masters, made me the subject of their abusive jests, ridiculous sayings, and scoffs, in their table-talk; which they accompanied with such rage, as if they could have eaten me up.

Ver. 17.] Lord! thou seest all this. I know very well; but how long wilt thou bear with it, and be a spectator only? be pleased at length to vindicate my innocence, and deliver me (who am desolate, and have none to relieve me, but thee alone) from those that have already despoiled me of my goods and good name; and now seek, like so many rapacious lions, to devour me, and take away my life.

Ver. 18.] I will ever preserve a grateful remembrance of it, if thou wilt vouchsafe this mercy to me; it shall be acknowledged with the most hearty thanks before all thy people, as soon as thou shalt restore me to thy tabernacle; in the most frequent assemblies, when the whole nation meet at thy solemn feasts, I will celebrate thy power and goodness with my praises.

Ver. 19.] Let not those, therefore, that unjustly persecute me, have the pleasure of getting any advantage of me: let them no longer make signs one to another with their eyes and their heads, as if they had done their business, and should satisfy their causeless hatred of me.

Ver. 20.] For they are men of a turbulent spirit, that give not their sovereign peaceable counsel, but devise false stories, to incense him against those that would gladly serve God quietly under his government, without doing the least harm to any body.

Ver. 21.] Nor are they content to do this secretly; but now they bawl against me with open mouth, and boldly accuse me as a traitor, rejoicing at any colour they can meet withal for their calumnies; and saying, So, so, we have found him out; his reasonable practices

22 *This thou hast seen, O LORD : keep not silence : O LORD, be not far from me.*

23 *Stir up thyself, and awake to my judgment, even unto my cause, my God and my Lord.*

24 *Judge me, O LORD my God, according to thy righteousness ; and let them not rejoice over me.*

25 *Let them not say in their hearts, Ah, so would we have it : let them not say, We have swallowed him up.*

are discovered ; we ourselves are eye-witnesses of it.

Ver. 22.] But thou knowest me better than they, O Lord ; to whom I appeal as a witness of the wrong they do me ; beseeching thee to declare my innocence, by affording me thy help, and delivering me from their hands now that they hope to seize on me.

Ver. 23.] Thou hast seemed hitherto to neglect me, though I have so often made my appeal to thee ; but I beseech thee at length, O my God and my Lord, who art the only judge that can give me relief, the only sovereign that can protect an injured subject, to take cognizance of my cause ; and pass sentence on me according to my doings.

Ver. 24.] I desire only that thou wilt do me right ; and not that thou shouldst, in favour of me, forbear to condemn and punish me, if I be guilty of what they accuse me. Deal with me according to thy unspotted justice, O Lord (whom the fear of none can overawe) my God, who art a judge whom none can corrupt ; and then I know they shall never have the better of me.

Ver. 25.] Prevent so great a mischief, O Lord, lest they should applaud themselves in their wickedness. Let them have no occasion to think within themselves they shall prevail ; saying to their souls, So now all

26 *Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together that rejoice at my hurt : let them be clothed with shame and dishonour that magnify themselves against me.*

27 *Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause ; yea, let them say continually, Let the LORD be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant.*

28 *And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy praise all the day long.*

goes well ; cheer up, we shall have our desires ; much less let them prevail so far, that they should triumph in my ruin, and say, We have obtained our end, we have utterly destroyed him.

Ver. 26.] Let them all be shamefully disappointed ; and, as they have combined together insolently to deride and mock me ; so let them who rejoice at my present forlorn condition, look upon one another with amazement and confusion. Let them not only be put to the blush, but perfectly confounded, and never be able to lift up their heads again, who proudly traduce me, and seek to raise themselves upon my ruin.

Ver. 27.] And thereby fill all their hearts with joy, and their mouths with the voice of triumph, who, believing my innocence, have wished well to me : and let them see me so victorious, that this may be their perpetual song ; The Lord be extolled with the highest praises, who favoured his servant David so much, that he delivered him out of all his troubles, and settled him in peace and prosperity.

Ver. 28.] As for my tongue, that sure shall never rest ; but be declaring thy justice, and goodness, and fidelity to me ; on which I shall ever think ; and be giving thee the praise which is due unto them perpetually.

PSALM XXXVI.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David, the servant of the Lord.

1 *The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes.*

2 *For he flattereth himself in his own*

PSALM XXXVI.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm, composed by David, and delivered by him to the chief master of music in the tabernacle, seems to have been penned, as the former and many others were, during the persecution he suffered from Saul. It is hard to say, to what part of that time it peculiarly belongs. The most probable opinion is, that it hath respect to the beginning of it : when Saul had a jealousy of him, and a hatred to him ; but hid it secretly in his heart, and counterfeited friendship to him, and desire of his alliance (as you read I Sam. xviii.) ; and yet could not carry the matter so cunningly, and so wholly suppress and conceal his intentions to destroy him, but that they broke out in some fits (as you find there, ver. 11, and in the next chapter, ver. 10) ; and by the very preference he gave him, made it plainly appear he designed his ruin. This treachery David here describes (without naming Saul, to whom he preserved a due reverence) ; and opposes thereunto the fidelity and goodness of God, who rules the whole world, and takes care of beasts as well as men ; and therefore would not, he hoped,

eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful.

3 *The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit : he hath left off to be wise, and to do good.*

4 *He deviseth mischief upon his bed ; he set-*

desert him, nor any else that depend on him, and are his faithful servants ; as he in a special manner, professed himself, and was obliged to be.

Ver. 1.] The wicked may use many arts to disguise and cloak his evil intentions ; but his actions, directly contrary to all the laws of humanity, as well as the law of God, discover what he is, and make me resolve not to trust him ; because, without all doubt, he hath no regard to God, nor will be restrained by the fear of him from doing me still more mischief.

Ver. 2.] Though he flatter and soothe up himself in his own conceit, imagining he carries things so cunningly and smoothly, that none can accuse him ; yet at length his iniquity shall be found out, and make him odious to all the world.

Ver. 3.] When he pretends great kindness to me, and professes I am dear to him, his meaning is to do me mischief, and to cheat and ensnare me into danger. He was once a better man, and better affected towards me ; but now his passions have so blinded his judgment, and perverted his will, that he knows not what belongs to justice and equity, much less to goodness and charity.

teth himself in a way *that is* not good; he abhorreth not evil.

5 Thy mercy, O LORD, *is* in the heavens; and thy faithfulness *reacheth* unto the clouds.

6 Thy righteousness *is* like the great mountains; thy judgments *are* a great deep: O LORD, thou preservest man and beast.

7 How excellent *is* thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings.

8 They shall be abundantly satisfied with the

Ver. 4.] For whatsoever he may say in public of his affection to me, when he is retired he is contriving how to ruin me. He muses of nothing else when he lies down to sleep, and when he awakes; and is not transported merely by a sudden fit of jealousy and anger against me; but hath set himself (with an obstinate resolution to persist in it) in a course so void of all piety, justice, or charity, that there is no wickedness, though never so abominable, at which he sticks, to compass his design to destroy me.

Ver. 5.] My comfort is, that his hatred and falsehood cannot be so great, but thy goodness and lovingkindness, O Lord, and thy faithfulness to thy word, are infinitely greater; on these I rely, which I know will not deceive me; being no less conspicuous and constant (as well as unmeasurable) than the heavens.

Ver. 6.] Thy justice, also, in the administrations of all affairs, appears as visibly, and is as unmovable, as the highest mountains; which the greatest power on earth cannot shake, nor make to bend to their inclinations. The deepest plots they can lay are shallow, and easily disappointed by thee; whose orders and decrees shall be executed and brought to pass, by ways and means that we cannot fathom: and therefore I will trust in thee, O Lord; whose careful providence extends not only to men, but to beasts also, which have no sense of thee.

Ver. 7.] For if thou hast such care of their wellbeing, O God, thy lovingkindness, sure, and tender mercy, are incomparably greater to those that know thee, and depend upon thee. It is impossible to express the value of them: and to know how rich, how safe, and secure, they are, who, in all troubles and dangers, can confide in thee for thy powerful protection.

fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.

9 For with thee *is* the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.

10 O continue thy lovingkindness unto them that know thee; and thy righteousness to the upright in heart.

11 Let not the foot of pride come against me, and let not the hand of the wicked remove me.

12 There are the workers of iniquity fallen: they are cast down, and shall not be able to rise.

Ver. 8.] They shall not only be well contented in that condition wherein they are; but have abundant satisfaction in thy love to them; and, at length, bring thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, for thy merciful preservation of them, and feast with thee in thy house; where thou shalt pour into them the sweetest joys, and give them an earnest of the greatest plenty of all divine blessings, that shall continually flow in upon them.

Ver. 9.] For thou art the spring from whence all our happiness comes, which thou art able to communicate for ever: and if thou wilt be favourable to us, nothing shall hinder our joy; but we shall think ourselves happy in the most disconsolate condition.

Ver. 10.] Vouchsafe then, O most gracious God, to extend thy lovingkindness (which is so precious, that it excels all worldly things) not only unto me, but unto all that obediently acknowledge their dependence on thee; never withdraw thy favour from them, but perform thy promises to thy faithful servants, and defend them from all the mischievous devices of their enemies to destroy them.

Ver. 11.] Make me an example of it; and, whatsoever is secretly designed and plotted against me, let not my proud enemy prevail, and tread me under his feet; let not all the power of the wicked, that may join with him, be able to subvert me.

Ver. 12.] In this attempt I am confident they shall fail: I plainly see them baffled in this wicked design. It is as certain, as if I already beheld it with mine eyes, that where they thought to overthrow me, they shall fall themselves: with so powerful a hand shall they be thrown down, that they shall never recover themselves, to renew their attempts against me any more.

PSALM XXXVII.

A Psalm of David.

1 FRET not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.

PSALM XXXVII.

ARGUMENT.—In this Psalm (which is composed so artificially, that the order of the letters of the alphabet is observed, in the first letter of every other verse) David seems to intend to prevent the scandal which some might take when they saw the wicked in prosperity, and the godly under affliction (as they did sometimes); quite contrary to the law, which promised all good things to those that kept it, and threatened all evils to those that broke it. He bids them be patient, and stay awhile; and they should see both verified. For the prosperity of the wicked shall be short (as he over and over again

2 For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.

3 Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt

bids them consider): and the just, if they would but wait awhile, should see themselves not only delivered out of trouble, but made very flourishing. And therefore he advises, in the first place, that no man by any means suffer himself to be tempted, by the splendid condition of the wicked, to imitate them in their ungodly courses; but stick close to the principles of piety and virtue, trusting in God, and committing himself to him; who will give great satisfaction to such honest men, in what they have at present, though never so little; and at last, put them in possession of all that their hearts can desire. And, to preserve themselves in this pious temper, he shows nothing could be more available

thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

4 Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thy heart.

5 Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.

6 And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday.

7 Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

8 Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.

than meekness and humility (which procure us, as Theodoret here notes, abundance of good things), and to reflect on the lamentable end of the proud and haughty, who take unjust courses (as was apparent in what befell Saul and Absalom, and such-like persons). Which sufficiently admonishes all men to bear their present troubles decently and well: and not to envy the prosperous successes of the wicked, nor to call them blessed: but rather account them unhappy and miserable.

The son of Sirach seems to have summed up this Psalm in those few words (Eccles. i. 23, &c.), "A patient man will bear for a time, and afterward joy shall spring up unto him. For the fear of the Lord is wisdom; and faith and meekness are his delight."

Ver. 1.] Let it not vex thee to see the evil-doers in great prosperity: nor be provoked thereby either to accuse God's providence, or to think the worse of virtue; or to imitate them in their wickedness; or to wish thyself to be what they are.

Ver. 2.] For this prosperity, which thou art apt to look upon with admiration, envy, or anger, is so far from lasting always, that it is but of short continuance: they shall be cut down on a sudden, as the grass is by the hand of the mower, when it is most flourishing; or they shall fade away as the green herb doth, which in a little time withers, and of itself falls to decay.

Ver. 3.] If you would have a firm and stable happiness, confide in God (and not in riches, shouldst thou have them in the greatest abundance), doing all the good thou art able in that condition wherein his providence hath placed thee: so shalt thou be settled in the good land God hath given us (when the wicked are cut off from it), and shalt enjoy securely all those blessings which he, according to his faithful promise, will provide for thee.

Ver. 4.] Be not discouraged, therefore, nor too much dejected, if thou art for the present afflicted; but rest contented with what thou hast: or rather so-lace thyself in the Lord, and take a greater delight in his promises, than the wicked can do in their present possessions: and, commending thyself unto him by constant prayer, be confident he will answer thee, according to thy heart's desire.

Ver. 5.] When thou hast any difficult business in hand, and art doubtful of the success; or when thou knowest not what course to take, for the accomplishing of thy honest designs; leave all to the Lord, and trust to him in pious and upright courses, that he will direct and assist thee, and bring things to a good issue.

Ver. 6.] And if thou shouldst be accused as a man of evil designs; let not that trouble thee neither: for though thy fame may be obscured for a time by calumnies and slanders, as the sun is by mists and clouds;

9 For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth.

10 For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.

11 But the meek shall inherit the earth; and delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

12 The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth.

13 The Lord shall laugh at him: for he seeth that his day is coming.

14 The wicked have drawn out their sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and

yet, as that scatters them all at last, so shall thy integrity appear, and shine as bright as the sun at noon-day.

Ver. 7.] And in the mean time rest satisfied in this, that the Lord knows thy innocency: and do not murmur and complain if he do not presently vindicate it; but think it becomes thee to wait upon him, with humble submission to his will, and to stay as long as he pleases. And be sure thou be not so impatient, as to be irritated by the thriving wickedness of the ungodly, and the strange success they have in their dishonest contrivances, to do as they do; and to follow them in their calumnies, fraud, injustice, and oppression, or any such like courses, whereby they craftily compass all their designs.

Ver. 8.] If thou perceive thy indignation begin to arise, to see such vile people so successful, suppress it presently; let it not vex and afflict thee, much less boil up to wrath and furious displeasure; or, if on a sudden thou art surprised with such a passion, take care, however, that it proceed no farther; and by no means be so incensed (I must repeat that caution, it is so weighty) as to follow their example in evil-doing.

Ver. 9.] For how prosperous soever it may prove in the beginning, the end, assure thyself, shall be lamentable. And let those evil-doers expect also to meet with an untimely end, and to be cut off by the hand of justice in a remarkable manner from the land of the living: when they that follow my advice, and wait patiently till the Lord will do them right, shall possess those good things that he hath promised, in this land which he hath given them for their inheritance.

Ver. 10.] And do not think he stays too long before he doth it; but if that thought come into thy mind, resolve to expect yet a while longer; and still believe that after a very short time the wicked, who seem to stand so fast, shall be utterly destroyed. When thou hast made a strict search after him, thou shalt find nothing of him remaining in the place where thou sawest him so flourishing.

Ver. 11.] Whereas they that meekly submit to their present afflictions, and patiently wait upon God till he be pleased to relieve them, shall be settled at last in their possessions, and lead a most pleasant life, in the greatest plenty of all manner of good things: in the enjoyment of which nothing shall disturb them.

Ver. 12.] The wicked, indeed, hope to hinder this; being so furiously enraged at the just, that he is always contriving some mischief against him.

Ver. 13.] But all his plots and crafty devices are ridiculous in the eyes of the Lord, who sees the day of his ruin approaching: which will inevitably seize on him before his designs can take effect.

Ver. 14.] He hath numerous partakers, indeed, who have added open force to their secret practices,

needy, and to slay such as be of upright conversation.

15 Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken.

16 A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.

17 For the arms of the wicked shall be broken : but the Lord upholdeth the righteous.

18 The Lord knoweth the days of the upright : and their inheritance shall be for ever.

19 They shall not be ashamed in the evil time, and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.

20 But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs : they shall consume ; into smoke shall they consume away.

21 The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again : but the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth.

and armed themselves in a warlike manner for the just man's utter destruction ; which they hope may be the more easily compassed because he is destitute of human help, and will not take any crooked ways for his own preservation.

Ver. 15.] But all these endeavours also shall prove in vain ; and, which is more, they shall not only miss their aim, but their sword, as we say, shall cut their own throat ; and the evil they intended against the just shall fall upon themselves.

Ver. 16.] And as there is more satisfaction in the little pittance a righteous man hath, than in all the abundance which the greatest potentates have gotten by extortion, oppression, and violence ; so that small power he hath shall be of more force to protect and preserve him, than all the multitudes which attend upon those violent men to guard them.

Ver. 17.] For the Lord is against the wicked ; and be their power never so great, which they have to oppress and destroy the righteous, he will break it in pieces ; but good men will he support, be they never so weak ; and both maintain them in what they enjoy, and increase their stock, notwithstanding all that their enemies can do against them.

Ver. 18.] He may seem to neglect them, but there is no day passes wherein he doth not take care of them, and exercise a most gracious providence over them ; observing not only all their afflictions, but their patience under them, which shall be rewarded with the blessings he hath promised to them, and to their children after them.

Ver. 19.] In calamitous times, when God punishes the world by war or pestilence, they shall not be ashamed of the hope they have placed in God that he will preserve them ; when a famine comes and pinches others, they shall be sure to have enough.

Ver. 20.] But the wicked shall perish in those evil days, for the Lord looks upon them as his enemies ; who, when they grow rich and great, are but fattened up as beasts for the slaughter, and on a sudden melt away, as fast as the fat of lambs that is burnt upon the altar : just so shall the divine vengeance seize on them, when they are in the fulness of their prosperity ; and, like that fat, they shall vanish into smoke, and come to nothing.

Ver. 21.] You see a man now, perhaps, grow rich by wicked arts : but he shall in time be reduced to such straits as shall put him to double shame ; first of borrowing, and then of not being able to pay at his day : when the righteous shall be so far from borrow-

22 For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth ; and they that be cursed of him shall be cut off.

23 The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord : and he delighteth in his way.

24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down : for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.

25 I have been young, and now am old ; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.

26 He is ever merciful, and lendeth ; and his seed is blessed.

27 Depart from evil, and do good ; and dwell for evermore.

28 For the Lord loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints ; they are preserved for ever : but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.

29 The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever.

ing of any, that he shall be able to lend ; nay, to exercise mercy, and give freely to him that needeth.

Ver. 22.] For upon these God hath entailed a blessing by his gracious promises (which shall certainly be fulfilled), that they and theirs shall enjoy the good things of the land ; and against the other he hath denounced a curse (which they shall no ways avoid), that they shall be rooted out.

Ver. 23.] Let a man but take care that his ways be pleasing to the Lord, by doing what he approves, and he will prosper him in all his undertakings, and guide his counsels and actions so that he shall meet with good success.

Ver. 24.] Or if he fail sometime of his end, he shall not be undone : the Lord still supports him by his power, that he be not discouraged ; and relieves him by his good providence, that he be not utterly ruined.

Ver. 25.] I say nothing but what I can confirm by my own long observation : when I was young I began to take notice of it, and I continued so to do till now that I am grown old ; and I cannot remember that in all my life I ever saw a truly pious, just, and charitable man, left destitute of necessary things ; or his children after him reduced to such poverty, that they were constrained to beg from door to door.

Ver. 26.] No, he rather hath not only enough to supply his own wants, but to spare also for the relief of others, to whom he freely gives, or at least lends ; and is so unwearied in these acts of charity, that God rewards it with blessings upon his posterity.

Ver. 27.] Take my advice, therefore, if thou wouldst be happy : never do any evil, though it be to gain the greatest advantage this world can afford ; but constantly employ thyself in good works, especially in acts of mercy, though thereby thou mayest seem to impoverish thyself for the present ; be assured this is the way to live a long and prosperous life in great tranquillity and peace.

Ver. 28.] For the Lord loveth that which is just and right, and upon that account will not forsake those that are merciful, but be very merciful to them ; and continue his mercy to their children after them, when the posterity of injurious and hard-hearted men shall be destroyed.

Ver. 29.] Such wretches may flourish for a time : but they that shall be settled and fixed in the land of promise, and leave it as an inheritance to those that succeed them, are only (as I have often said) the godly, just, and merciful men.

30 The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment.

31 The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.

32 The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him.

33 The LORD will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged.

34 Wait on the LORD, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it.

35 I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree.

36 Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.

37 Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.

38 But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off.

39 But the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD: he is their strength in the time of trouble.

40 And the LORD shall help them, and deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in him.

Ver. 30.] Who do good not only to men's bodies, but to their souls also; imparting to them (especially to their own children) such precepts of virtuous wisdom as teach them how to behave themselves aright in every action of their life, and naturally tend to make them prosperous.

Ver. 31.] As appears by this righteous man himself: who, making the law of God (which he hath continually before his eyes), the rule of his life, proceeds steadily to the obtaining of his end; and happily finishes his course without falling into those mischiefs into which wickedness leads those who have no regard unto that rule.

Ver. 32.] His greatest danger is from such lawless men who (as I have said before) watch for an opportunity, and leave no means unattempted (though it be by falseness and treachery) not only to give him trouble and disturbance, but to take away his life.

Ver. 33.] But the Lord will not let them have power to do what they design. He will rescue him from their violence. Or if they seek to undo him in a form of law, by false accusations before the public judges, he will find a means to clear his innocence, and reverse even the sentence they have pronounced against him.

Ver. 34.] Therefore, if I should study never so long, I can give a good man no better advice than I did at first: hope in God (when any of these troubles happen) and patiently wait for his mercy, in a steadfast observance of all his commands. Be not moved by any mischiefs that men can threaten to go out of that way into which thou art directed by God's law, but believe that he will at last, if thou persevere in it, advance thee to the possession of all the blessings it promiseth; and thou shalt see those that thought to depress thee utterly destroyed.

Ver. 35.] There wants not public examples of this in our own days. For I myself have seen the wicked (such as Saül, Doeg, and Ahithophel) in such power, that he was in no fear that any body could hurt him; but, quite contrary, struck terror into all: his off-

spring was numerous, his possessions large, his revenue exceeding great; being like a tree never yet transplanted, that hath taken root, and sucked abundance of the earth, and spreads juice out of its branches every way.

Ver. 36.] And yet, as firm as he seemed to stand, he was gone on a sudden; he vanished (it is very wonderful) just as you see a cloud pass away and disappear. I looked about me to see what was become of him, and whether he might not be removed (as a tree sometimes is) to another place; but there was no such man, nor any remainder of him to be found.

Ver. 37.] Do you mark then and make it your own observation, as I have made it mine, and you will find there is this great difference between him that makes the laws of God the rule of his life, and those that transgress them; that though the former may meet with some troubles for a time, yet, if they do not make him forsake his integrity, nor in any thing swerve from his duty, he shall in the issue be very prosperous and happy.

Ver. 38.] But the other shall be utterly destroyed; none of them shall escape by any of their cunning tricks and devices, but shall all alike perish; though for the present they may thrive in their wickedness, yet in the conclusion they shall be cut off both root and branch.

Ver. 39.] For the Lord, whom none can resist, undertakes to be the defender, deliverer, and benefactor of just and good men: they may safely depend on him for power and strength to support and protect them, whensoever they fall into any distress.

Ver. 40.] He will not fail to help them during their troubles, and at last to deliver them out of them: the wicked shall not be able to hinder it; but he will deliver them from all their secret plots, or open attempts to destroy them: he will therefore deliver them, because they entirely rely on him for safety, and will not take any other course but such as he allows to save themselves from danger.

PSALM XXXVIII.

A Psalm of David, to bring to remembrance.

1 O LORD, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.

2 For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore.

PSALM XXXVIII.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm was composed by David, either during his affliction, to desire God graciously to remember him (as the title of it is), and send him deliverance, or afterward, to put himself in remembrance of the moans he made when he was

in that sad condition; and how earnest he then was with God, to pardon all the sins which had brought him into it, and to release him out of it; and what hope and confidence he then had in God, which might encourage him and all others to place the like humble trust in his goodness for the time to come.

3 *There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin.*

4 For mine iniquities are gone over my head: as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me.

5 My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness.

6 I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long.

7 For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease: and there is no soundness in my flesh.

8 I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.

9 LORD, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee.

10 My heart panteth, my strength faileth me: as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me.

11 My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand afar off.

12 They also that seek after my life lay snares for me: and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long.

13 But I, as a deaf man, heard not; and I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth.

14 Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs.

15 For in thee, O LORD, do I hope: thou wilt hear, O LORD my God.

What the affliction was, is not so certain as it may seem at first sight. It is generally thought he was sick, and that of some noisome, ulcerous disease; as, in the beginning of the Psalm, several expressions, if they be taken literally, plainly enough denote. But he presently falling into a doleful complaint of the malignity of his enemies, and the coldness of his friends' affection towards him, it is thought not improbable by others, that he describes the crazy condition he was in (under the persecution of Saul) by the languishment of a sick man under some dangerous disease. And thus Theodoret understands it; only he supposes that he reflects upon the disastrous things that befell him after he came to the crown; by the murder of his son Amnon, the rebellion of Absalom, the falseness of Ahithophel, the abusive reproaches of Shimei, and all the other afflictions mentioned in his history, which were sent by God upon him for the cure of his sins. And this sense we must follow, or else say he was at the very same time sick of a grievous disease, when he laboured under one of those persecutions. And since the Psalm will be of larger use if we so interpret it, I shall follow that conjecture. So I call it, because we do not read of any sickness David had, nor are we certain what the particular sins were which he bewails in so sad a manner, that it hath made this be called one of the penitential Psalms, beginning just as the first of them doth, Ps. vi.

Ver. 1.] O Lord, I am sorely afflicted; and it is but just I should be so. Yet let me prevail with thee for so much mercy as not to proceed to any farther severity; or if thou dost, yet still to mitigate it with some favour, that I may not suffer in the utmost extremity.

Ver. 2.] For (beside the trouble which my enemies give me without) the pains I already endure in my body are exceeding sharp, and touch me to the very quick: thou hast inflicted on me a heavy punishment, which presses me down to the ground.

Ver. 3.] There is no part of my body but feels the sad effects of thy displeasure, which my sins have so provoked, that I am in perpetual pain, without any intermission.

Ver. 4.] They have brought a great number of evils upon me, which like a deluge have overwhelmed me; and lie upon me as an intolerable burden, under which I am ready to sink, unless thou support me.

Ver. 5.] I am full of ulcers, and they are full of putrefied matter, which grows noisome and offensive to me; as a just reward of my folly, whereby, to satisfy my unreasonable desires, I have inconsiderately offended thee (2 Sam. xi. 2—4).

Ver. 6.] I am not able to go upright, being grown crooked beyond measure: the posture of a mourner, who goes, or rather creeps, softly, and bowed down, is mine continually.

Ver. 7.] Fiery biles break out in the parts about my loins: and though there be so many of them that one would think all the ill humours were run thither, yet in the rest of my body, as I said before, there is no part but is out of order.

Ver. 8.] I am exceedingly weak, and worn away with pain and grief; wherewith my heart is so perpetually tormented, that I roar, rather than sigh, and groan and cry under the apparent anguish of it.

Ver. 9.] But why do I complain in this manner, and make such a particular enumeration of my sufferings? thou, Lord, understandest what I want, and what I would have: though I should say never a word, all my miseries, and the sighs they have cost me, are not unknown to thee.

Ver. 10.] Thou seest the great agitation of my mind, which wanders up and down in restless thought, but all to no purpose; for my strength hath forsaken me: the light of my eyes is so weak that I can scarce make any use of them.

Ver. 11.] And if I could, I should see none of those whom one would expect in such a condition to come and comfort me (2 Sam. xv. 31). For I am deserted by those who professed great love to me: yea, they with whom I contracted a friendship and intimate familiarity neglect me: and such whom nature hath inclined to pity and relieve me keep at a distance, and give me no assistance in my affliction.

Ver. 12.] Meanwhile my enemies are very busy, and employ all their subtilty to find a way how to make an end of this miserable life of mine: they discourse of nothing else but what mischief they may do me; and what they cannot do by force, they are continually contriving how to compass by fraud and deceit.

Ver. 13.] I wanted not information how they calumniated me, but was so oppressed with the weight of my other afflictions, and of those sins which have brought them upon me, that I took no notice of it, but lay as if I were deaf, and heard not what they said; or dumb, and could not make an answer.

Ver. 14.] I was as silent, I say, as if I knew nothing of their false accusations, or as if I were not able to confute them.

Ver. 15.] For notwithstanding all my sins, and thy sore displeasure which I feel against them, I have a good hope in thee, O Lord, that thou wilt plead my cause. I leave them therefore to thee, O Lord, who art the righteous judge; and as thou hast in justice afflicted me, so wilt thou, I doubt not, make them know that they have wrongfully charged me.

16 For I said, *Hear me*, lest otherwise they should rejoice over me: when my foot slippeth, they magnify themselves against me.

17 For I am ready to halt, and my sorrow is continually before me.

18 For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin.

19 But mine enemies are lively, and they are

Ver. 16.] I still conclude with myself, that, as bad as I am, and as low as thou hast laid me, thou wilt not think fit to let them insult over me, and brag that they have got the better of me:

Ver. 17.] As they are in danger now to do; for I am so weak every way that I am ready to fall, and have nothing but a sad prospect of ruin before mine eyes.

Ver. 18.] I know, and do confess, that I have deserved it by my iniquity; which when I consider (and nothing else), I have reason to fear the worst that they can do unto me.

Ver. 19.] And what cannot they do, who, while I lie in this weak and miserable condition, are flourishing and prosperous, strong and mighty? and by false rumours make me still more odious to the multitude, and increase their forces against me.

Ver. 20.] With which are joined even those whom

strong; and they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied.

20 They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries; because I follow *the thing that good is*.

21 Forsake me not, O LORD: O my God, be not far from me.

22 Make haste to help me, O LORD my salvation.

I have highly obliged; who do not think it bad enough not to be my friends, but are become my adversaries; for no other reason, that I can find, but because I make a conscience of what I do, and faithfully study and earnestly seek the good of all this kingdom.

Ver. 21.] I humbly therefore betake myself to thee, O LORD, beseeching thee that thou wilt not desert me as they have done. O my God, who hast been very gracious to me on sundry occasions, and seest that I still depend entirely upon thee, let not my sins make thee to abandon me.

Ver. 22.] But rather let my misery, and the imminent danger I am in, move thee speedily to relieve me. Defer no longer, O LORD, whose property it is to deliver those who have none to help them, and trust in thee alone, as I now do, for safety and preservation.

PSALM XXXIX.

To the chief Musician to Jeduthun. A Psalm of David.

1 I SAID, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.

2 I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good; and my sorrow was stirred.

3 My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue,

4 LORD, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am.

PSALM XXXIX.

ARGUMENT.—It is thought by some, that this Psalm (which David delivered afterward to Jeduthun, an excellent musician, and governor of the music in the tabernacle, 1 Chron. xxv.) was made upon the same occasion with the foregoing. And so in part it was; for though there is little reason to think that he was still sick when he composed it (as they imagine), yet his enemies, it is manifest, pressed him sorely. And the consideration of the flourishing condition wherein they were, though very wicked (whilst he, a pious servant of God, was lamentably afflicted), put him into some commotion, notwithstanding his resolution to the contrary; till the thoughts of the shortness of man's life, and consequently of his sufferings, and how easy it was for God to cut off his enemies, composed his spirit again, and made him patient and contented with his present condition.

So that this Psalm seems to me to be rather of the same kind with the thirty-seventh than the thirty-eighth. Only there David gives counsel to others, after God had delivered him from many persecutions, to be patient by his example; but here he himself puts that counsel in practice (perhaps when the rebellion of Absalom renewed his trouble, which is the opinion of Theodoret); though he shows it is very difficult on some occasions not to be very much disturbed at wicked men's prosperity and good men's afflictions, especially when it comes to be a man's own ease under some grievous calamity.

Ver. 1.] It is a very great provocation to anger and discontent to see the wicked still continue prosperous, and to hear how they abuse and calumniate me. But I resolved with myself not to be vexed at it, but rather to take care, as I have exhorted others (Psalm xxxvii.) to be more inoffensive in all my actions; and especially to watch over my tongue, and to lay the strictest restraint upon it, that no indecent complaint, no irreverent discourse about God's providence, no, nor any intemperate speeches against my adversaries, should proceed out of my mouth (2 Sam. xvi. 8. 13).

Ver. 2.] And this purpose I kept for some time so steadfastly, that I spake not a word, either good or bad, but remained, like a dumb man, in perfect silence; being so afraid of breaking out into impatient language against my unjust accusers, that I would not so much as vindicate myself, and clear my innocence. Though the truth is, while I thus denied all vent to my inward grief (which I could not quite suppress), it was the more increased.

Ver. 3.] For though I said nothing, yet I could not choose but have many sad thoughts of the injuries I suffered; and musing long upon them, and upon the impunity of those who committed them, my sorrow grew so great at last, that it could no longer be pent up; but, burning like a fire, with vehement heat in my breast, it broke forth into such expressions as these:

Ver. 4.] Lord, I do not murmur nor repine at my sufferings: but that I may be able to bear them still patiently, make me sensible, I humbly beseech thee, how short this frail life is, and how soon it will have

5 Behold, thou hast made my days as a handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah.

6 Surely every man walketh in a vain show: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.

7 And now, LORD, what wait I for? my hope is in thee.

8 Deliver me from all my transgressions: make me not the reproach of the foolish.

9 I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it.

an end; that, duly considering this, I may be the less concerned about the miseries I endure, which will end together with it.

Ver. 5.] And it is strange I should forget it, seeing it is so apparent thou hast circumscribed my days within a very narrow compass, and that, compared with thy eternal duration, they are just nothing. Besides, there is no man so strong, so firm, but he may die in an instant (as my enemies may do), in the height of his prosperity, and most flourishing condition: for he never so settled as he thinks in his greatness, it is certain he is mere emptiness and vanity.

Ver. 6.] What an imaginary thing then is the life of man! who promises himself mighty matters, but hath no more than the image and shadow of them in his brain; for on a sudden he himself vanishes, and is gone: yet for these he makes a lamentable bustle and stir, whereby, if he get anything, alas! it is to very small purpose; for after all the pains he hath taken to heap up wealth, he hath no certainty whether he shall live to enjoy it; no, nor whether his son or his kindred (for perhaps a stranger, nay, his enemy) shall possess it.

Ver. 7.] And therefore I am resolved, O Lord, with thy gracious assistance, not to trouble myself so much as I have done about these vain and uncertain things: for what is there even in a kingdom, that I should desire and expect it impatiently, which may so soon be lost again! I have done with all these empty hopes, and content myself with this alone; that thou wilt not forsake me, but be my gracious God, and choose what is best for me.

Ver. 8.] And first, I hope thou wilt forgive me all those sins, which have justly deserved these heavy punishments; and then show me so much favour, that wicked men, who are so foolish, that they understand not thy meaning in these afflictions which have befallen me, but imagine thou hast cast me off, may not make me their laughing-stock, nor mock

10 Remove thy stroke away from me: I am consumed by the blow of thy hand.

11 When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth: surely every man is vanity. Selah.

12 Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears: for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.

13 O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.

at my reliance on thee, and patient submission to thee.

Ver. 9.] For I did not complain, but silently endure their insolent and scurrilous language, together with all my other sufferings; reverencing thy justice, by whom everything is ordered (2 Sam. xvi. 10), and this they interpreted to be yielding the cause, and justifying their proceedings against me.

Ver. 10.] May it please thee, therefore, who hath inflicted sore judgments on me, at length to remove them: put a speedy end to them (if thou intendest to confute their foolish reproaches); because I cannot long subsist under such a burden, as hath already taken away all my strength from me.

Ver. 11.] And, indeed, who is able to contend with thee, if thou wilt not graciously remit the punishment we deserve? For when thou chastisest man (in any of those ways whereby thou hast threatened to rebuke his extravagance), his wealth, his power, and whatsoever else he hath that is valuable, moulders away like a garment that is moth-eaten: and it is no wonder; for the greatest of men, as well as the meanest, are but mere vanity.

Ver. 12.] But let even this move thee, O Lord, to grant my petition, which I make for pardon and release from this chastisement. Because I am so frail (as all my forefathers were), and our time here is so very short, that I am more like a stranger and sojourner in this country, than an inhabitant or lord of it (as I lately thought myself); therefore grant my earnest request: and when I say nothing, but silently submit to thy correction, let my tears speak for me, and prevail with thee for some mercy.

Ver. 13.] Forbear me, I beseech thee, and do not proceed thus to afflict me: but repair the decays that are in my strength, and let the very few days I have to live be more peaceable; that, free from the disturbance my enemies give me, I may do thee some small service before I leave the world, and have nothing to do in it any more.

PSALM XL.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

1 I WAITED patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.

2 He brought me up also out of a horrible

PSALM XL.

ARGUMENT.—A Psalm of David, directed to the chief master of music, for the use of the tabernacle.

Wherein he thankfully acknowledges God's goodness to him in delivering him from some great danger (it is not certain what: but may be applied either to the distress he was reduced into by his

pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.

3 And he hath put a new song in my mouth,

enemies, as we read in the Psalm foregoing; or to the sickness God had inflicted on him: or to both, mentioned Ps. xxxviii.): and then declares his resolution to serve God faithfully and cheerfully, in such words as may be better applied to Christ's readiness to do the will of God, though it were by dying for us.

even praise unto our God : many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.

4 Blessed is that man that maketh the Lord his trust, and respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.

5 Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward : they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee : if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.

6 Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire ; mine ears hast thou opened : burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.

7 Then said I, Lo, I come : in the volume of the book it is written of me,

8 I delight to do thy will, O my God : yea, thy law is within my heart.

But it seems this deliverance was not so complete, but that still he was infested with many enemies ; and therefore, in the latter part of this Psalm, he commends himself still to God's merciful providence : beseeching him to finish what he had begun, by continuing to be his deliverer.

Ver. 1.] It is good, I see, to persevere in prayer, and with constancy and patience to wait upon the Lord ; for though he hath made me expect very long, yet at last he hath been graciously pleased to condescend unto me, and to grant my desire.

Ver. 2.] For when I was in the greatest distress, and no more able to help myself than a man who is fallen into a very deep pit, where he sticks fast also in the stiffest clay ; he not only delivered me from that present danger, which was very dreadful ; but brought me into a place of safety, and withal confirmed me in it, that I might not fall again into the like extremity :

Ver. 3.] But have liberty in quiet and peace to meditate his praises, and to indite a new song in honour of our God ; who hath, to all other benefits, added this late wonderful preservation : which shall excite many others, when they duly consider it, to join together with me in his worship and service : and patiently to depend upon him, and hope in his mercy, as I have done.

Ver. 4.] And happy is that man, notwithstanding all the troubles he may endure, who reposes his confidence in the Lord alone : and neither envies the success of insolent and deceitful men ; nor is tempted thereby to imitate them in their pride, and in their perfidiousness.

Ver. 5.] Many are the benefits, O mighty Lord, and my most gracious God, which thou hast bestowed upon such faithful servants ; for whom thou hast done wonders, and still designest great and many kindnesses, which cannot be comprehended, much less expressed, by our weakness. Whensoever I attempt to make thee some acknowledgment for such inestimable favours, I find it is beyond my power so much as to tell the number of them.

Ver. 6.] There are no peace-offerings (whereby we are wont to testify our thankfulness for thy mercies), nor any oblations, which attend upon them that are worthy to be presented unto thee ; or are a fit expression of our gratitude for so many, and so great, benefits as I have received from thee. A ready and constant obedience to thee, in thy faithful service, is far more acceptable ; to which, as I am by nature tied, and thou hast by thy mercies strongly engaged

9 I have preached righteousness in the great congregation : lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest.

10 I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart ; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation : I have not concealed thy loving-kindness and thy truth from the great congregation.

11 Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O Lord : let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me.

12 For innumerable evils have compassed me about : mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up ; they are more than the hairs of my head : therefore my heart faileth me.

13 Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me : O Lord, make haste to help me.

me, so I do freely consent, and cheerfully devote myself (as the Lord Christ hereafter will do entirely) : if I should add all other kinds of sacrifice, whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin, I see of how little value they are with thee.

Ver. 7.] And therefore, when I thought what thou mightest justly expect from me, after this great deliverance, immediately I said (as if I had heard thee calling upon me, to do thee some extraordinary service), Behold, I come to make an offering of myself unto thee (as the Lord Christ will do, even of his very blood). For so the book of the law requires (wherein this sacrifice of Christ is more plainly described) :

Ver. 8.] That I should do what is pleasing and acceptable to thee, O my God (as the Lord Christ will do more perfectly), though it be never so difficult and troublesome to me : and so I will most gladly, with all my soul : for there thy law is written, and not only in my book (Dent. xvii. 18, 19).

Ver. 9.] And as an earnest of it, I have already proclaimed to all thy people, in their full assemblies, what great obligations I have unto thee : behold, O Lord, I appeal to thee, who canst not be deceived how forward I have been to offer to thee, on all occasions, this public sacrifice of praise, for all thy benefits bestowed upon me.

Ver. 10.] I have not thought it sufficient to meditate alone by myself upon thy loving-kindness, which hath mightily affected my heart ; but I have made known to others how faithfully thou hast performed thy promises in the wonderful deliverance thou hast lately given me : this singular kindness and fidelity I have openly published to all thy people, in their most frequent assemblies, at the solemn festivals.

Ver. 11.] Be thou pleased, O mighty Lord, as readily, openly, and abundantly, to express thy tender mercy towards me : let that loving-kindness and faithfulness, which I have so much magnified, be ever seen in my continued preservation and deliverance from all future dangers.

Ver. 12.] For I am not yet so completely happy, but that I see mine enemies are so busy in contriving more mischief against me, that dangers without number surround me. And indeed my sins are so many, that it is but just I should feel the fruit of them in multiplied punishments ; which have suddenly seized on me, and grown to such a number, that, as I may sooner tell how many hairs I have on my head, than how many troubles I suffer, so I am ready to faint under the burden of them :

Ver. 13.] Till I think of thee, O Lord, who, I hope,

14 Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my soul to destroy it; let them be driven backward and put to shame that wish me evil.

15 Let them be desolate for a reward of their shame that say unto me, Aha, aha.

will be still pleased to deliver me; yea, thou hast been so very good to me, that I take the humble boldness to beseech thee, O Lord, to deliver me speedily.

Ver. 14.] Let them all be alike most shamefully disappointed, that restlessly endeavour to take away my life: defeat them, and put them to flight, with open disgrace, whoever they be that study to do me any mischief.

Ver. 15.] Let utter desolation be the recompense of all their shameful deeds, whereby they thought to have exposed me to shame: when they insulted over me, and made a mock both of my affliction and of my trust in thee.

16 Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: let such as love thy salvation say continually, The Lord be magnified.

17 But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God.

Ver. 16.] But let all those that depend on thee alone, and seek for safety by no other means but those which thou allowest, have perpetual cause to rejoice in thee exceedingly: let such as expect and delight to see thee appear for the deliverance of thy people, never cease to say, The Lord be praised: let the glory of his wonderful works be everywhere published and extolled.

Ver. 17.] As for myself, this is my never-failing comfort, though I am stripped of all, and quite destitute of human help, yet the Lord takes care of me, and consults my good: and it is sufficient, that thou Lord art my God, on whom I depend for relief and deliverance; O delay not to send it to me.

PSALM XLI.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

1 BLESSED is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.

2 The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies.

3 The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed

of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.

4 I said, Lord, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee.

5 Mine enemies speak evil of me, When shall he die, and his name perish?

6 And if he come to see me, he speaketh

PSALM XLI.

ARGUMENT.—Though some will have this Psalm to have been composed by David, and delivered to the chief master of music, only upon occasion of that great strait, into which he was brought by the rebellion of his son Absalom; yet it is the more common opinion, and seems more probable, that he had been also lately very sick. And then finding, by sad experience, what an aggravation it was of his affliction, to see his enemies so barbarous as to rejoice at it, and with his death, nay, his friends, especially some one particular friend (who was a type of the traitor Judas), not only to take no pity on him, but prove false and perfidious to him; he, in the first place, highly commends and blesses that temper of mind which inclines men to be pitiful and compassionate to those that are sick, and assures such persons that they shall feel the happy fruits of it; and then complains most heavily of their inhumanity, who insulted over him in his calamity, and with reproachful words and vile calumnies, exasperated the grief of his mind. On which he hoped God, who loves merciful men, would take compassion, and put him into a condition to chastise their insolence.

Ver. 1.] Happy is that tender-hearted man, who, prudently considering it may be his own condition, doth not despise, but visit the sick, especially such as are poor, and takes care to comfort and relieve them. The Lord will requite his kindness, and send him the like succour and relief when he falls into any danger.

Ver. 2.] In sickly times, or other public calamity, the Lord will preserve his life; and more than that, will make him live in prosperity upon the earth;

which when the envy and hatred of his enemies endeavour to destroy, the Lord will disappoint them, and not suffer them to have their will on him.

Ver. 3.] Or if any sickness (as no man can expect always to be in health) bring him into such a languishing condition, that he cannot help himself, the Lord will support him, and give him patience: then thou wilt remarkably requite his officious care about the sick (whose bed he was wont to turn and smooth for his softer repose), by giving him ease and refreshment during his weakness, till thou change it again into health and strength.

Ver. 4.] In confidence of this, I myself, when I was sick, addressed my prayer unto the Lord, and implored his mercy, saying, Take pity upon me (who have not been negligent in this duty, Ps. xxxv. 13, 14), and do not deal in strict justice with me; but, though I have been a grievous offender, and so deserved a heavier stroke, graciously pardon all that I have done amiss, and restore me again to my former health.

Ver. 5.] I am the fitter object of thy compassion, because my enemies have none at all; but, to the affliction which thou hast laid upon me, add their defamations, and imprecate more evils to befall me: for nothing will satisfy them but my death; which they impatiently long to see, and hope to bury my reputation together with me.

Ver. 6.] If any of them, indeed, come to see me, he seems to be sorry for me, and condoles with me; but there is nothing but fraud and deceit under these fair words, which he bestows upon me: for all the time that he either counsels or comforts me, or makes any promises of what he will do for me, he is hatching some mischief in his heart against me, from what he can gather out of my words, or actions, or disease: and as soon as he is out of my doors, he spreads

vanity: his heart gathereth iniquity to itself; *when he goeth abroad he telleth it.*

7 All that hate me whisper together against me: against me do they devise my hurt.

8 An evil disease, *say they*, cleaveth fast unto him: and *now* that he lieth he shall rise up no more.

9 Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up *his heel* against me.

it abroad among his companions, to increase their hatred, or their contempt of me:

Ver. 7.] Which discovers itself in their private assemblies, where they secretly confer together how to undo me: they have no other business there, but to contrive what use they shall make of his information for my ruin.

Ver. 8.] This is the time, *say they*; for now God hath met with him, and punished his heinous sins with a grievous disease; which sticks as fast to him as our reports (which the people believe, and he will never be able to confute), and hath laid him so low, that he cannot possibly recover.

Ver. 9.] And, which is still more afflictive, the man with whom I never had any quarrel, but rather used as a friend; he in whom I reposed the greatest confidence (2 Sam. xvi. 23), who was one of my family, and was maintained by my service, hath, in a brutish manner, not only forsaken me, but (like a horse that kicks at him that feeds him) contemptuously lifted up himself against me.

Ver. 10.] But all this doth not discourage me when I think of thy mercy, O Lord: which as I most humbly implore, so thou art wont to show to those that are merciful. I am not so low (ver. 8), but, contrary to their expectation, thou art able

10 But thou, O LORD, be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them.

11 By this I know that thou favourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.

12 And as for me, thou upholdest me in mine integrity, and settest me before thy face for ever.

13 Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting. Amen, and Amen.

to raise me up, and restore me to my throne, from whence they have driven me; and then I shall punish them, according as my office and their wickedness require.

Ver. 11.] And truly I take this to be an argument of thy kind intentions towards me, that hitherto thou hast marvellously preserved me, both in this sickness and in all other danger; so that my enemy hath missed the triumph he hoped for in my ruin.

Ver. 12.] The triumph belongs to me, who thankfully acknowledge that thou hast supported me, and defended my innocence: thou hast taken such a special care of me, that I hope I shall serve thee all my days, without interruption, in that office thou hast committed to me.

Ver. 13.] For which and all other his benefits, let the great Lord of all the world, the God of Israel, whom he hath chosen for his own peculiar people, be most heartily blessed and praised; let him be blessed throughout all generations, as long as the world shall last, and unto all eternity: let him be blessed; let him be blessed (again and again I repeat it with most fervent affection); and let all his people concur with me in these desires, and with one consent accompany me with their joyful acclamations, saying, The Lord be praised, the Lord be praised.

PART II.

PSALM XLII.

To the chief Musician. Maschil. For the sons of Korah.

1 As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.

PSALM XLII.

ARGUMENT.—Here begins the second of the five books of Psalms, according to the Hebrew division. All those of the former book, except four, have the name of David prefixed to them, as the author of them; and so were put together, by him that collected them, into one volume. But in this second book, the first part of it consists of Psalms entitled *to the sons of Korah*; as several learned men understand the inscriptions; who imagine that some holy men among them composed these Psalms, in the time of the captivity. But I shall follow our English translation, and take this Psalm (as the LXX. and the Vulgar Latin do) to be directed to the sons of Korah, to be set or sung by them, under the chief master of music in the tabernacle. And then there is little question to be made, but David indited

2 My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?

this and some of the Psalms which have this title; as it is certain he did most, if not all, of those that are contained in the latter part of this second book, from Psalm the fiftieth to the end of the seventy-second. And this present Psalm, with that which follows, seems to have been penned, either when he was under the persecution of Saul, or (which is more probable) when he was driven again from the house of God by Absalom. Which sad condition he bewails: with a great mixture of grief for his banishment from those sweet enjoyments he had there, and of hope to be restored to them again.

This Psalm is the second of those thirteen which are called *Maschil* (see Ps. xxxii.); by some here taken to be an epithet of the master of music, who taught or instructed the sons of Korah very skillfully.

3 My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?

4 When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with the multitude that kept holiday.

5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.

6 O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar.

7 Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy

Ver. 1.] The hunted deer doth not long more earnestly, and cry more loudly, for the brooks of water to quench her thirst, than my soul doth for the happy enjoyment of thee, my God, in the public solemnities; from whence I am driven by those that seek my life.

Ver. 2.] It is not my throne of which I am so desirous, as the place where thou my God dwellest; who art the eternal spring of life and comfort, which no other God can communicate. O how vehemently doth my soul long for thee; and how tedious doth the time of my banishment from thee seem! O when shall I see that happy day, wherein I shall be restored to the liberty again of presenting myself before thee in thy tabernacle?

Ver. 3.] There I was wont with great delight to feast with thee; but now my appetite fails me to my daily food: instead of which, my only satisfaction is in tears; to which I have wholly abandoned myself. For what can be more grievous than to hear them say, I am abandoned by thee (2 Sam. xvi. 7, 8)? and to be continually reproached and derided with this taunting question, What is become of thy God, of whose favour thou wast wont to boast?

Ver. 4.] O what a sad thought is it, to call to mind those pleasant days which are past and gone! particularly when I brought the ark to thy dwelling-place, with the joyful shout of all thy people; who in a pompous manner accompanied me with their praises and thanksgivings at that festival solemnity (1 Chron. xv. 25, 28). It even breaks my heart with grief to remember this thing, and all the other sacred times, when before this banishment we met together at thy house, to worship and acknowledge thee for all thy benefits.

Ver. 5.] And why may I not expect the like again? It is true, my soul, these are very sad and melancholy reflections; but must I therefore be utterly dejected? Is there any cause that anxiety of mind should make thee so tumultuous, as if all hopes of this felicity were lost forever? Trust in God, and patiently wait upon him; for the time will come when I shall go to his house, and praise him still for his favour towards me; in delivering me from this as well as all my former afflictions.

Ver. 6.] O my most gracious God, thou seest how I hide myself for it; and yet I am overcome with grief, and should be quite oppressed, while I am

waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.

8 Yet the Lord will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life.

9 I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

10 As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?

11 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

forced to hide myself in this wilderness beyond Jordan (2 Sam. xvii. 22, 29), and wander up and down in the solitary mountains, far distant from thy tabernacle, did I not comfort myself with the thoughts of thy goodness and power; whom I have served there.

Ver. 7.] I am fallen into a bottomless depth of miseries; which follow one upon another, as if the former invited the next to succeed it; they gush in upon me by thy appointment with such violence, as spouts of water do out of a cloud. I am tossed like one upon a tempestuous sea, where the waves rage and swell so high, that every billow threatens to overwhelm and bury me in the deep.

Ver. 8.] Yet I do not distrust the loving-kindness of the Lord, by whose authority this tempest shall be appeased. He will in much mercy order and dispose things so, that night and day I shall have perpetual cause to sing his praise; and therefore I will commend myself to him continually, who is the author of my life, and beseech him to preserve it.

Ver. 9.] I will take the boldness also to expostulate with him, saying, O God, I have always made thee my refuge; and thought myself safer under thy protection, than if I had been in the strongest fortress: why then dost thou delay thy help, as if thou tookest no farther care of me? why do I still continue in that mournful condition wherein I left Jerusalem (2 Sam. xv. 30), and have no relief from this grievous oppression of the enemy?

Ver. 10.] O how cutting are their reproaches! how deeply do they wound my soul! It is like a stab to the very heart, to hear them say, in their daily jeers, What is become of thy God, in whom thou trustedst? why doth he make no more haste to send thee deliverance?

Ver. 11.] But it better becomes me to expostulate with myself, than with thy majesty. And therefore I ask myself again; O my soul, why art thou thus sadly afflicted? why do these things so miserably torment thee, and disturb thy quiet? since there is hope in God, that I am not utterly banished from his presence; but shall return to his house again to praise him: on whom I fix my eyes as my only saviour (for hitherto he hath been my most gracious God), who will pull off my mourning apparel; and make joy and gladness take place of sorrow and sadness in my countenance.

PSALM XLIII.

1 JUDGE me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation: O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.

2 For thou art the God of my strength; why dost thou cast me off? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

3 O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me

PSALM XLIII.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm, in all probability, was composed by the same author with the former (and accordingly the LXX. expressly ascribe it to David); and upon the same occasion, when he was driven by Absalom (who drew the whole kingdom into his conspiracy, 2 Sam. xv. 10. 13, &c.), from the house of God, which he loved more than his own palace. Thither, therefore, he desires to be restored, and expresses his hope of it, in the very same words that he did in the Psalm foregoing.

Ver. 1.] O God, the supreme judge of the whole world, I appeal to thee, in this contest between me and a seditious people; who, void of piety and humanity, are risen up in rebellion against me: beseeching thee to vindicate my innocence, and defend me from their violence. O deliver me from that deceitful man, who pretended devotion, when he went to make an insurrection (2 Sam. xv. 7. 10), deliver me from the crafty counsel which Ahithophel gives him; and from the open force, whereby he seeks injuriously to take away my life (2 Sam. xvii. 1, 2).

Ver. 2.] For I have none to flee unto for safety and protection, but thee alone; who hast ever hitherto been my mighty deliverer, and art now my only support: and therefore I hope thou wilt make haste to help me; because it puts me into the sorest agonies to see myself for the present so deserted by thee, that I can do nothing but bewail the forlorn condition and

unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.

4 Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God.

5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

the miserable straits into which the enemy hath reduced me (see Ps. xlii. 9).

Ver. 3.] I am beset with mighty armies, and have nothing to oppose to them but thy favour and thy faithfulness: O send forth the blessed effects of them, and, according to thy promises to those that depend on thee, let thy almighty power, in much mercy, lead and conduct me: let it go along with me, and give me the victory over them; and bring me back again unto thy holy mountain, where thou hast fixed thy dwelling-place.

Ver. 4.] Then will I faithfully perform my promises unto thee; and the first thing I do, shall be to go to thy altar, with sacrifices of thanksgiving to thee, the author of my joy and triumph: which shall not cease with that public service; but when I am alone, entertaining myself with my harp, I will praise thy mercy, and faithfulness, and power, O God, my righteous judge; who graciously protectest the innocent, and defendest those that cannot right themselves.

Ver. 5.] I doubt not of it; and therefore be no longer dejected, O my soul: why shouldst thou give thyself any farther disquiet, and trouble thyself with tumultuous thoughts? Hope in God to see better days; and believe the enemy hath not so blocked up the way to his tabernacle, but God will open it again, and give me liberty to go and sing praises there unto him; from whom alone as I expect deliverance, so he (who hath always been my most gracious God) will turn my mourning into joy, and let my countenance be dejected no more.

PSALM XLIV.

To the chief Musician, for the sons of Korah. Maschil.

1 We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old.

PSALM XLIV.

ARGUMENT.—This is the third of those Psalms called *maschil* (see Ps. xxxii.), and the second of those directed to the sons of Korah (see Ps. xlii.), but doth not seem to have been composed by David, as the two foregoing were: for in his days they were not oppressed by foreign enemies, as the Psalmist here complains, in the name of the whole church, they were to such a degree, that some of them were made slaves, others killed, and all of them became a reproach. Yet I do not think it was composed in the captivity of Babylon (much less in the persecution by Antiochus, as Theodor thinks, when these inspirations were ceased), but before that time, though long after David's days, while their kingdom was as yet standing, and they had some

2 How thou didst drive out the heathen with thy hand, and plantedst them; how thou didst afflict the people, and cast them out.

forces remaining, though God did not bless them with success (ver. 9).

And if we will fix upon any particular time, and not content ourselves to know, in general, that it was penned when the whole nation was in great distress, I can find none so likely as the days of Hezekiah, who was a pious reformer of that church, and had restored the divine service, according to the law of Moses, and the ordinances of David (2 Chron. xxx. 3, 4. 13. 25); and taken care the priests and Levites should not only do their duty, but have their tithes paid them punctually, &c. (3 Chron. xxx. xxxi.), and yet, notwithstanding, was invaded by the king of Assyria. Who did not merely make some inroads upon them, and carry away a great many people (as had been done before his time, 2 Chron. xxix. 9), out took all the fenced cities, and

3 For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them.

4 Thou art my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob.

5 Through thee will we push down our enemies: through thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us.

6 For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me.

7 But thou hast saved us from our enemies, and hast put them to shame that hated us.

came before Jerusalem with a great army (2 Kings xviii. 13. 17. Isa. xxxvi. 1). In this strait, that good king (or some other divine person, 2 Chron. xxix. 25), indited this Psalm; wherein he remembers what God had done for their ancestors; and, considering he was still their king, thought they might have hoped for the like victories, of which they could not but still boast and glory. But, alas, it fell out quite contrary; for when they expected his help, he delivered them up into their enemies' hands, and that when they were the true worshippers of him, and for his sake were slain all the day long. The consideration of which, he hoped, would move God at length to take compassion upon them, and arise for their deliverance.

This is the best account I can give of this Psalm, which I shall follow in my paraphrase. And we need not scruple to think there were psalmodists in Hezekiah's days; for after that we find this gift remained with the prophets. For instance, it is visible in Habakkuk; who composed a prayer after the manner of David's Psalms, as we read in the last chapter of his prophecy: where there are several words, which are to be met withal nowhere but in the book of Psalms; such as *Sigionoth*, *Selah*, and *Niginoth*.

Ver. 1.] We have been certainly informed, O Lord, by our fathers, and we believe what they have told us, not only concerning the wonderful works thou didst in their times, but in the ages long before them; as our ancestors that lived in those days have recorded.

Ver. 2.] How thou didst by thy power expel the seven nations^s out the land of Canaan, and settle in their stead thy people Israel, whom thou didst transplant thither from among the Egyptians; upon whom thou inflictedst the sorest plagues, till they were forced themselves to thrust them out (Exod. vi. 1. xii. 33).

Ver. 3.] This is to be ascribed to thee alone, and not to their strength and valour; such a speedy conquest was not gained by the force of arms, but by thy mighty power and glorious presence; which thou wast pleased to afford them; not because they had obliged thee by their meritorious services (for they were a murmuring and refractory people), but merely out of thy love and good-will towards them.

Ver. 4.] And thou, O God, who didst such astonishing things for them, art still the very same almighty being; whom I honour as my sovereign, my governor, and protector; and humbly beseech thee that thou wilt now in this sore distress vouchsafe to deliver (for, alas! it is not in my power, though thou canst as easily as speak a word deliver) the posterity of those, for whom thou hadst so great a favour.

Ver. 5.] If thou wouldest but appear for us, the

8 In God we boast all the day long, and praise thy name for ever. Selah.

9 But thou hast cast off, and put us to shame; and goest not forth with our armies.

10 Thou makest us to turn back from the enemy: and they which hate us spoil for themselves.

11 Thou hast given us like sheep appointed for meat; and hast scattered us among the heathen.

12 Thou sellest thy people for nought, and dost not increase *thy wealth* by their price.

13 Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and a derision to them that are round about us.

14 Thou makest us a byword among the

most powerful enemies should not be able to stand before us: but (as thy servant Moses foretold, Deut. xxxiii. 17. O fulfil that gracious promise!) we should overthrow and trample under foot all that oppose us.

Ver. 6.] It is thou alone must do it, as thou didst for our forefathers, when thou broughtest them into Canaan: for I have not the least confidence (as they slander me, 2 Kings xviii. 20), in my arms; no hope to be delivered from this dreadful invasion by any forces that I can raise:

Ver. 7.] But by thee, O Lord, of whose goodness we ourselves, as well as those before us, have had experience; for thou hast often rescued us from our enemies, and shamefully disappointed those whose hatred armed them against us.

Ver. 8.] In this we glory, and make our boast continually, that we have such a king, such a mighty saviour and deliverer, who hath wrought wonderful things for us, and for our forefathers; this is our only comfort and security, which gives us hope that we shall praise thee for relieving us in this distress, and that all posterity shall praise thy power and goodness.

Ver. 9.] But for the present thou art so far from being our defender, that thou hast exposed us to the will of our enemies: the shame which was wont to fall on them (ver. 7), is now our portion; and thou hast withdrawn that gracious presence (ver. 3) wherewith thou wast wont to conduct and accompany our armies.

Ver. 10.] We have lost the courage wherewith thou didst formerly inspire us, and cannot defend our cities and fortresses: but, instead of pushing down our enemies (ver. 5), are forced to flee before them, and shamefully leave our camp to be a spoil to them that hate us.

Ver. 11.] And some of us they kill in the pursuit without any mercy, like sheep appointed for the shambles: others they carry captive, and disperse them among strange people (2 Chron. xxix. 9).

Ver. 12.] Where being disowned by thee, they are become so contemptible, that they are sold as the vilest slaves, who are nothing worth: thou hast parted with them very easily, and their lords look upon them as unprofitable wretches; by whose sale they do not enrich themselves, but only seek to be rid of a useless burden.

Ver. 13.] This hath made us that remain to be so cheap in the eyes of all our neighbours, who do not only despise, but reproach and vilify us; for we are grown ridiculous to them that are round about us, and they make a scoff of us.

Ver. 14.] Thou hast brought upon us the curse pronounced by thy servant Moses, (Deut. xxviii. 37), for we are become a by-word among the heathen; who, when they would express the wretchedness of any person, say, he is viler or more miserable than a Jew; and when they say nothing they signify, by the scorn-

heathen, a shaking of the head among the people.

15 My confusion is continually before me, and the shame of my face hath covered me.

16 For the voice of him that reproacheth and blasphemeth; by reason of the enemy and avenger.

17 All this is come upon us; yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant.

18 Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way;

19 Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death.

ful motion of their heads, their contempt and derision of us.

Ver. 15.] I cannot open my eyes but the tokens of our disgrace present themselves before me; which hath made me so ashamed, that, to hide it, I do not willingly show my face.

Ver. 16.] For I can hear nothing neither but reproachful words against us, and blasphemous words against thee (2 Kings xix. 3. 23), from that insolent enemy, whose very countenance is full of disdain and scorn, and threatens farther mischief to us.

Ver. 17.] This great heap of calamities is fallen upon us, and certainly we have deserved them all: though this comfort is still remaining, that we are not so wicked as to be moved by all this to desert thee, and violate that covenant whereby we are engaged to worship thee alone.

Ver. 18.] We adhere still to thy religion, though both it and we be thus vilified and persecuted (2 Kings xviii. 29), we have such a hearty affection to it, that we have not hitherto proved apostates from it.

Ver. 19.] No, though thou hast so shattered and broken in pieces all our forces, that we are in the most dismal and forlorn condition: little short of utter destruction.

Ver. 20.] Thou knowest the truth of this: for if here have been so much as a design in our hearts to revolt from thee; or we have made prayers when we spread out our hands towards heaven unto any other god, whose worshippers we saw so prosperous;

Ver. 21.] How is it possible for us to conceal it from thee? or how should we escape thy vengeance for it, who art privy to the most secret motions that are in our souls?

20 If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god;

21 Shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.

22 Yea, for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.

23 Awake, why sleepest thou, O LORD? arise, cast us not off for ever.

24 Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and forgettest our affliction and our oppression?

25 For our soul is bowed down to the dust: our belly cleaveth unto the earth.

26 Arise for our help, and redeem us for thy mercies' sake.

Ver. 22.] And that which thou seest in secret, our sufferings testify openly to all others: for our constancy to thee exposes us to continual slaughters; we prefer a shameful death before prosperous impiety; and, rather than sacrifice to any other god, choose to fall ourselves a sacrifice to thee.

Ver. 23.] And therefore we hope at last thou wilt take notice of our fidelity; and no longer seem to neglect those that have not deserted thee. Give us leave, O God, to beg this of thee most earnestly, and to ask why thou dost not send relief to thy afflicted servants. Make no farther delay; but, though for our sins we have been exposed to the cruel contempt of our enemies (ver. 9), own us now at length for thy people: and show that we are not such objects as they account us.

Ver. 24.] It is very grievous to us to think that they look upon us as deserted by thee; which provokes us to expostulate with thee, and to demand (in an humble manner) wherefore is it that thou givest us no countenance; nor expressest the least regard to our intolerable affliction, wherewith we are oppressed?

Ver. 25.] For the load of it is so great that it hath sunk us into the most dejected condition: wherein we lie dismayed, as men without life and soul, having no strength at all to help ourselves.

Ver. 26.] Therefore do thou appear for our deliverance, now that we can neither do any thing for ourselves, nor deserve anything of thee: let not thy goodness, which hath been so famed, suffer together with us; but, for the sake of that which we and our fathers have so often experimented, rescue us from our miseries.

PSALM XLV.

To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim, for the sons of Korah. Maschil. A song of loves.

I My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.

PSALM XLV.

ARGUMENT.—The foregoing Psalm is not more sad and mournful, than this (as Theodoret observes) is joyful and comfortable: promising the most glorious things to them. The author of it is not named: but it was delivered, as the former, to the master of music, for the use of God's service in the tabernacle; to be sung upon *Shoshannim* (by which we may understand all those instruments that had six strings) by the sons of Korah, to the known tune of *Maschil* (see Ps. xxxii.). And being a *Song of*

2 Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.

loves, as the title tells us (alluding plainly to the name of Jedidiah, given to Solomon by Nathan the prophet, 2 Sam. xii. 25), most interpreters conclude it was composed upon the occasion, at least, of Solomon's marriage with Pharaoh's daughter: who, it is most probable, was a proselyte to the Jewish religion.

Some few, indeed, will not allow so much as this, that there is any respect to Solomon at all in this Psalm, but only to Christ. And the truth is, many of the expressions in it are so magnificent, that they can but in a very poor and low sense be applied to So-

3 Gird thy sword upon *thy* thigh, O *most* mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty.

4 And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness *and* righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.

5 Thine arrows *are* sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; *whereby* the people fall under thee.

6 Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom *is* a right sceptre.

7 Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

8 All thy garments *smell* of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.

9 Kings' daughters *were* among thy honourable women: upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.

10 Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house;

11 So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he *is* thy Lord; and worship thou him.

12 And the daughter of Tyre *shall be there*

lomon and his bride: and some of them scarce at all. Though, on the contrary side, other expressions seem so plainly to belong to him, that they can no other way, but by allegory, be applied to our Saviour. Therefore I believe that I ought not wholly to admit all respect to Solomon and his marriage in my paraphrase; though principally I shall direct the Psalm to Christ. It being so apparent, that no Christian can deny it, that the mind of the prophet, while he was writing some part of this Psalm, was carried quite beyond king Solomon, to the great king, the Lord Christ. Or, at least, he was guided to use words so high, that they proved too big for Solomon: and we must say, as our Saviour doth in another case, *Behold, a greater than Solomon is here.* And so the best of the Jewish interpreters acknowledge.

Ver. 1.] My heart is full of a festival song, which I have meditated and am ready to utter in praise of king Solomon; who is but a shadow of that great king which we expect: in honour of whom chiefly I will recite what I have composed, with such fluency, as shall equal the style of the most skillful writer.

Ver. 2.] Thou, O king, art lovely above all other persons, thy speech is most acceptable and persuasive because the Lord loves thee (2 Sam. xii. 24), and hath therefore promised long blessings to thee; which yet do but faintly represent the truly eternal blessings, which he hath bestowed on that great king, who when he comes it shall be said that he is in favour with God as well as man (Luke ii. ult.); and speaks as never man spake (John vii. 46), so that all wonder at the gracious words which proceed out of his mouth (Luke iv. 22).

Ver. 3.] Put on thy royal ornaments, and the ensigns of thy power, O most mighty prince; and appear like thyself in such splendour and majesty, as may serve for an emblem of that most illustrious power and sovereign authority, wherein the omnipotent Lord of all the world shall show himself among men.

Ver. 4.] And may thy kingdom so prosper every way, in the planting all virtue among thy subjects, and terrifying thy enemies; that it may prove a lively type of the happy government of the Lord Christ: whose kingdom shall prevail over all, when he goes forth like a great conqueror (Rev. xix. 11), not to enslave men's persons, or to spoil them of their goods, but to settle the true faith among them, to make them humble and meek, just and charitable; and for the furtherance of this glorious work, thy mighty power, O Lord, shall instruct thee to do miraculous and amazing things (Luke iv. 36. v. 26).

Ver. 5.] Which shall make thy words pierce, like sharp arrows, into the hearts of all those that oppose thy royal authority; and make the nations of the earth (far more than shall obey king Solomon, though he should reign over many kingdoms, 1 Kings iv. 21), humble themselves, and become subject to thee.

Ver. 6.] O great Lord, the God of king Solomon, and of all those that are called gods in heaven or earth; the judge of the whole world: how weak and tottering are the thrones of all other princes in comparison with thine, which shall never be subverted! It is the glory of king Solomon, that God hath promised his kingdom shall continue many ages (2 Sam. vii. 13.): but thou shalt reign for ever and ever; and of thy kingdom there shall be no end (Luke i. 33), thy laws are so just and so good, thy government so equal and fit, that they shall be subject to no alteration.

Ver. 7.] For thou thyself also immutably lovest all righteousness and goodness (from which other princes may swerve, and so bring their kingdoms to ruin, 1 Kings ix. 4—6), and perfectly hatest all impiety and wickedness: for which cause, God the Father hath highly exalted thee, O God, above all others whom he calls his sons; and conferred on thee such supereminent gifts, as make a joy among thy subjects far exceeding that by whose sound the very earth was rent, when Solomon was anointed king, and preferred above all his brethren (1 Kings i. 39, 40).

Ver. 8.] That, indeed, was a joyful day; and so is this, wherein thou didst appear with great gladness in thy wedding garments, brought out of the stately wardrobes; the odour of which is so fragrant as if they were made of the richest perfumes among us, and yet nothing so grateful as the knowledge of Christ, which shall be spread as a sweet odour in every place, when he goes to espouse a church unto himself (2 Cor. ii. 14—16).

Ver. 9.] Thou wast most honourably attended by many princely virgins, the daughters of kings (though far inferior in their descent to the true disciples of Christ, who are all born of God), and next to thyself was placed the royal bride, in a vesture of the purest gold; as an image of the church of Christ, which shall sit with him in heavenly places (Eph. ii. 6), having the glory of God upon her (Rev. xxi. 9. 11).

Ver. 10.] O royal bride, understand and consider seriously the happiness to which thou art advanced by being married to such a prince, and never think more of the religion of thy country in which thou wast born and bred; but become a true proselyte, and consent to the law of God (as we ourselves and all the world must do to Christ, when he calls us to incline our ears to his heavenly doctrine; and not only renounce all our former rites, but father and mother, and all things else that are dearest to us for his sake, Luke xix. 26. Eph. v. 31, 32).

Ver. 11.] So shalt thou be most beautiful and amiable in the eyes of the king thy husband (as Christ by that means shall present to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, Eph. v. 27), who is now become thy lord: and therefore see thou be subject unto him (as the church must be to Christ, whom God will highly exalt, that at his name every knee shall be bound to bow, and

with a gift; *even* the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour.

13 The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold.

14 She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee.

15 With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: and shall enter into the king's palace.

16 Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom they mayest make princes in all the earth.

17 I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.

every tongue confess that he is the Lord (Phil. ii. 9, 10).

Ver. 12.] The people of Tyre, as rich and as proud as they are, shall come, with their neighbouring countries, and bring thee presents; the most powerful among them shall make suit unto thee for thy friendship (as the kings of the earth shall bring for thy glory and their honour into the church, Rev. xxi. 24).

Ver. 13.] For king Pharaoh's daughter, the wife of our prince, is no less adorned with all excellent qualities of mind, than her body is with rich attire; wherein she now appears in a splendid manner (as the ornaments of those that are born of God in the Christian church shall not be so much the outward adorning of wearing of gold, as the hidden man of the heart, which is in the sight of God of great price, 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4).

Ver. 14.] She shall be brought home unto the king with magnificent pomp, in embroidered raiment; and the virgins, her maids of honour that attend upon her, shall come along with her (as the church being owned by Christ for his spouse in a solemn manner, and being pure and holy, Rev. xix. 7, 8, there shall be many chaste virgins among us, who shall make a part of it, and follow Christ whithersoever he goes, Rev. xiv. 1, 4).

Ver. 5.] They shall express their inward gladness by all the outward tokens of joy, as they go along in

that pomp; and so shall enter into the royal palace (a figure of the church, into which men shall enter with far greater joy, and say, Hallelujah, let us rejoice and be glad, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, Rev. xix. 6, 7; Acts ii. 46).

Ver. 16.] And may this be the happy fruit of this marriage, that instead of thy royal ancestors, in Egypt, whom thou hast forsaken, thou mayest be the mother of children, whom thou mayest make rulers in all the countries which are subject to king Solomon (2 Kings iv. 21, 24). As, instead of the patriarchs, of our descent from whom we are apt to boast, shall be the twelve apostles and their successors, sitting upon thrones, and judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. xix. 28), by whose means the church shall bring forth children unto Christ, whom he shall make kings and priests unto God, and they shall reign upon the earth (Rev. v. 10).

Ver. 17.] By this very song I will make thy name to be mentioned with honour throughout all ages, who shall learn from hence to give thee thy deserved praises as long as the world shall last: and, much more, to propagate the Christian name (propesied of so long before) to the latest posterity, and celebrate their worth with perpetual praises, who forsook all to follow Christ, and rather chose to lose their life than quit his service (Jam. v. 11. Μακαριστοι, "We call them blessed," &c.).

PSALM XLVI.

To the chief Musician, for the sons of Korah. A Song upon Alamoth.

1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

2 Therefore will not we fear, though the earth

be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

3 *Though* the waters thereof roar and be trou-

PSALM XLVI.

ARGUMENT.—It is not known to what time this Psalm belongs (about which there are several conjectures), nor who was the author of it. I shall suppose it to have been made by David, or some of the sons of Korah, after those great victories which he won over several nations, mentioned 2 Sam. viii. 10. For any one may see that it is a pious triumph in God after some remarkable deliverance from very powerful enemies; and there are none we can find in the historical books to whom it can more probably relate than to those there recorded. Of which great victories it was very fit there should be some thankful monument left to posterity, whereby they might be encouraged to hope in God, and not suffer themselves to be dismayed at the sight of the most numerous armies that might be gathered against them, if they adhered faithfully to their duty. And therefore this Psalm was delivered to the master of music, to be sung in the tabernacle upon *Alamoth*; of which mention is made, 1 Chron. xv. 20, and is thought to be either some tune then in common use, or some kind of musical instrument unknown to us, in which young virgins, as some fancy, took

a peculiar delight, and were wont to learn to play upon it; which they make the reason and original of its name.

Ver. 1.] God is the most powerful protector, in whom we may safely confide: he inspires us with courage, and gives us strength to meet our enemies; we were in great danger, but found him exceeding ready to send us help, and give us a safe deliverance when we were sorely distressed.

Ver. 2.] For which cause we will never hereafter be dismayed, but steadfastly hope in God in the midst of the greatest tumults and dangerous commotions: though we should see the most dreadful confusions (such as there are in an earthquake), and all things tumbled upside down, as if the earth and sea were blended together, we will still immovably trust in him.

Ver. 3.] Though the times should prove very tempestuous, and our enemies should storm like the troubled sea; though they should threaten utter destruction to us, and rush upon us with such a violence as its raging waves do (when it is swollen to the greatest height) against the shore; the mountainous cliffs shall sooner shake than we be disturbed,

bled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.

4 *There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most high.*

5 *God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.*

6 *The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted.*

7 *The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.*

Ver. 4.] Our hearts shall be quiet and still, like the river that runs through our city, from whence the inhabitants draw, by trenches, delightful streams to water their gardens. The small forces that guard this place, which make no more noise than those waters (Isa. viii. 6, 7), shall, by the help of the most high God, who in a special manner dwelleth here, be too hard for the greatest armies, which in their number and their boasts imitate the waves of the roaring sea.

Ver. 5.] Let them not think to prevail against him, who, by a singular token of his presence, is in the midst of this city: other mountains may be shaken, but mount Zion is immovable; because God, when there is any danger, will send us seasonable and speedy relief against those that invade us.

Ver. 6.] So we have lately seen, that when many nations combined against us (2 Sam. x. 6), they only showed their rage and fury, but could not hurt us; for they were remarkably overthrown by the power of God, who declared himself against them, and utterly discomfited them; as he did the Philistines, sometimes by thunder and lightning from heaven, 1 Sam. vii. 10 (see Ps. xviii. 13, 14).

Ver. 7.] Why then should we be afraid, since it is apparent the Lord, who commands all the armies of heaven as well as earth, is on our side? That God who preserved our forefather Jacob in all his distresses, and hath made a gracious covenant with his posterity, defends us as in an impregnable fortress, where we need never fear any danger.

Ver. 8.] Draw near all ye that doubt of it, and con-

8 *Come, behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth.*

9 *He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.*

10 *Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.*

11 *The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.*

consider seriously the wonderful victories, which it had been impossible for us to win without the help of God: mark, I beseech you, how many cities we have taken, and what desolation we have made by his assistance in the enemies' country, who thought to have laid us waste (2 Sam. viii. 1, 2; 1 Chron. xviii. 1).

Ver. 9.] It is he that hath given us this peace which we now enjoy, by disenabling all the people of Canaan and the neighbouring nations to make any wars upon us: he hath broken their bows, and cut their spears in pieces, and cast their chariots, wherein they trusted, into the fire (2 Sam. vii. 4).

Ver. 10.] Showing them as plainly by these glorious victories how vain it is to oppose him, as if he had called unto them by a voice from heaven, saying, Lay down your arms, and no longer molest my people; know that I am the supreme governor of all the world, who have defeated all your designs, and destroyed your forces: and my power is not confined to one country, but shall be magnified every where as well as here, by confounding all those that will not desist from their hostile opposition to my will and pleasure.

Ver. 11.] This is our comfort and support; in this we continue still to glory, and say as we did before, We will not fear the most potent enemies, since the Lord, who commands all the host of heaven and earth, is on our side: he preserved our forefather Jacob in all his distresses, and made a gracious covenant with him to be the God of his posterity; in him we are safe, as in an impregnable fortress, where no danger can approach us.

PSALM XLVII.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm for the sons of Korah.

O CLAP YOUR hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph.

2 *For the LORD most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth.*

PSALM XLVII.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm is thought by some to have been composed by David (though his name be not in the title), when he translated the ark (which was the token of the divine presence with them) either from Kirjath-jearim, with the most solemn pomp and all sorts of music (2 Sam. vi. 5), or from the house of Obed-edom unto mount Zion (ver. 14, 15). Others think it was composed by some of the sons of Korah, when the ark was again translated by Solomon with the like rejoicing (2 Chron. v. 2, 12, 13), from mount Zion to the house which he had built for it upon the neighbouring mountain. And there may be a third conjecture allowed, that it was made after some great victory which God had given them over their enemies, and sung as they followed the ark back to its dwelling-place, from whence it had been carried before them to the battle. There is no doubt but one or other of these

triumphs gave occasion to it; and the ark being a figure of Christ, as that mountain was of the heavens, the translation or carrying back of the ark thither may be looked upon as a figure of Christ's ascension (after he had dwelt here awhile in a meaner place, and conquered death) unto the high and holy place, where he is now at God's right hand in the heavens. And with relation to this alone the ancient fathers expound the Psalm, which may easily be applied in the mystical sense unto that business.

Ver. 1.] O be joyful all ye people, who are now assembled at this festival; let your hearts overflow with joy, and express how exceeding glad they are by clapping your hands, and lifting up your voices, and shouting after a triumphant manner, in honour of the great God who dwells among us.

Ver. 2.] For his majesty is most sublime, his dominion absolute, his power dreadful; being the sove-

3 He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet.

4 He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved. Selah.

5 God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.

6 Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises.

reign Lord of the whole world, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords:

Ver. 3.] By whom the people of these countries, though warlike and strong, were anciently subdued; and other nations since have been made our subjects.

Ver. 4.] He who is the supreme disposer of all things hath of his mere good will chosen this good land to be our inheritance, and therein chosen a place for his own dwelling; which is an honour wherein we excel all other people, and a most singular token of his love towards us.

Ver. 5.] God is gone up, by the special token of his presence, into that holy place, with shouts of joy and praise: the Lord is gone up in a triumphant pomp, with the sound of the trumpet and all other instruments of music (2 Sam. vi. 5, 15).

Ver. 6.] Let us never cease to sing his praises, who hath chosen us to be his people; let it be our constant employment to praise our king, who hath subdued the nations to us: O sing praises to him, sing

7 For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with understanding.

8 God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.

9 The princes of the people are gathered together, *even* the people of the God of Abraham: for the shields of the earth *belong* unto God: he is greatly exalted.

praises to him: it cannot be too oft repeated, that he alone is to be praised.

Ver. 7.] For our king is the sovereign of all the nations upon earth; sing ye praises therefore skilfully to his most excellent majesty: it is your wisdom to praise him in the best manner you are able, who alone is wise enough to govern all the world.

Ver. 8.] He hath made those heathens who dwelt in Zion to feel his power, and submit themselves unto him (2 Sam. v. 7). And there he hath seated himself upon the ark of his presence as on his holy throne.

Ver. 9.] Before which the heads of the tribes, with all the people that worship him, who promised to give this country unto Abraham, are assembled together at their solemn feasts, without any fear of invasion from their foreign neighbours: for God (when to attend his service they have left their own houses unguarded) hath undertaken their protection (Exod. xxxiv. 23, 25), and he is infinitely superior to all other gods which pretend to be defenders of the earth.

PSALM XLVIII.

A Song and Psalm for the sons of Korah.

1 GREAT is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness.

2 Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.

3 God is known in her palaces for a refuge.

4 For, lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together.

5 They saw it, and so they marvelled; they were troubled, and hasted away.

PSALM XLVIII.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm seems to have been composed after the repulse of some army which invaded them, and intended to have destroyed Jerusalem. If all things else would agree, it might not unfitly be applied to the defeating of Sennacherib the king of Assyria's army, which actually begirt that city; but by a sudden pestilence, which in one night killed a vast number, was forced to quit the siege and retreat with shame (2 Kings xviii. 19). But the fourth verse of this Psalm speaks of a combination of kings, who had joined their forces together upon this design: which makes it most applicable, in my judgment, to that history in 2 Chron. xx. where we read (ver. 1, 2, 10) that Moab, and Ammon, and they of mount Seir, came against Jehoshaphat, with an intention, I suppose, to fall upon Jerusalem. And though Jehoshaphat went out to oppose them, yet he acknowledges (ver. 12) their multitude was so great that he had no power to resist them, but they might do what they pleased with him: for he knew not which way to turn himself, but only depended upon God, who in a marvellous manner dispersed them, as he told Jehoshaphat he would, without their striking one stroke against them. For which gracious message, sent him by a prophet (ver. 14), the Levites, and among others those descended from Korah,

immediately praised the Lord beforehand (ver. 19), and after the victory gave solemn thanks before they left the field, in the Valley of Blessing (ver. 26); and then returned to Jerusalem with psalters, and harps, and trumpets, unto the house of the Lord (ver. 28). At which time it is probable this Psalm was sung, and called a *song and psalm*; that is, a psalm of triumph, or of great joy; composed perhaps by some of the sons of Korah. But of a *song and psalm*, see Psalm lxxvii.

Ver. 1.] Great is the majesty and the power of the Lord, who is therefore to be celebrated with the highest praises; and nowhere so much as in his own city, by the inhabitants of Jerusalem, in that mountain which he hath long ago set apart for the place of his worship, and hath now so marvellously defended.

Ver. 2.] And a beautiful place it is which he hath chosen for his habitation, the very situation of mount Zion being most delightful, the pleasantest in all the country, for it lies on the north side of Jerusalem, the city of the great king, the Lord of heaven and earth:

Ver. 3.] Who is the principal glory of that place, as that is of the country: for mount Zion is not so beautiful for its situation, as for his divine presence in that magnificent palace which is built for him there, and makes that city an impregnable fortress.

Ver. 4.] For behold a fresh instance of it; the

6 Fear took hold upon them there, *and* pain, as of a woman in travail.

7 Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind.

8 As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the LORD of hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish it for ever. Selah.

9 We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple.

10 According to thy name, O God, so is thy

kingdom of several neighbouring countries entered into confederacy to cast us out of our possession (2 Chron. xx. 11), and made a great progress in their design; marching together from beyond the Dead sea (ver. 2) till they came nigh to Jerusalem (ver. 16, 20, 24).

Ver. 5.] But then they only had a sight of it, and that was all; for a sudden amazement seized on them, and such a panic fear, that they fell into confusion; and, taking one another for enemies, were destroyed by the ambush which one nation laid for the other (2 Chron. xx. 22).

Ver. 6.] There was nothing but terror and trembling to be seen throughout all the host: which surprised them so suddenly, and cast them into so great anguish, that it may be compared to the hasty and violent pangs of a travailing woman:

Ver. 7.] Or to the consternation and confusion which the mariners are in, when a fleet of ships richly laden from Tarshish is broken in pieces by the furious blasts of the east wind, one against another.

[As a fleet of Jehoshaphat's was shortly after, 2 Chron. xx. 37.]

Ver. 8.] We have heard of such things heretofore, which our fathers have reported to us; but now our eyes see the wonderful works of God, who told us by his prophet that he would save us from this great army which invaded us (2 Chron. xx. 14, 15, &c.). And we have seen his word verified in this city, from whence God, whose city it is, and who is the Lord of all the host of heaven and earth, sent invisible powers to terrify and disperse them (ver. 22); and will, we hope, defend and protect it from being subverted by the assaults of our enemies in future ages.

Ver. 9.] O God, we had no confidence in our fortifications, or in our army; but we assembled ourselves together in thy temple to ask help of thee (2 Chron. xx. 3—5), and meditating on thy wonted mercy to

praise unto the ends of the earth: thy right hand is full of righteousness.

11 Let mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because of thy judgments.

12 Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof.

13 Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following.

14 For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide *even* unto death.

those that seek thee, we quietly expected what thy loving-kindness would do for us.

Ver. 10.] And as thou art called, O God, by the name of the Lord of hosts, so thou hast demonstrated thyself in the glorious victory thou hast given us (2 Chron. xx. 15). For which not we alone praise thee, but the most distant people who hear the fame of it shall acknowledge and magnify thy power (ver. 29), which thou hast abundantly declared in the just destruction of our enemies, and the gracious protection of us thy faithful servants.

Ver. 11.] Let the inhabitants of Jerusalem then, which is the mother-city, give an example of joy and thankfulness to all the rest of the cities and towns of Judah; and let them unanimously join together with the greatest gladness, to express how sensible they are of thy power and goodness in this wonderful deliverance.

Ver. 12.] Make a solemn procession, and go round about the city, blessing and praising God with thankful hearts, who hath preserved you from being begirt by the enemy: tell all the towers as you go along, and see if there be so much as one wanting, or the least hurt done to any of them.

Ver. 13.] Observe the outworks, and attentively consider them; take a distinct survey of all the sumptuous buildings also, and mark how entire they are, and untouched by the enemies' batteries, that you may keep a record of it, and preserve the memory of so great a wonder for the benefit of succeeding generations.

Ver. 14.] For this is the God who alone can protect us, and will be our defender, if we depend upon him, for ever and ever: he will not content himself with having preserved us once, but be our conductor, and exercise a most tender providence over us, as a shepherd doth over his sheep all the days of our life.

PSALM XLIX.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm for the sons of Korah.

1 I HEAR this, all ye people; give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world:

2 Both low and high, rich and poor, together.

PSALM XLIX.

ARGUMENT.—The author of this Psalm is not known: not can we find whether there was any particular occasion of it. But whosoever composed it (whether some of the sons of Korah, or any other), it is likely that he had in his eye the unreasonable thirst of mankind after riches, and their insolence and haughtiness when they have acquired them; which, it is possible, was a great discouragement to some pious but poor people in those times; and therefore, after the example of David (Ps. xxxvii. xxxix.) he indited this Psalm to check that vanity, by set-

ting death before their eyes; the serious meditation of which he knew would both pull down the plumes of the proud and scornful, and preserve those upon whom they trampled from being dejected at their prosperous impiety.

Ver. 1.] Listen to me all ye people, in what part of the world soever you dwell; for that which I am going to deliver is of such common concernment that it belongs to all countries, as much as any one, upon the face of the earth.

Ver. 2.] Whether you be men of obscure birth and meaner rank, or persons nobly descended and in great

3 My mouth shall speak of wisdom ; and the meditation of my heart *shall be* of understanding.

4 I will incline mine ear to a parable : I will open my dark saying upon the harp.

5 Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about ?

6 They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches ;

7 None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him :

8 (For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever :)

9 That he should still live for ever, and not see corruption.

10 For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others.

11 Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations ; they call their lands after their own names.

12 Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not : he is like the beasts that perish.

13 This their way is their folly : yet their posterity approve their sayings. Selah.

14 Like sheep they are laid in the grave ; death shall feed on them ; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning ; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling.

15 But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave : for he shall receive me. Selah.

16 Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased ;

17 For when he dieth he shall carry nothing

authority ; whether you abound in wealth or are of a poor estate, you are all alike concerned to attend to my instruction.

Ver. 3.] Which is neither about trivial things, nor slightly considered, but about the most weighty matters, which my mind hath deeply pondered : I will enrich your souls with wisdom, which is better than all the worldly wealth you covet ; and teach you how to direct all your actions aright unto that scope at which you aim of being happy.

Ver. 4.] It is not vulgar instruction ; but most excellent advice, which I have to give you ; more to be desired than the skill of resolving the darkest riddles : to which I myself will diligently attend, while it is sung, as I play upon my harp.

Ver. 5.] I intend not to neglect the counsel I give to others ; and therefore shall ask myself the question I mean to answer : What cause is there that I should be troubled with fears, and cares, and anxiety of mind, in calamitous times, when the iniquity of those that endeavour to supplant me hath surrounded me on all sides, and left me no way to escape them ?

Ver. 6.] They are confident their strength and power are such, that none can resist them ; and the high conceit they have of their vast treasures makes them so proud, that they insult over others, and brag what they can do to ruin them.

Ver. 7.] Alas ! poor men, their weakness is apparent ; there is not a man among them that, by all the power he hath, can find a means to save the dearest friend alive when God calls for him : he alone can dispose of mens' lives ; and the richest of them hath not wealth enough to purchase a reprieve, when he pronounces the sentence of death upon him.

Ver. 8.] That is a business too difficult and costly for him, to redeem the life of a man ; or to respite for a time his departure, whose soul is leaving his body : he must let that alone ; for, as long as the world lasts, it will be a vain endeavour.

Ver. 9.] Let him attempt it, if he please, upon himself : can he prolong his own life, from time to time, so that it shall be perpetuated and never dissolved ?

Ver. 10.] No such matter ; the wisdom I speak of (ver. 3), promises no exemption to the best of men, but they must die as well as others : and therefore those wicked sots, whose life differs little from that of beasts, may justly expect not merely to die, but to be destroyed and cut off like the beasts that perish. And then what becomes of all their wealth, which they are forced to leave to others ; perhaps to strangers ?

Ver. 11.] They imagined, indeed, and secretly

pleased themselves in this fancy, that when they could stay no longer in the world, their goodly houses, which they had built, should stand for ever, and the places of their abode continue in their family from age to age : though they could not be immortal themselves, yet they hoped their names, which they imposed upon their lands, should never die.

Ver. 12.] But, alas ! the thoughts of man are vain : for whatsoever esteem or reputation one of these worldlings gets here, it lasts not at all, but dies together with him ; he is in this also like to his fellow-beasts, whom, when they are dead, nobody remembers.

Ver. 13.] Thus their life concludes, as it was spent, in folly (for they have no security that the names they impose on their lands shall last ; or if they do, that men shall think of them ; or if they should, what are they the better for it ?) ; and yet, so close doth this folly stick to mankind, that they that succeed in their possessions make no benefit of this observation, but are as very fools as themselves, and tread in the steps of those that went before them.

Ver. 14.] They go in droves to their graves, when death seizes on them ; thither it drives them in the close of their days, just as the shepherd doth his sheep to the fold in the evening : and then the just, over whom they insulted, shall quickly trample upon, and triumph over them (as they shall do much more when they awake out of the dust at the resurrection) ; all their power and splendour wherein they formerly appeared, though they seem as firm as a rock, shall moulder away ; for the grave is their utmost bound, beyond which they cannot go.

Ver. 15.] And doubtless God will rescue me from that imminent danger wherein I am (ver. 5), of being destroyed, and not let me descend into the grave, but live to have dominion over them ; for he hath graciously received me into his favour (so that if I die I shall still have this comfort remaining, that he will one day raise me out of my grave again).

Ver. 16.] Be not thou then troubled, nor dismayed (no more than I, ver. 5), whosoever thou art that hearest or readest this, when thou seest a worldly man grow very rich, and great honours heaped on his family ; which enable and embolden him, perhaps, to use the meaner sort contemptuously :

Ver. 17.] For he can, by no means, as I told thee, purchase the privilege of living one moment longer than God pleases ; and when he dies, he is no greater than other men : for he can carry none of his wealth along with him ; nor shall he that was so terrible here be at all regarded in the other world.

away: his glory shall not descend after him.

18 Though while he lived he blessed his soul: and men will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself.

Ver. 18.] For all his happiness ends with this life (why shouldst thou then be troubled at his prosperity?), which he spends in luxury and riot, pride and vanity, applauding himself in his riches and in his pleasures, and having a company of flatterers about him; who will commend thee too, if thou wilt imitate him in indulging thine own appetite, and denying nothing to thyself and companions, but doing no good to any body else.

Ver. 19.] And he arrives, perhaps, at the age of his

19 He shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light.

20 Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish.

forefathers, whose steps he follows; but after that shall all be alike miserable, and never more partake of the least joy or consolation.

Ver. 20.] So true it is, which was said before (and so little cause there is to envy such mens' greatness), that a man raised to great dignity in this world, and never considers how short his honour is (ver. 15), behaves himself like a brute while he lives; and thinking of no such thing, is cut off like a brute, whom nobody regards when he is dead.

PSALM L.

A Psalm of Asaph.

1 THE mighty God, even the LORD, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof.

2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined.

3 Our God shall come, and shall not keep si-

lence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.

4 He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people.

5 Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.

PSALM L.

ARGUMENT.—The author of this Psalm, the title tells us (as we translate it), was Asaph, who composed several songs, as well as David, for the use of the tabernacle, as we read in 2 Chron. xxix. 30. But whether he was Asaph the Levite, who lived in the same age with David, or some other prophet in aftertimes, cannot be certainly resolved. It seems to me that it was not the former; because he is never, that I remember, called Asaph the seer, as the other is; whose psalms Hezekiah caused to be sung together with those of king David. And therefore I judge it most likely that he lived in aftertimes, in the reign of some pious prince, such as Jehoshaphat; or, which is most probable, in the days of Hezekiah himself (see Ps. xlv.); who, though he had reformed the worship of God, yet could not amend mens' minds; but there still remained, this prophet observed, abundance of hypocrisy among them: both among the people, who placed all religion in sacrifices, and other external rites and ceremonies; and among the doctors of the law and the judges, who taught the people their duty, but observed none of those precepts themselves which they expounded to others.

Both these this holy man awakens, by this Psalm, to a consideration of the danger they were in; representing God as the supreme judge of the world, coming in an amazing manner to call them all to a strict account, and to take a severe vengeance on them, unless they amended; which began to come upon them by Sennacherib: whom God threatened to send "against the hypocritical nation," (Isa. x. 6): and calls that time, "the day of his visitation," (ver. 3), when Sennacherib overran all the country (as Isaiah prophesied, viii. 7, 8), till he came to Jerusalem: upon which city Nebuchadnezzar completely executed the judgment here threatened when he destroyed Jerusalem and the temple itself; unto which it was to no purpose to bring a multitude of sacrifices, while they continued the evil of their doings (Isa. i. 13, 16).

In both which days of visitation, first by the king of Assyria, and then by the king of Babylon, the Psalmist here represents the divine majesty, after the manner of men, like to a king coming out of his palace, attended by his ministers, with the ensigns of terror carried before him; and issuing out his orders to summon all his subjects to appear at his tribunal, and hear their accusation read, with the sentence he would pronounce upon them.

Ver. 1.] The omnipotent majesty, the supreme judge of heaven and earth, to whom the greatest kings and potentates are but subjects: the eternal Lord, who changes not, hath given out his orders, that all the people of the land, from east to west, be summoned to appear before him.

Ver. 2.] He will go forth in the greatest splendour out of his magnificent palace, where he dwells in Zion; and let you see how much his incomparable excellencies and perfections are to be revered.

Ver. 3.] Our God will undoubtedly come and reckon with you, though now he seems to take no notice of your impiety: and he will not come like earthly princes, before whom there marches an armed multitude, but in a far more terrible and irresistible manner, which shall make you as sensible of his dreadful presence, as your ancestors were at Mount Sinai, when the devouring flames, and thunder, and lightning, which attended on him, made the very mountain to quake and tremble (Exod. xix. 16, 18; Isa. ix. 18, 19).

Ver. 4.] He shall call heaven and earth to be witnesses of the equity of his proceedings (Isa. i. 2); and you may as soon move them out of their place, as avoid appearing before his tribunal.

Ver. 5.] He will send out his officers, with a pe-remptory charge, saying, Bring those men before me, whom I have obliged above all other people and separated to myself to be a holy nation (Deut. xiv. 2); and who have engaged themselves to me in such a solemn covenant, confirmed by the blood of sacrifices, that they wish they might perish, in like manner, if they did not observe it (Jer. xxxiv. 18, 19).

6 And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself. Selah.

7 Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I am God, even thy God.

8 I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings, to have been continually before me.

9 I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he goats out of thy folds.

10 For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.

11 I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine.

12 If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.

13 Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?

14 Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most high:

15 And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

16 But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth?

17 Seeing thou hastest instruction, and castest my words behind thee.

18 When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers.

19 Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit.

20 Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son.

21 These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether

Ver. 6.] They shall have a fair trial, whether they have so done or not: for the justice of his judgment shall be as conspicuous as the heavens; because God himself, who cannot do unrighteously, will examine the cause, and pronounce the sentence.

Ver. 7.] Imagine then, that all things being thus prepared, you hear him calling to you, saying, Harken, O my people, for I have something to say to thee. O Israel, my beloved people, hearken; for I must admonish and convince thee of the breach of those laws, which I, the supreme lawgiver, and thy most gracious God, have given to thee (Exod. xx. 2).

Ver. 8.] I do not mean those concerning sacrifices; I have no complaint to make about that matter: thy burnt-offerings, I acknowledge, never fail to be brought both morning and evening to my altar; and I see how busy thou art in that employment:

Ver. 9.] But is this all that I require of thee? do not mistake myself, nor think that I will be content that all the rest of my laws should be broken, if you do but multiply sacrifices, of which I have no need; or if I had, need not be beholden unto thee, for the very best of them.

Ver. 10.] For I could be supplied out of my own folds and herds, which thou hast nothing to do withal; having all the beasts of the forest at my command, with the cattle that graze on more hills than thou hast ever seen.

Ver. 11.] I know also where the fowls of the mountains build their nests, which thou canst not reach; and the wild beasts in the open fields, whom thou canst not enclose, are all ready at hand to do me service.

Ver. 12.] If I were hungry, I would not come to acquaint thee with it, that thou mightest provide me food: why should I be beholden to thy poverty, when I am so rich: for the whole world is mine and all that it contains.

Ver. 13.] Canst thou be so absurd as to imagine that I need meat or drink? and for that reason call daily for the flesh of bulls, and the blood of goats, to satisfy my hunger, and to quench my thirst? or that my nature is such, that I can be pleased merely with the smoke of those upon my altar?

Ver. 14.] They have their use: but if thou wilt bring me acceptable sacrifices, know that I value, in the first place, a truly thankful heart, which gratefully acknowledges my benefits, above all the peace-offerings in the world; and next that I expect thou shouldst faithfully perform all the vows and promises thou makest, when thou beggest any blessing of me; and not think to put me off (who am too great to be dallied withal) with sin-offerings for the breach of them.

Ver. 15.] And, thirdly, devoutly commend thyself unto me, when thou art in any trouble, by ardent prayer: piously confiding in me, and thou shalt find it more powerful than all burnt-offerings: for I will certainly deliver thee, that thou mayest honour me with thy praises, and proclaim my power and goodness, to invite others unto my service.

Ver. 16.] Not that this is all that I require of thee; for if thou leadest a wicked life, and art injurious to thy neighbours, what care I for thy praises, or for thy zeal to boot, in pressing my commands upon others, which thou dost not observe thyself? thou braggest thou art a doctor of the law, and thou declarest to the people my will and pleasure, and makest often mention of my covenant, whereby they stand bound to be obedient to me; but to what purpose is it? or with what face canst thou do it?

Ver. 17.] Since, by thy example, thou teachest them to contemn all those instructions to which thou hastest to be bound thyself; and by thy actions declarest thou hast no regard at all to any thing, either that I have hidden thee do, or threatened I will do to those that violate my precepts.

Ver. 18.] When thou hast observed a man thrive by stealth and robbery, instead of having him punished, thou hast greedily accepted the proffer of being a sharer with him; and, which is worse, the adulterers find favour with thee, and thou art partaker with them in their filthiness.

Ver. 19.] Thou lettest thy tongue loose to slanders; and backbitest those who are not present to answer for themselves; and dost not stick to contrive artificial lies and deceptions, to cheat those that have any dealing with thee.

Ver. 20.] Nay, when thou sittest in open court, solemnly to judge men according to the law, thou makest bold to speak falsely (for a reward); and that not against a stranger, but thy own brother: yea, thou wilt not spare him that lay in the same womb with thee; but load him with calumnies and reproaches.

Ver. 21.] All this wickedness thou hast committed, and I have forbore to punish thee: but instead of amending thy life, to which my patience should have invited thee, thou hast presumed so much upon my lenity, as to add another sin to all the rest; and imagined that I am ignorant of what is done in secret, or am altogether as well pleased with these things as thyself: and therefore now I have sharply rebuked thee for them (so hateful they are to me) and set them all in order (that thou mayest see nothing can escape my knowledge) distinctly before thy eyes.

such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.

22 Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and *there be none to deliver.*

Ver. 22.] Let this be a warning to you, and to all those that abuse the patience and long-suffering of God; never thinking of his just severity against such wicked doers. Consider this seriously, and repent in time, lest my patience be turned into indignation and wrath; and I lay hold on you, and snatch you away, to suffer your deserved punishment: and none of your companions, whom you have served in their sins, shall be able to give you any relief; but all perish together with you.

23 Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth *his conversation aright* will I shew the salvation of God.

Ver. 23.] Remember I have told you what sacrifices I am well pleased with; not with those of beasts, but with the sacrifice of praise and hearty thanksgiving for all my benefits; which doth me more honour than all the lifeless sacrifices of bulls and goats: but he that thus devoutly worships me, must take care withal to dispose his life into a conformity with all my precepts; for this is the man whom I will make partaker of the blessings which I have promised.

PSALM LI.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bath-sheba.

1 HAVE mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.

4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done *this evil* in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward

PSALM LI.

ARGUMENT.—Here now begins a new collection of some Psalms, whereof David was the author: which, I suppose, were found after the first book was published, and this second begun; to the end of which from this place they continue: as we read expressly, Ps. lxxii. ult. For though the author of the last two before that be not mentioned in the title, yet the very matter of them, as well as the conclusion of the book, assures us they were composed by David; who, in this fifty-first Psalm (as the title tells us), most sadly bewails the sin which he had committed with Bath-sheba, and those that followed it. In which he had also continued for some time, till Nathan the prophet came with a message from God to reprove him, and to pronounce a very sore judgment against him and his family for his crimes.

After this divine reprehension and threatening, he was very much humbled, and to make himself as notorious an example of true repentance as he had been of foul wickedness, he composed this penitential hymn: and sent it to the master of the music in the tabernacle, to be used perpetually there; as a testimony of his unfeigned sorrow for what he had done, and of the miserable condition he thought himself in, without the infinite mercy of God to him. Which he begs with the greatest earnestness, together with the assistances of his grace; which he promises to employ for the reducing other sinners, beseeching him withal to be favourable to his people, especially to the city of Jerusalem; and not let them and that suffer for his offences.

Ver. 1.] O God, the supreme judge of the world, whom I have most highly offended many ways, and therefore may most justly be condemned to suffer the effects of thy severest displeasure; I cast down myself before thee, and humbly supplicate for mercy: unto which I am encouraged by thy known clemency, and thy infinite compassions; which will move thee,

I hope, to take pity upon a grievous sinner, and to pardon the adultery and bloodshed, accompanied with a number of foul circumstances, which I have committed.

Ver. 2.] I have made myself indeed exceeding loathsome by my repeated wickedness, which, like a stain that hath long stuck to a garment, is not easily got out: but do not therefore, I beseech thee, abhor me, but rather magnify thy mercy in purifying me perfectly, and cleansing me so thoroughly, that there may be no spot remaining in me.

Ver. 3.] For how stupid soever I was, before thou sentest thy prophet to awaken me, I am now deeply touched with a sense of my horrid transgressions: which I both sorrowfully confess and bewail in thy presence, and in the face of the public congregation; and carry also a sad and amazing remembrance thereof continually before my eyes.

Ver. 4.] Not because I stand in fear of punishment from men, who have no power over me; but because I am so obnoxious to thee, whose judgments I ought to dread the more, the less I am liable to give an account of my actions unto others. O how it afflicts me, that I presumed, because I had none to control me here on earth, to offend thy majesty,—thy all-seeing majesty, at whose tribunal the highest must be judged: and if thou shouldest pronounce the heaviest sentence upon me for my crimes, and execute it also with the greatest severity, I could not accuse thee of too much rigour: but must still justify thee in thy proceedings, and clear thee from all such unjust imputations!

Ver. 5.] It is true, indeed, and thou, O Lord, knowest it better than I, that there is in me an innate proneness to evil; but I am so far from representing this as an excuse for what I have done, that I confess the consideration of it ought to have made me the more watchful and diligent to suppress those bad inclinations; which I knew to be so natural, that I brought them into the world with me.

Ver. 6.] I am amazed at my folly, that I should be so careless; when I was not ignorant that thou re-

parts: and in the hidden *part* thou shalt make me to know wisdom.

7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

8 Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones *which* thou hast broken may rejoice.

9 Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.

12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me *with thy* free spirit.

13 *Then* will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

quirest us not to entertain, with the least kindness, those first motions which we find in our thoughts and desires after any evil, but uprightly to oppose them; for which end thou hast put a principle of better motions into us, and endued me with wisdom, which secretly checks and corrects those brutish inclinations.

Ver. 7.] I have nothing therefore to say in my own behalf, but wholly betake myself to thee for a gracious pardon of my sin, which every thing I can think of sadly aggravates. I am as impure as a leper, and deserve to be banished from thy presence, and shut out from among thy people; far more impure by touching Bath-sheba, than he is that toucheth a dead body; yet I am not so foul, but, if thou pleasest, thou canst purify me, and make me as clean and white as snow: vouchsafe me that grace, O Lord; expiate me, I beseech thee (Lev. xiv. 6; Numb. xix. 17, 18), and restore me perfectly unto thy favour, and the happy fruits of it, which I have justly forfeited and lost.

Ver. 8.] Raise me out of this wofully dejected state wherein I lie; and as the terrible message I received by thy prophet, hath cast me into such insufferable anguish and pain, as if my bones were crushed in pieces by my fall; so send me the most comfortable news of my reconciliation with thee; to ease me of the torment I endure under the weight of my guilt, and the sense of thy heavy displeasure: and to turn it into the height of joy and gladness.

Ver. 9.] Remember not any longer how wicked I have been; nor lay any sin to my charge: but pass by all my transgressions, and acquit me from the punishment they deserve.

Ver. 10.] And bestow upon me withal such purity of heart (which, alas! I have lost, and am not able to recover without thy grace), that I may utterly hereafter detest all such filthy motions: and, because we are apt to revolt from our good resolutions, do thou daily supply me with fresh strength from above, to confirm and settle them, that I may never return to folly.

Ver. 11.] I deserve, I confess, to be rejected by thee, as my predecessor was, (1 Sam. xv. 25, 26), and to be admitted no more into thy favour: but I humbly beseech thee, deal not so severely with me, nor deprive me (as thou didst him, compare 1 Sam. x. 6 with xvi. 14), of the gift of thy Holy Spirit, wherewith thou hast anointed me (ver. 13).

Ver. 12.] Let not that evil spirit which troubled him seize on me; but restore to me the joy which I was wont to have, when I saw myself so much in thy favour as to be delivered by thee out of the greatest danger (Ps. xxi. 1): support me and my authority, with such a cheerful, free, and generous spirit, as becomes him whom thou hast appointed to be the governor of thy people:

14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.

15 O LORD, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

16 For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering.

17 The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

18 Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem.

19 Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.

Ver. 13.] That I may have the confidence to admonish those of their duty that transgress thy laws (as I will not fail to do), and they may not take the boldness to despise my instructions: but the very worst of them may, by my authority and my example, be reclaimed from their sinful lives, and become, like me, thy faithful servants.

Ver. 14.] Though I have added the sin of murder to that of adultery, the murder of a trusty servant, of several of my servants (2 Sam. xi. 17), who, by my order, were exposed to that danger wherein they lost their lives; let it not hinder this grace which I beg of thee; but, O God, the God from whom I have received so many deliverances and blessings, vouchsafe this one favour more, to deliver me from the punishment due to this crying sin: and I will not spare to proclaim, as loud as ever I can, thy infinite goodness and clemency; together with thy truth and faithfulness in thy promises to returning sinners: it shall be my joy to speak of these, though therewithal I publish my own most horrid wickedness.

Ver. 15.] Try me, O God, and let the sense of thy gracious pardon give me the boldness and liberty to open my lips (which shame, confusion, and fear, have closed and shut up), and my mouth shall every where declare thy mercy to thy perpetual praise and renown.

Ver. 16.] This shall be the sacrifice I will offer to thee, as an acknowledgment of thy kindness; but that of beasts, I know, thou desirest not I should bring thee: the whole burnt-offerings being no pleasure at all to thee, but only as they are tokens of a grateful mind.

Ver. 17.] With which I will also join that divine sacrifice of an humble, sorrowful, and penitent heart: for a soul that is truly contrite, and entirely submits its will to thine, is such an acceptable sacrifice, that thou canst not possibly reject it.

Ver. 18.] And the same mercy I desire for myself, I beg also for all thy people. Spare them, good Lord, and let not my folly be the occasion of bringing upon them any calamity; or upon that city, which is called after my name, where I have set both thy throne and mine (2 Sam. v. 7, 9; vi. 16): but be favourable to that place, and do it good; let the walls of Jerusalem, which I have begun to build (2 Sam. v. 9), be perfectly finished (1 Kings iii. 1; xi. 27).

Ver. 19.] Then shall the righteous be very thankful to thee: and express it by bringing peace-offerings in abundance, and all other sacrifices: they shall offer thee the choicest sacrifices upon thy altar (1 Kings iii. 5; viii. 63, 64), which from such pious persons shall be acceptable to thy majesty.

PSALMS.

PSALM LII.

To the chief Musician. *Maschil.* A Psalm of David, when Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, and said unto him, David is come to the house of Ahimelech.

1 WHY boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man? the goodness of God endureth continually.

2 Thy tongue deviseth mischiefs; like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.

3 Thou lovest evil more than good; and lying rather than to speak righteousness. Selah.

4 Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue.

5 God shall likewise destroy thee forever, he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling place, and root thee out of the land of the living. Selah.

6 The righteous also shall see, and fear, and shall laugh at him:

7 Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness.

8 But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.

9 I will praise thee for ever, because thou hast done it: and I will wait on thy name; for it is good before thy saints.

PSALM LII.

ARGUMENT.—The title sufficiently instructs every one about the author, and in the occasion of this Psalm, if they will but read the history to which it directs them in 1 Sam. xxii. where Doeg (one of the seed of Esau, or that had lived so long among them, that he had got the name, as well as the savage manners, of the Edomites), to ingratiate himself with Saul, pretended to discover those who were confederate with David, particularly Ahimelech; whom he undertook also to kill, together with all his family, when others refused that bloody charge which Saul would have imposed on them. And when he had done, it should seem he bragged of it, as if it had been some gallant action, or famous achievement; as it is intimated, I take it, in the first verse of the Psalm. Which David penned when Ahithair (who was the only person that escaped in that slaughter, whereby they thought to terrify others from harbouring David, or showing any kindness to him) came and brought him the sad tidings of what was befallen their city. And it was afterward delivered to the master of the music in the tabernacle, to be sung in perpetual memory of the vulgar tune called *Maschil* (see Ps. xxxii.); or, as Theodoret seems here to expound the word, to fortify those with patience and constancy who unjustly suffer, by instructing them in the justice of the divine sentence in the issue.

Ver. 1.] A goodly feat, indeed, for a man to boast of! that he hath killed eighty-five innocent and unarmed priests, together with a company of women, children, and sucklings (1 Sam. xxii. 19). A mighty champion thou art, who vapourest, no doubt, that thou wilt do the like execution upon me: but know, vain man, that the goodness of God, whereby I have been hitherto preserved (1 Sam. xxii. 1. 3. 5), will still defend me: for it is not a thing of short continuance, like our prince's favour, but lasts for ever.

Ver. 2.] O thou contriver of false stories! who pretendest to be the only or most loyal person in the court of Saul (1 Sam. xxii. 8, 9), but art an egregious hypocrite; a mere designer of mischief to others, thereby to advance thyself: thy tongue was the first instrument in this butchery, being sharpened by thy malice on purpose like a razor newly set, to cut the throats of the guiltless, that thou mightest seem to be the most zealous of all others for the safety of the king's person and government.

Ver. 3.] To have told the plain truth would not have served thy ambition and thy malice, which make thee love to do mischief rather than good offices

unto others, and to devise lies against Ahimelech, rather than to declare his innocence.

Ver. 4.] Thou carest not whom thou destroyest, but can swallow up a whole city at a morsel: O thou false tongue, who, to curry favour with thy prince, devisest the most impudent lies against those that never offended him.

Ver. 5.] The great God, whose priests thou hast slain, shall avenge their cause, and pull thee from that greatness and honour, to which thou seekest, by this vile means, to raise thyself: and more than that, he will pay thee in the same coin thou hast dealt to them; for he will utterly destroy thee, and snatch thee away as hastily as thou didst those innocents; just so will he pluck thee from the tabernacle of God (where thou wast wont to pretend devotion, 1 Sam. xxi. 7), and root out, not only thee, but all thy family, from the face of the earth.

Ver. 6.] Which just judgment of God upon thee all good men shall mark, and be confirmed thereby in their pious fear of offending him; and, reflecting upon thy vain devices to greatness thyself and family, shall deride thy folly, saying as I do;

Ver. 7.] Behold that mighty man, that principal favourite, who regarded not God, nor sought to support himself by his favour, but laid the foundation of his fortune (as we speak) merely in abundance of riches, and the favour of his prince; in which also he endeavoured to establish himself, not by honest means, but by the most perfidious arts, and cruel enterprises: what now is become of him? and where is his greatness? Lo, his ambitious hopes are all vanished and come to nothing,

Ver. 8.] Whilst I, at whom he principally aimed in his murderous design, am still, blessed be God, in safety; nay, compared with that destruction which shall fall on him, in a flourishing condition: for he shall drop away like a withered leaf; but I grow and increase in strength, like a green olive-tree planted in the courts of God's house; whose mercy, I trust, will preserve me to my life's end from all the mischiefs they devised against me, and make me more and more flourishing, both in my person and in my posterity.

Ver. 9.] For which I will never cease to praise thee, because I owe it entirely to thee that I am not destroyed; and I will patiently expect the accomplishment of thy promises to me: for all thy pious servants have ever found this to be the best and wisest course, to depend upon thy omnipotent goodness and faithful promises, and not to imitate those wicked men, who study to advance or preserve themselves by flattery, or other viler practices.

PSALM LIII.

To the chief Musician upon Mahalath. Maschil. A Psalm of David.

1 THE fool hath said in his heart, *There is no God.* Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: *there is none that doeth good.*

2 God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were *any* that did understand, that did seek God.

3 Every one of them is gone back: they are

altogether become filthy; *there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

4 Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people *as they eat bread:* they have not called upon God.

5 There were they in great fear, *where no fear was:* for God hath scattered the bones of him that encampeth *against thee:* thou hast put

PSALM LIII.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm and the fourteenth differ so little, that it hath troubled interpreters to give a reason for the repetition of the same thing, almost in the same words. There is some variation, indeed, in every verse, but it is merely the change of one word for another of the same import (as, for example, *God* for *Lord*, ver. 2. 4. 9): except only verse the fifth, where there is a much greater alteration; and the sixth wholly omitted; which makes it probable there was some new occasion for the using this hymn again, though an occasion exceeding like the former. What it was writers do but guess; and if I take the liberty also to interpose my conjecture, it will be nothing so remote as all those I have met withal seem to be.

If we suppose the defection of the people in the rebellion of Absalom, to have been the matter of his complaint in the fourteenth Psalm, then it looks like a probability, that the new revolt which the Israelites generally made, immediately after the other, before David had quite recovered Jerusalem, and his settlement there, was the occasion of this. For you read, that upon the quarrel which arose between the men of Judah and the men of Israel, about precedency in bringing back the king, Sheba blew the trumpet of rebellion afresh; and it is said, that every man of Israel left David, and followed after him (2 Sam. xx. 2). This is the revolt, I apprehend, here spoken of, ver. 3, where the Psalmist says, *Every one of them is gone back.* And a dangerous revolt it was, as David apprehended, more dangerous than the former, unless timely checked (2 Sam. xx. 6): which made him, before all his army could be assembled (ver. 5), send his guards to pursue him speedily (ver. 7): as they did through all the tribes of Israel (ver. 14). Who being afraid of the issue (ver. 5, of this Psalm), fell off from Sheba more and more, the farther he went, and left him at last to shift for himself, so that he was shut up in the city of Abel, there taken, and beheaded (ver. 22). After which, his body, it is likely, was exposed to the fowls of the air, or the wild beasts; insomuch that his bones were, indeed, at last scattered (as the Psalmist here speaks, ver. 5), and all his adherents made contemptible.

This David desired should be commemorated together with his deliverance from Absalom's rebellion; and therefore, making a review of the fourteenth Psalm (wherein that distress is described), he delivered it again to the master of the music (as appeared after the first collection of the book of Psalms was finished), with some small alterations, relating to this new business; desiring God, for instance, to give them still some farther and new *salvation* (ver. 6). For the word here is in the plural

number, but in the fourteenth Psalm in the singular; which hath made me render it here *complete salvation*, which he implores with the same earnestness he had done before, and orders also how the Psalm shall be sung upon *Mahalath*, or the hollow instrument (flute or pipe) to the tune of *Maschil* (or as a caveat against rebellion, see Ps. xxxii.).

If any be not satisfied with this account of the Psalm, because of the word *captivity*, in the last verse, which they may think ought to be taken properly; then they may suppose this Psalm to have been reviewed by Asaph the seer, in the days of Hezekiah, when abundance of the people had been indeed carried captive (Isa. v. 15). But there is no need to have recourse to this; for the word *captivity* imports no more, in some places, but only *great desolation*; such as was made of Job's estate and family (xlii. 10), and by the Philistines, when Shiloh was destroyed (Judg. xviii. 30, 31).

Ver. 1.] Though the wicked are not yet so impudent as openly to deny God with their mouths; yet such is their abominable filthiness, so shameless are they in their wickedness, so universally depraved, that their secret thoughts sure are, God takes no notice of what they do, or that he will not judge them for it.

Ver. 2.] But let them know that he exactly observes them, and all the ways of the sons of men, which are naked and bare before his eyes; though, alas! there is nothing now to be seen but ignorance and contempt of his majesty.

Ver. 3.] The Israelites have made a new separation, and are entirely revolted; being like a body without spirit, so rotten and putrefied, that it is hard to find so much as one that hath any kind of goodness in him.

Ver. 4.] Strange that they should still be thus senseless! and (after such a defeat as they have lately received) continue to work iniquity; nay, to be cruel and void of all pity and compassion to my poor people; the reason is, they have no religion.

Ver. 5.] And none more cowardly than such atheistical wretches; whose courage so soon failed them, that a panic fear seized them before my forces could approach them: for they ran away, and dispersed themselves, when I sent but a small party after them. God, O my soul, hath broken him in pieces, and his bones lie scattered on the ground, who thought to oppress thee; thou has obtained this favour of him, to put them to shame; for he despised those who had so little regard to his majesty.

Ver. 6.] And he is mighty to save (whatsoever such wicked people think), and resides, by a special token of his presence there, on mount Zion: O that it might please him to complete our deliverance from thence; and restore us all again to the happy enjoyment of that place, from whence we have been ba-

them to shame, because God hath despised them.

6 Oh that the salvation of Israel were come

nished! it would turn our sad lamentations into the most cheerful thanksgivings; and fill not only

out of Zion! When God bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.

Judah, but all the tribes of Israel, with joy and gladness.

PSALM LIV.

To the chief Musician on Neginoth. *Maschil.* A Psalm of David, when the Ziphites came and said to Saul, Doth not David hide himself with us?

1 SAVE me, O God; by thy name, and judge me by thy strength.

2 Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth.

3 For strangers are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul: they have not set God before them. Selah.

4 Behold, God is mine helper: the

LORD is with them that uphold my soul.

5 He shall reward evil unto mine enemies: cut them off in thy truth.

6 I will freely sacrifice unto thee: I will praise thy name, O LORD; for it is good.

7 For he hath delivered me out of all trouble: and mine eye hath seen his desire upon mine enemies.

PSALM LIV.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm, the title tells us, was composed, when (not long after the butchery of Doeg) the Ziphites, a false people, void of humanity, and that sought nothing but how to raise themselves, though by another's ruin, endeavoured to ingratiate themselves with Saul, by discovering to him where David lurked in their neighbourhood (1 Sam. xxxiii. 14. 19): and undertook to guide the king to the very place, and assist the forces he should send to take him (ver. 20, &c.). By which means David was brought into such a great strait (ver. 26), that if Saul had not been diverted by a sudden invasion which the Philistines made, he could not have escaped him. In this distress he made his address to God by prayer, in the words of the first three verses of this Psalm. But on a sudden (hearing, I suppose, how Saul himself was alarmed with the news of an invasion) he breaks out (ver. 4, 5) into admiration of God's goodness. And when the danger was quite over, added, I suppose, the last two verses; wherein he expresses with what joy he took a view, from the mountain where he lay hid, of Saul's forces as they retreated. Which was a thing so memorable, that, when he came to the kingdom, he delivered the whole to the master of music in the tabernacle, to be sung as the fourth Psalm, to the tune of *Maschil*.

Ver. 1.] O God, whose name imports that thou art the supreme judge, and therefore the defender and protector of all injured and oppressed persons, I humbly implore thy aid in this great distress; beseeching thee, who can easily do it, to deliver me from my enemies, and, by thy almighty power, vindicate my innocence; and maintain my righteous cause against those that are too strong for me, and wrongfully seek to destroy me.

Ver. 2.] Deny me not this request, O God, I most

earnestly entreat thee; but grant the petitions of thy poor servant, who hath nothing but his prayers to oppose to all those forces that surround him.

Ver. 3.] And they are conducted by barbarous people, whom I have no way disoblige, for I never had any thing to do with them; and yet they have undertaken to deliver me into the hand of Saul, and those formidable enemies that are come to seek my life (1 Sam. xxiii. 20): having no regard to God at all; but only studying, right or wrong, to gain the favour of their prince.

Ver. 4.] O the wonderful goodness of God! who in this deplorable condition sends me, in a strange and unexpected manner, most seasonable relief! Behold, how he takes my part, the Lord preserves my life; for, alas! the small forces I have with me, are unable to secure it; and can by no means support me against those numerous enemies that thought to destroy me.

Ver. 5.] And as for those spies that undertook to find out all my hiding places (1 Sam. xxiii. 22, 23), he shall bring the mischief they intended to me upon themselves: take a just vengeance on them, and execute thy threatenings, O Lord, against such treacherous persons.

Ver. 6.] In the mean time I will not be sparing in expressing my thankfulness for what thou hast done already, but make thee my grateful acknowledgments both in word and deed. First, I will offer thee liberal sacrifices; and then I will accompany them with my praises of thy wisdom, power, and goodness, O Lord; which is the most pleasing sacrifice, I know, unto thee, and the most delightful employment.

Ver. 7.] Who, by his special providence, art marvellously delivered out of that distress wherein I was, and all the dangers which it threatened: for my eyes now dare look upon those enemies in their retreat, from whom I lately fled for fear (1 Sam. xxiii. 26—28).

PSALM LV.

To the chief Musician on Neginoth. Maschil. A Psalm of David.

1 GIVE ear to my prayer, O God; and hide not myself from my supplication.

2 Attend unto me, and hear me: I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise;

3 Because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked: for they east iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me.

4 My heart is sore pained within me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me.

5 Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me.

6 And I said, O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest.

7 Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. Selah.

8 I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest.

9 Destroy, O LORD, and divide their tongues: for I have seen violence and strife in the city.

10 Day and night they go about it upon the walls thereof: mischief also and sorrow are in the midst of it.

11 Wickedness is in the midst thereof: deceit and guile depart not from her streets.

12 For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself

PSALM LV.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm was sent to the master of the music to be sung as the former: having an occasion something like it. For the complaint which he makes in the middle of the Psalm, that his greatest confidant proved treacherous to him, makes it probable that it was composed when Absalom's rebellion broke out, and he was forced to flee suddenly from Jerusalem: and, as he was going barefoot upon mount Olivet (he and all his company weeping), to increase his sorrow, met the news that Ahithophel also was among the conspirators, 2 Sam. xv. 31. Upon which, we read there, he presently fell to his prayers; and as soon as he came to a place where he could rest, and retire himself, he represented, it is likely, the sadness of his condition more largely in this Psalm: beseeching God to disappoint the conspirators (ver. 9). First, because of the violence they had committed at Jerusalem, ver. 9—11: and, secondly, because of the vile treachery of Ahithophel, from the twelfth to the fifteenth, which seems to me ought to be connected with the beginning of the ninth verse; for he goes on, in the fifteenth, to beseech God to defeat them all, which he had begun in the ninth, but breaks off to insert his reasons why he was so earnest; and then, in the conclusion, he exhorts all those that adhered to him not to be discouraged, but to cast their care upon the Lord; who would reward their pious confidence in him, by protecting and delivering them, and destroying their and his enemies.

Ver. 1.] O God, the supreme judge of all the world, I most humbly address myself to thee, who art inclined to relieve those that are oppressed; beseeching thee not to reject a poor supplicant, but graciously to receive his petition which he puts up unto thee.

Ver. 2.] Let the sadness of my condition move thee to consider and relieve me; which I am not able to represent in my prayer, without shrieks and lamentable cries: so great is the perturbation of my mind.

Ver. 3.] Because my own son is become my enemy, and hath blown the trumpet of rebellion against me (2 Sam. xv. 10), and because of the sore straits to which he hath wickedly reduced me: for which, that there might be some colour, he and his associates load me with false accusations, and say I am unjust, and take no care of my people (ver. 3, 4), and there-

fore furiously set themselves against me to dethrone me.

Ver. 4.] This is a sore grief unto my heart, and puts me into the very agonies of death: which, without thy mercy, I must suddenly expect (2 Sam. xvii. 2).

Ver. 5.] The suddenness and strength of this conspiracy have struck me into such a fear, as makes me tremble: I am involved in such difficulties, that, which way soever I look, horror and consternation seize upon me.

Ver. 6.] In this confusion I rather wished than hoped to escape (2 Sam. xv. 15), saying, Who will lend me wings as swift as those of a dove, that I may flee away to some place of safety and repose?

Ver. 7.] Lo, then would I go to some far-distant country, though I wandered I knew not whither (2 Sam. xv. 20); I would hide myself in some desert place, remote from all society.

Ver. 8.] And I would make all the haste imaginable to escape this fierce persecution (2 Sam. xvii. 16, 21), which is risen like a sudden storm of wind, or violent tempest, and threatens utterly to subvert me.

Ver. 9.] O Lord, let that speedy destruction swallow up them which they design against me (2 Sam. xvii. 19), divide their counsels, and raise dissensions among them (2 Sam. xv. 34; xvii. 14, 15), for I am certainly informed, that, by rapine and cruelty, brawling and contention, they have filled the whole city of Jerusalem with tumult and confusion.

Ver. 10.] There is nothing else to be seen, either by day or by night: for they that guard the gates, or go the rounds, make it their business to ravage and spoil, to pick quarrels, and fall out with every body they meet withal: and such as run to the main guards, in hope to meet with some relief, are miserably deceived; for there the same iniquity, oppression, and injurious dealing, keep their station.

Ver. 11.] There is no place free either from their open violence, or secret fraud and deceit; but they barbarously abuse, or cunningly circumvent, the inhabitants, both within doors and without.

Ver. 12.] And there is one most notorious traitor, whose ingratitude deserves to be severely punished; for he hath maliciously reproached and calumniated me and my government, when I thought of no such treachery: for we never had any quarrel (then his treason would not have been so strange, but far more tolerable) nor did he give any sign of hatred to me; for then I could have secured myself, by withdrawing from his familiarity.

against me; then I would have hid myself from him:

13 But *it was* thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance.

14 We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company.

15 Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into hell: for wickedness is in their dwellings, and among them.

16 As for me, I will call upon God; and the Lord shall save me.

17 Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.

18 He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle *that was* against me: for there were many with me.

Ver. 13.] No; thou, O most perfidious of all mankind, who contrivest this mischief against me, wast the person whom I esteemed above all others; whom I loved as myself; whose counsel I ever followed; and to whom, as my friend, I unbosomed all my secrets.

Ver. 14.] Whose conversation was most delightful to me, and to whom I thought I had been tied, not only by the bond of civil friendship, but (which is far stronger) of religion.

Ver. 15.] Let death seize on them as unexpectedly as this treason broke out against me: let them sink on a sudden into the grave, when they think of nothing less; for wheresoever they go, all manner of mischief marches along with them.

Ver. 16.] As for me, I will injure nobody to preserve myself, but only commend myself and my cause to God, the righteous judge: and the almighty Lord, who changes not, will deliver me as he hath done formerly.

Ver. 17.] For this I will not cease to solicit him when I go to bed, and when I rise, and before I take my repast; both in my inward thoughts, and with my mouth, in silent desires and lamentable moans, I will never give over my importunity, till he graciously grant my petition, and send me relief.

Ver. 18.] He will rescue me from the hand of this rebellious army which comes against me, and restore me to my throne in peace: for be they never so numerous, there is a far greater power on my side, to defend me, and to fight for me.

Ver. 19.] God himself, who hath so long governed the world most justly, and never alters nor changes,

19 God shall hear, and afflict them, even he that abideth of old. Selah. Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God.

20 He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him: he hath broken his covenant.

21 *The words* of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war *was* in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet *were* they drawn swords.

22 Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.

23 But thou, O God, shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; but I will trust in thee.

will hear my prayer, and bring down their pride: for having prospered hitherto in their villany, there is not one of them that repents; but they all pertinaciously persist in their rebellion, without any fear of the divine vengeance.

Ver. 20.] Especially that perfidious person, who hath not only violated all the laws of friendship, but profanely broken his promise and oath of fidelity, wherein he was engaged to me.

Ver. 21.] Nothing can be falser than he; who entertained me with the fairest and smoothest language, when, at the same time, he was contriving this rebellion in his heart: all his soft words and tender professions of kindness to me, served only to hide his design of giving me a mortal wound.

Ver. 22.] But why do I trouble myself any farther with him? he not dejected, O my soul (and let me give this counsel to every one that adheres to me), but, reposing thy humble trust in God, cast all the burdens of thy cares upon him, who will certainly support thee under any troubles that he is pleased to impose upon thee. Preserve thy integrity; and, though thou mayest be shaken and disturbed for a time, he will not suffer thee to be moved out of thy place, but quietly settle thee there again.

Ver. 23.] But as for those that have given me this disturbance, thou, O God, wilt bring them to an untimely end, and throw them headlong into the pit of destruction. They are men that thirst after blood, and by all manner of fraud and treachery endeavour to compass their ends; and such shall perish in the flower of their age, when I trust to spend my days in prosperity and peace.

PSALM LVI.

To the chief Musician, upon Jonath-*elem-rechokim*. Michtam of David, when the Philistines took him in Gath.

I BE merciful unto me, O God: for man would swallow me up; he fighting daily oppresseth me.

2 Mine enemies would daily swallow me up: for they be many that fight against me, O thou most high.

PSALM LVI.

ARGUMENT.—A Psalm composed by David, when, for fear of Saul, he fled like an innocent dove into remote countries. More particularly when he was forced to take shelter among the Philistines in Gath (1 Sam. xxi.), where the lords of the court brought him to king Achish, with such high commendations of his valour, as he thought might endanger his life. And therefore he put on the guise of a man beside

himself; silently bewailing the sadness of his condition, which constrained him to make use of such artifices; and complaining to God of the cruelty of his enemies, who had driven him into this and many other straits: but making no remonstrances to Achish how he was used, nor begging his assistance against them. Not a word of this; which is the reason, possibly, why he compares himself here in the title to a *silent* or *dumb dove*, if interpreters rightly understand the words *jonath-*elem**, which

3 What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.

4 In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.

5 Every day they wrest my words: all their thoughts *are* against me for evil.

6 They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark my steps, when they wait for my soul.

7 Shall they escape by iniquity? in *thine* anger cast down the people, O God.

8 Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: *are they* not in thy book?

they expound in that manner. And Kimchi thinks, he the rather compares himself to a *dove*, because that is accounted a *silly creature* (Hos. vii. 11); and David now seemed no better.

And this is the reason that this Psalm is also called *Michtam* (see Ps. xvi.), because it is a commemoration of God's singular care over him, in many great dangers, especially at Gath; when he entirely depended upon his favour and love alone; supporting himself (and seeking no farther for help) by his gracious promise to him; which he thankfully acknowledges, especially in the conclusion of this Psalm.

Which was penned, it appears from ver. 8, after many wanderings of this good man; first, to Samuel in Naioth (1 Sam. xix. 18), then to Jonathan (xx. 1), then to Nob (xxi. 1), after that to Gath (ver. 10), from thence to Adullam (xxii. 1), and then into the country of Moab (ver. 3): from whence he was admonished by the prophet Gad, to go to a place of greater security (ver. 6), which he found in the forest of Hareth (1 Sam. xxii. 5); where, I suppose he might have a little repose and leisure, to reflect upon what was past, and to compose this Psalm: and from that forest, I fancy, he might call himself (if we admit of Bochartus's change of one point, lib. i. De Animal. cap. 3. par. ii.), *Jonath-elim-rechokim*, "a dove in the remote woods." Where he made this Psalm before the rest of his wanderings to other places, which afterward followed. And when he came to the kingdom, he delivered it to the chief master of music, to be sung after the tune of a song which began with those words (as Aben Ezra takes it), *Jonath-elim-rechokin*.

Ver. 1.] O God, the supreme, and therefore impartial, judge of all the world, take pity upon me, I beseech thee, and rescue me from the violence of my enemies: for Saul, forgetting his own mortality, and how unseemly it is for frail man to continue his enmities for ever, most eagerly pursues me, with an insatiable desire to take away my life: he never intermits his persecutions, but presses me so closely, that he gives me no time to breathe.

Ver. 2.] He sends abroad his spies, to watch all opportunities to ensnare me: for which they gape as greedily as ravenous beasts do for their prey: and great multitudes there are, O thou Most High, (who alone canst disappoint them) that, proud of their numbers, and of their power, have insolently set themselves against me to destroy me.

Ver. 3.] As I have just reason to fear they will, unless I be defended by thee, with whom I have entrusted myself and all my concerns: which is the only thing whereby I overcome those fears when they seize upon me.

Ver. 4.] By the help of God, I will be so far from being dismayed, that I will rejoice in the faithful promise he hath made to me by his prophet (1 Sam. xvi.

9 When I cry *unto thee*, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God *is* for me.

10 In God will I praise *his* word: in the Lord will I praise *his* word.

11 In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.

12 Thy vows *are* upon me, O God: I will render praises unto thee.

13 For thou hast delivered my soul from death: *wilt not thou deliver* my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?

13; 2 Sam. iii. 9; v. 2). Though it be not fulfilled presently, yet by his assistance I will depend, as I have done hitherto, upon his fidelity for the performance of it, and never fear what frail man can do to hinder it.

Ver. 5.] I know what an ill construction my enemies would put upon these words, if they could hear what I say: for they do nothing but wrest the most innocent speeches; and because I profess to confide in God, pretend that I conspire against the king (1 Sam. xxiv. 9), their whole business being nothing else but to contrive how to do me mischief.

Ver. 6.] For this end they hold many consultations among themselves, and lay snares privily for me; curiously observing all my motions, and still expecting an opportunity to take away my life.

Ver. 7.] Shall this iniquity always go unpunished? Or by their subtlety and craft shall they, who thus unjustly persecute the innocent, escape thy vengeance? O God, the righteous judge, throw down those insolent people, who have so long provoked thy patience, and make them feel the effects of thy just displeasure.

Ver. 8.] Thou art perfectly acquainted, I am sure, how often I have been forced to fly, like a vagabond, from place to place; which hath cost me many a tear; good Lord, preserve a kind remembrance of them; and let them not perish as things thou nothing regardest. But why am I so infortunate for this, since I know thou art so far from despising my misery, that thou art as mindful of it, as if thou kept a register of every tear, and all my troubles?

Ver. 9.] My prayer therefore shall prevail when my enemies oppress me, and obtain a glorious victory over them; of this I am assured, because the mighty God, who rules all the world, is on my side.

Ver. 10.] By his gracious assistance I will continue my resolution to rejoice in the faithful promise I before mentioned: he is the eternal Lord, who never alters nor changes, and I will be like him, immutably rejoicing in that faithful promise.

Ver. 11.] Nothing shall shake the confidence I have reposed in him; nor will I fear what the greatest man can do, were he more powerful than he is, to hinder the accomplishment of what the Lord designs for me.

Ver. 12.] Nor will I ever be unmindful of the promises I have made to thee, O God; to whom, when I was in distress, I vowed the most grateful acknowledgments, if thou wouldest deliver me; though I am not able to requite thy kindness, yet I will not cease to magnify and extol it with my highest praises.

Ver. 13.] For thou hast so remarkably rescued me from death (to thy goodness I ascribe it, not to my policy) when I was in the power of the Philistines, that I ought not to doubt of thy continued preservation of me, from the snares my enemies lay to entrap me, or from the open violence they use to overthrow me: thou wilt support me still to praise thee, and to perform further service to thee here in this world, as I intend to do most sincerely.

PSALM LVII.

To the chief Musician. *Al-taschith.* Michtam of David, when he fled from Saul in the cave.

1 BE merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.

2 I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth *all things* for me.

3 He shall send from heaven, and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up. Selah. God shall send forth his mercy and his truth.

4 My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men,

whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.

5 Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; let thy glory be above all the earth.

6 They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down: they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen themselves. Selah.

7 My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise.

8 Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early.

PSALM LVII.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm, the title informs us, was penned upon the like occasion with the former. For after several other wanderings (besides those he speaks of in the foregoing Psalm, ver. 8), or removes from place to place, mentioned 1 Sam. xxiii. you find David in the strong hold of En-gedi (ver. 29), where there was a cave among the rocks (xiv. 2, 3), in which David and his men lurked and hid themselves for fear of Saul. Who, in his pursuit of them, came to ease himself in this very place where they skulked; and thereby presented David with as fair an opportunity, as could be desired, to kill him. Which he might have done without any noise, if his piety and religious resolution to do nothing that was sinful, no, not to gain a kingdom, but (trusting to the faithful promise he speaks of, Ps. lvi. 4. 10), to wait wholly upon God, to prefer him when and as he pleased to the throne, had not hindered him. For some of his men, observing the advantage, would fain have despatched him, if David had not forbidden the person who was ready to strike the blow, saying, *Al-taschith*, “thou shalt not destroy him;” or “destroy him not.” So some expound that word, which we find in the title of the Psalm; though others (observing the same word to be in the title of the two following Psalms, and of the seventy-fifth, which belongeth not to this matter) judge it more probable that *Al-taschith* was the beginning of some song, according to which this Psalm was to be sung. To which, notwithstanding, in my opinion, it may be replied, that those three Psalms which follow after this had that title prefixed, only to show that they were to be sung like this.

In which David commemorates God's great mercy in mollifying the heart of Saul, at that time, by the kindness and piety which he expressed towards him: remembering, in the first place, what kind of thoughts he had when he was in the cave, and saw himself in manifest danger of being taken by Saul's forces: and then blessing God for the sudden change which was made in his condition, by Saul's falling into his hand, to do what he pleased with him, by the demonstration he gave him, that he had no traitorous thoughts in his heart; but bare still a due reverence to him, notwithstanding the ill usage he received from him.

It is called *Michtam*, for the same reason that the former was, because of the singular favour which God showed him in this deliverance; more precious to him than any jewel, and that deserved an everlasting remembrance (see Ps. xvi.)

Ver. 1.] O God, the ruler and governor of all the world, I most earnestly beseech thee to be merciful and gracious to me; O take some pity upon me, who rely solely on thy mercy, having no confidence in these fortresses, or secret places, where I hide myself; but trusting merely to thy almighty protection, on which I will still depend, as I have done hitherto, for defence and preservation, till this danger be past, which is now independent over me, and threatens to destroy me.

Ver. 2.] There is none superior, or equal, to him, unto whom I will continually commend myself: unto that mighty God, who will finish, I hope, what he hath begun to do for me.

Ver. 3.] There are greater armies in heaven, than those that here surround me; which, rather than I shall perish, he will send for my deliverance; he will expose him to shame and reproach, that gapes like a ravenous beast to devour me: I doubt not of it; for, besides his infinite mercy, I have his promise for my security; in the performance of which, he will visibly declare his fidelity.

Ver. 4.] And now there is a fit opportunity, when my life is in extreme danger; for here I lie close, and dare not stir, being encompassed with enemies picked out on purpose to destroy me (1 Sam. xxiv. 2), who are as fierce and cruel as lions, and enraged against me so furiously, that they are continually incensing Saul to pursue me; tearing my good name (as they hope to do me) in pieces, and giving the most deadly wound to my reputation (1 Sam. xxiv. 9.)

Ver. 5.] Confute them, O God, the most righteous judge of men's actions and intentions; and by delivering me from this imminent danger, raise to thyself the highest praises: and spread the fame of thy glorious power, goodness, wisdom, and truth, throughout all the earth.

Ver. 6.] And how ready art thou to hear the prayers of thy faithful servant! For, after all their projects and devices to entrap me, when I was just falling into their hands, I am miraculously preserved; and they themselves precipitously run into that very danger, wherein they thought to have caught me (1 Sam. xxiv. 3—5, &c.).

Ver. 7.] My heart also is ready, O God, my heart is prepared, and firmly resolved to pay thee the vows which I made in my distress; my song shall be of thee; and, with all the joy I can express, I will set forth thy praise.

Ver. 8.] My tongue, wherewith I ought to glorify thee, shall be no longer silent, or merely full of complaints; nor shall any instrument of music be wanting to accompany my hymns: which I will sing unto thee so early, that I will prevent the rising sun.

9 I will praise thee, O LORD, among the people: I will sing unto thee among the nations.

10 For thy mercy is great unto the heavens and thy truth unto the clouds.

Ver. 9.] Nor will I content myself with my private acknowledgments of thy goodness; but I will publish thy praise in the greatest assemblies of thy people, among whom this song shall be sung; yea, other nations shall read therein, how thankful I am to thee for what thou hast done.

Ver. 10.] For it is fit my thankfulness should be as

11 Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: let thy glory be above all the earth.

boundless as thy mercy; which transcends all my expressions; and hath nothing equal to it, but thy faithfulness and truth.

Ver. 11.] Be thou still exalted in these, O God, and raise to thyself thereby the highest praise: spread the fame of them everywhere, that thou mayest be glorified throughout all the world.

PSALM LVIII.

To the chief Musician. *Al-taschith. Michtam of David.*

I Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation? do ye judge uprightly, O ye sons of men?

2 Yea, in heart ye work wickedness; ye weigh the violence of your hands in the earth.

3 The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.

4 Their poison is like the poison of a serpent: they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear;

5 Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely.

6 Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth: break out the great teeth of the young lions, O LORD.

PSALM LVIII.

ARGUMENT.—This, and the next Psalm, in order of time, precede the foregoing. But it is an ordinary method among the Hebrews to go backward from the last to the first; as they seem to me to do very plainly in these three Psalms, which have the title of *Al-taschith*. For David's first escape, when Saul sent to kill him, was certainly the occasion of Ps. lix. And then Saul calling his privy-council together, who, without any more ado, pronounced him guilty of high-treason; it is the subject of this present Psalm. And after that Saul persecuted him with the greater colour and show of justice, accusing him of the worst of crimes; as he complains in many places, particularly in the Psalm foregoing: which being called *Al-taschith*, for a peculiar reason (see there), this, when it was delivered to the chief musician, was appointed to be sung after the same manner with that, and had the same name given it, with the title of *Michtam* also; because it contains a memorable reproof of those evil counsellors, who, against their conscience, had condemned David, merely to please the king, and give him a pretence to destroy him. And therefore he prophesies a signal vengeance should overtake them (which he would have every body observe); and that so suddenly and dreadfully, that he compares it to the mischief which a whirlwind doth, when it carries all before it in a moment: and particularly, he remembers the pots and caldrons over the fire, which should suffer by it; to intimate, I suppose, that these men were great oppressors, and devoured the people; as the prophets often complain, in that very language, particularly Micah iii. 2, 3, where you read how the senators of Israel broke the very bones of the poor, and chopped them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron. Which place affords the best explication that I can find of the ninth verse of this Psalm. Where I take *hai* and *haron* to refer to thorns, and render the former *green*, or alive, the other *dry*, or scorched and burnt. But whatsoever these words signify, the repetition of *chemo* before each of them plainly

denotes (to any one that understands the Hebrew language), that the things meant by those words should be served both alike.

Ver. 1.] From whom may we expect justice, if not from the princes and rulers of the people met together in council? But let me ask that grave assembly, Do you verily think that you have pronounced a righteous sentence against me? Did you judge according to your consciences, uprightly and sincerely; and not suffer yourselves to be biassed by your affections?

Ver. 2.] You know the contrary to be true; and that you are not only disposed to do as the king would have you; but have hearts fraught with malice and wicked devices against me: you that ought to weigh things in an even balance, and judge a cause according to its merits, suffer yourselves to be inclined by base respects, to do an open violence to your country, and to oppress the innocent.

Ver. 3.] But it is no wonder I am thus used by a wicked brood, who never had any sense of God and goodness; but were depraved from the very womb: going astray as soon as they could go; and telling lies as soon as they could speak.

Ver. 4.] And such is the malignity of their venomous nature, they tell the most malicious and destructive lies of me; which strike at my life as plainly as if they were the poison of a serpent: whom they resemble in this also, that they will not be better instructed, nor, as becomes good judges, keep an ear open to farther information; but are as obstinate as the deaf adder (so much spoken of in our neighbouring countries), which can hear well enough, but stops both her ears.

Ver. 5.] And will not listen to the magical song, wherewith their cunning men are wont to charm those serpents; and draw them together out of their holes.

Ver. 6.] I appeal, therefore, from them unto thee, O God, the most righteous judge; beseeching thee to disable those men's forces, whose wickedness is incorrigible: though they be as strong and terrible, as fierce and ravenous, as the young lions, thou, O

7 Let them melt away as waters which run continually: when he bendeth his bow to shoot his arrows, let them be as cut in pieces.

8 As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away: like the untimely birth of a woman, that they may not see the sun.

9 Before your pots can feel the thorns, he

Lord, who art superior to all, canst easily disarm them, and leave them a desire, without any power, to do me mischief.

Ver. 7.] Or if they have any strength remaining, let their courage fail them when they would attempt anything against me; let them be dissipated like waters which slide away: when Saul bends his mind to do me any harm, let him miss his aim; like him that shoots a broken arrow out of his bow.

Ver. 8.] Or be like a snail, that appears with a threatening look when it puts forth its horns; but the farther it goes, the more it wastes and spends itself: whatsoever designs he and his followers may have to destroy me, let them all miscarry and prove like an abortive child, which dies in the womb, and never sees the light of this world.

Ver. 9.] O ye unrighteous judges; who, instead of preserving the people, devour and eat them up: God

shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in his wrath.

10 The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.

11 So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.

shall hurry you away suddenly, as in a furious tempest; which, before your flesh-pots can feel the thorns, carries them all away, both the green thorns and the dry.

Ver. 10.] Which just judgment of God, when innocent people, whom you have oppressed, shall behold, it will fill them with joy; yea, they shall triumph over these wicked men, like a great conqueror; who, returning with an absolute and complete victory from the slaughter of his enemies, dips his feet in their blood, as he passes over their carcasses.

Ver. 11.] And the most vulgar people, who observe little, seeing so remarkable a vengeance, shall confess and say, Surely it is best to be just and pious: surely there is a supreme judge, whatsoever profane men imagine, who takes notice of all that is done upon earth, and punishes or rewards men according to their desires.

PSALM LIX.

To the chief Musician. *Al-taschith.* Michtam of David; when Saul sent, and they watched the house to kill him.

1 DELIVER me from mine enemies, O my God: defend me from them that rise up against me.

2 Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloody men.

3 For, lo, they lie in wait for my soul: the mighty are gathered against me; nor for my transgressions, nor for my sin, O LORD.

4 They run and prepare themselves without my fault: awake to help me, and behold.

5 Thou therefore, O LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel, awake to visit all the heathen: be not merciful to any wicked transgressors. Selah.

PSALM LIX.

ARGUMENT.—The title sufficiently informs us of the occasion of this Psalm, wherein David expresses what his thoughts and affections were, when Saul sent officers to watch his house all night; and to slay him when he came out of his doors in the morning: as you may read 1 Sam. xix. 11—18. He represents his danger; beseeches God's protection; describes the wickedness of his enemies, and their diligence to destroy him; commends himself to God: expresses his confidence in him; and at last gratefully acknowledges God's goodness, who, by the kindness of his wife, preserved him from this danger. Which was so great, and the deliverance from it so remarkable, that he would have it commemorated in this Psalm: which is therefore called *Michtam* (see Ps. xvi.): and was sent to the master of music in the tabernacle, to be sung as the two former, which have the name *Al-taschith* (see Ps. lvii.).

Ver. 1.] O God, who hast hitherto graciously preserved me (see 1 Sam. xix. 10), take me now into thy protection, and deliver me from this great danger: thou seest the number and the power of my enemies, who are risen up to destroy me; be thou my defence, I beseech thee; and bring me into some place of safety, where they may not be able to reach me.

Ver. 2.] Rescue me from the malice of men, whose business and constant employment it is to do wickedly: save me from the cruelty of those, whom nothing but my blood will satisfy.

Ver. 3.] For, lo, a strong guard hath beset my house, and lies in wait to apprehend me, and take away my life: though I have committed no offence against them, either great or less, as thou, O Lord, from whom nothing can be hid, very well knowest.

Ver. 4.] Unprovoked by me (I dare again repeat it, so great is my innocence) they very busily run to and fro, and with all diligence dispose their watch in every place to hinder my escape: O that thou wouldst therefore seasonably interpose for my succour, and consider the danger of my condition!

Ver. 5.] What is all their power and force to thine? who art the sovereign Lord of the world, and commandest all the hosts in heaven and earth; and hast made also a gracious covenant with thy people, to protect and defend them: appear now for my relief, and punish all those wicked men who call themselves thy people, but are as barbarous and cruel, as false and perfidious, as the heathen: do not spare them, therefore, nor show any favour to such as violate all the laws of justice and charity, and keep no faith with their neighbours.

Ver. 6.] After I had escaped the fury of Saul in

6 They return at evening : they make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city.

7 Behold, they belch out with their mouth : swords *are* in their lips : for who, *say they*, doth hear ?

8 But thou, O LORD, shalt laugh at them ; thou shalt have all the heathen in derision.

9 *Because of his strength* will I wait upon thee : for God *is* my defence.

10 The God of my mercy shall prevent me : God shall let me see *my desire* upon mine enemies.

11 Slay them not, lest my people forget : scatter them by thy power ; and bring them down, O LORD our shield.

12 *For the sin of their mouth and the words of their lips* let them even be taken in their

the day, he renews his attempts in the evening ; and sends armed men to apprehend me (1 Sam. xix. 10, 11) : some of which lie about my house, ready, like a growling dog, to seize upon me ; and others (should they miss me there) go round about the city to way-lay me in every corner.

Ver. 7.] Behold, how full their hearts are of malice ! which bursts out at their mouth : they openly threaten to kill me (1 Sam. xix. 15) : for who, say they, shall call them to any account for it, when they have despatched me ?

Ver. 8.] Thou, O Lord, art not in their thoughts, who wilt so disappoint them in their designs, as to make them very ridiculous : thou wilt expose all those paganish people to the scorn and derision of those who see how they are defeated (1 Sam. xix. 15).

Ver. 9.] For what is the strength of Saul to thee ? on whom I will wait with the same diligence, that they watch for me : knowing that I am safer under God's protection, than if my house were an impregnable tower.

Ver. 10.] He who hath given me so many demonstrations of his love, will not now desert me ; but make way for my timely escape, notwithstanding all their diligence to apprehend me : let them observe me as closely as they can, God will let me behold their disappointment.

Ver. 11.] Not that I desire they should all be slain at one stroke, which, though a terrible vengeance, might soon slip out of my countrymen's mind ; whose profit I desire, more than my own private revenge : and therefore wish rather that thou wouldest employ thy power, O Lord our protector, first to depose them from their honour and high place ; and having laid them low, and made them contemptible, then to disperse them here and there, and make them wander up and down as vagabonds ; that they may remain everywhere public spectacles of thy just displeasure.

Ver. 12.] The falsehoods and calumnies which their mouths continually utter deserve this vengeance :

pride : and for cursing and lying *which* they speak.

13 Consume *them* in wrath, consume *them* that they *may not be* : and let them know that God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth. Selah.

14 And at evening let them return ; and let them make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city.

15 Let them wander up and down for meat, and grudge if they be not satisfied.

16 But I will sing of thy power ; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning : for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble.

17 Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing : for God is my defence, and the God of my mercy.

which shall certainly come upon them : for, though they may thrive by this means for the present, yet at last these very artifices shall prove their ruin : especially since they are so arrogant and audacious, as to dare to forswear themselves, and to confirm their forgeries with oaths and horrid execrations.

Ver. 13.] Let such vile wretches as these, who incense thy just displeasure against them after this manner, be utterly consumed : let them waste away by degrees in their dispersions, till there be none of them found : that they may be convinced there is a supreme being, and most righteous judge, who governs all things, and controls even kings themselves, not only among us, but throughout the world.

Ver. 14.] Let them therefore watch me now, as narrowly as they please (ver. 7) ; lying near my house, like a dog, ready to seize upon me ; or hunting about the city everywhere to apprehend me.

Ver. 15.] They shall be punished in their kind, and go up and down the city and country hereafter, upon another design : wandering, like a hungry dog, from door to door, to get something to eat ; and forced to pass whole nights in complaints for want of satisfaction.

Ver. 16.] Whilst I (whom they thought to have devoured) am praising thy power, as I intend to do continually ; I will get up early, to give thee the highest praises for thy mercy, (as I did that morn'g when I had escaped the hands of those that watched for me), because thou didst so mightily defend me, and take me into thy gracious protection ; when I was in such a strait, that without thy miraculous mercy I must have perished.

Ver. 17.] It is but just that I should praise thee (who didst inspire me with strength and courage) with the same diligence that I prayed to thee, against the power of Saul (ver. 9). For, whosoever was the instrument, it was God that brought me to a place of safety ; that God, who hath been most merciful to me, and tied me unto him by innumerable benefits.

PSALM LX.

To the chief Musician upon Shushan-eduth, Michtam of David, to teach ; when he strove with Aram-naharaim, and with Aram-zobah ; when Joab returned, and smote of Edom in the valley of salt twelve thousand.

1 O God, thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeas'd ; O turn thyself to us again.

PSALM LX.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm, we learn by the title, was

2 Thou hast made the earth to tremble ; thou hast broken it : heal the breaches thereof ; for it shaketh.

penned by David after Saul's persecution was ended by death ; and David not only ruled over Judah,

3 Thou hast shewed thy people hard things: thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment.

4 Thou hast given a banner to them that feared thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth. Selah.

5 That thy beloved may be delivered; save *with* thy right hand, and hear me.

6 God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.

7 Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of mine head; Judah is my lawgiver;

8 Moab is my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe: Philistia, triumph thou because of me.

9 Who will bring me *into* the strong city? who will lead me into Edom?

10 *Will* not thou, O God, which hadst cast us off? and *thou*, O God, which didst not go out with our armies?

but Israel also. Till which time the Philistines and other nations afflicted the country very much, by reason of the divisions there were between the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah: as they had done also all the days of Saul, while he was busying himself in pursuing his hated against David; and neglected his foreign enemies so much, that the Philistines were too hard for him, and at last overthrew him in that great battle wherein he and his sons were slain (1 Sam. xxxi.). But when David was come to the crown, and both kingdoms also united in him, God himself seemed to lift up an ensign to them (as he speaks here, ver. 4), to call them to resort to his own consent unto David, in assured hope of victory over their enemies. Accordingly he subdued the Philistines, as you read 2 Sam. viii. 1 (which chapter must be read for the understanding of this Psalm), and after that smote the Moabites, ver. 2 of that chapter; and then, in a memorable battle (particularly taken notice of in the title of this Psalm), overthrew the Syrians, called here and in other places Aram: both those that lived between the two rivers Tigris and Euphrates, called Naharaim: and those that adjoined to them, in that part of Syria, called Zobah (ver. 3, &c.).

And returning from this victory, after his lieutenant-general Abishai had slain of the Edomites eighteen thousand (2 Sam. viii. 13; 1 Chron. xviii. 12), Joab, the general of all his forces, fell upon them again, and killed in the same place, the valley of salt, twelve thousand more (as the title of this Psalm informs us), and afterwards destroyed them entirely, leaving never a male-child, that he could find, remaining (1 Kings xi. 15, 16).

For all which expeditions, when David was preparing himself, he composed this Psalm, and delivered it to the master of music in the tabernacle to be sung upon an instrument of six strings which was wont to be used in solemn thanksgivings (and therefore called *Shushan-eduth*). For he nothing doubted, but God would prosper his arms better than he had done Saul's; and both give him the victory over their forces in the field, and bring him also into their fortified cities (ver. 9), as we read he did, 2 Sam. viii. 14. Which made this Psalm also be called *Michtam of David* (see Ps. xvi.); being a most precious memorial, worthy to be ever preserved, of his faith in God, and of the admirable success of it, whereby posterity should learn to trust in him.

Ver. 1.] O God, the judge of all the world, who hast lately rejected us, and refused to go out with our armies; who hast broken and scattered our forces (1 Sam. xxxi. 1. 7), so highly had our sins provoked thy displeasure; I most humbly beseech thee to return to us with thy favour, and make us as prosperous as we have been unsuccessful.

Ver. 2.] There have been dreadful commotions among ourselves, and miserable rents and divisions

(2 Sam. ii. 9, 10, 17, iii. 1), the woful effects of which remain to this day, and call for thy help; who alone canst repair the breaches our folly hath made, and perfect the union which is begun.

Ver. 3.] Thou hast made us feel what it is to offend thee, by inflicting grievous punishments upon us, wherein thou hast fulfilled the words of thy servant Moses (Deut. xxviii. 18, 34); for we have been like to men bereft of the use of their reason by some intoxicating potion, and have madly destroyed one another.

Ver. 4.] But now thou hast granted the desires of those that devoutly worship thee, and according to thy faithful promise (2 Sam. iii. 9, 18), given me to them to be their king; to whom they should all repair, as soldiers do to their ensign when it is lifted up, and unanimously fight against their enemies under my conduct.

Ver. 5.] Which I beseech thee to bless and prosper; that by the mighty power accompanying my arms, I may be an instrument of delivering thy beloved people from those that have oppressed them.

Ver. 6.] Why should I doubt of it? And not rather rejoice in assured hope of victory; since God, who is most holy, and cannot lie, hath said, He will deliver them by my hand (2 Sam. iii. 18), and hath already put me in possession (as he also promised, ver. 2) of all the country about Samaria, which I will distribute under such officers as I think fit to set over them.

Ver. 7.] Gilead also and Manasseh, who were lately under another king (2 Sam. ii. 9), have submitted themselves unto me; and so hath the tribe of Ephraim, which is a main support of my authority: these, and all the rest of the tribes of Israel, are now united to the royal tribe of Judah, which (according to the word of our forefather, Gen. xlix. 10) supplies me with wise and able men to administer the laws, and order the affairs of my kingdom.

Ver. 8.] Which shall now extend itself beyond the bounds of this country; for I will tread Moab under my feet, and reduce them to the vilest servitude (2 Sam. viii. 2); I will trample also upon the Edomites, and make them my slaves (ver. 14). The Philistines likewise, whom I have begun to smite (2 Sam. v. 17, &c. 22, &c.), shall add to my triumphs, and be forced to meet me as their conquering lord (2 Sam. viii. 1).

Ver. 9.] These are difficult things indeed; and I may well ask, when I consider how potent these nations are, By what power or force shall I enter that strongly-fenced city, in the frontiers of their country? who is it that will conduct me into Idumea, and make me master of it?

Ver. 10.] But I can soon answer myself; for why should I despair of thy presence with us, O God of all power and might? who formerly indeed didst reject us, and forsake the conduct of our armies; but now, I hope, will graciously aid us, and make us victorious.

11 Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man.

Ver. 11.] Do not frustrate these hopes; but afford us thy help against the Syrians also (2 Sam. viii. 5), now that they distress us; for no human force is able to deliver us, nor have we any confidence in it, but in thee alone.

12 Through God we shall do valiantly: for he it is that shall tread down our enemies.

Ver. 12.] By whose assistance we will behave ourselves courageously, and do valiant acts; for God will utterly rout our enemies, and tread them down like mire in the streets.

PSALM LXI.

To the chief Musician upon Neginah. A Psalm of David.

1 HEAR my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer.

2 From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

3 For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy.

4 I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah.

5 For thou, O God, hast heard my vows: thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name.

6 Thou wilt prolong the king's life: and his years as many generations.

7 He shall abide before God for ever: O prepare mercy and truth, which may preserve him.

8 So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows.

PSALM LXI.

ARGUMENT.—All agree that, in the beginning of this Psalm, David relates what his thoughts were, when he fled either from Saul or from his son Absalom; who drove him over Jordan, as far as Mahanaim, the very extremity of Judea. Of this latter, it is most probable, he complains here (ver. 2); because afterwards he calls himself king (ver. 6), which he would not have done during the life of Saul, though he was anointed, and designed by God to that high dignity; because nothing could have justified Saul's persecution of him so much as his taking upon him that title.

It may be said, indeed, that he kept this Psalm private till he was possessed of the kingdom, and then delivered it to the chief musician, to be sung as Psalm iv. But that will not seem so likely, when we consider that his danger was over before he had finished this Psalm, and called himself a king, as appears from the latter part of it, beginning ver. 5; where, after a pause, he begins to acknowledge how God had granted the desires he made when he was in distress; and thankfully commemorates his mercy in bringing him back again to his tabernacle: hoping he would prolong his life in the throne (ver. 6), to which he was newly either advanced, or restored by God's goodness. I shall suppose the latter in my paraphrase.

Ver. 1.] O God, the supreme governor and judge of all the world, graciously vouchsafe to admit and answer the petitions of a poor supplicant, who, in a most lamentable condition, cries unto thee most earnestly for relief.

Ver. 2.] Of which I will not despair, though I am upon the brink of being thrust out of my kingdom (2 Sam. xvii. 22, 24), and in such anxiety of mind, that I am even overwhelmed with fear, and grief, and care; still I cry unto thee, saying, Secure me, I beseech thee, and bring me into a place of safety; which as without thee I am not able to reach, so there my enemies may not be able to approach me.

Ver. 3.] For in all my distresses hitherto, thou hast been pleased wonderfully to preserve me: I fled to thee, and was protected, as in an impregnable fortress, when Saul sought to destroy me.

Ver. 4.] Which makes me hope thou wilt restore me again to the place where thou dwellest; and that I shall never be thus banished from it any more, but remain in safety under thy almighty protection, in which I will put my entire confidence.

Ver. 5.] And since thou, O God, hast heard the prayers, which with these vows I made unto thee; and hast given me again the possession of that country, which is the inheritance of thy faithful people:

Ver. 6.] I doubt not but thou wilt grant their king a long and prosperous reign over them, and add so many years to those which his enemies would have cut off: as if thou hadst given him a new life, and added another age unto the former.

Ver. 7.] He shall sit upon his throne, and ever govern in the fear of God: O that thy goodness and faithfulness, which are a stronger guard than all his military forces, may be ever ready at hand to defend him!

Ver. 8.] So will I perpetually sing psalms in praise of them; and learn thereby to be faithful to my promises: and day by day perform the vows which I made unto thee when I was in trouble.

PSALM XLII.

To the chief Musician, to Jeduthun. A Psalm of David.

1 TRULY my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation.

2 He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; I shall not be greatly moved.

PSALM XLII.

ARGUMENT.—There are no petitions at all in this Psalm nor any thanksgivings, but only expressions

of David's faith and confidence in God. Which (notwithstanding the straits he was in, as appears from ver. 3, 4), grew greater and stronger (compare ver. 2 with ver. 6), and moved him to earnest ex-

3 How long will ye imagine mischief against a man? ye shall be slain all of you: as a bowing wall *shall ye be, and as a tottering fence.*

4 They only consult to cast him down from his excellency: they delight in lies: they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly. Selah.

5 My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him.

6 He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved.

7 In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God.

8 Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour

out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah.

9 Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity.

10 Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them.

11 God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power *belongeth* unto God.

12 Also unto thee, O Lord, *belongeth* mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work.

hortations of all other persons, never to trust in men; much less in those wicked arts of fraudulent dealing and robbery, whereby men are wont to advance themselves to great estates; hoping thereby to be so strong, that nobody dare meddle with them: but to place all their confidence in God alone, who can and will make those supports fail those that rely upon them, and bless the piety of such men as depend wholly upon him.

Which would make one think this Psalm was penned by him when he had overcome all the fears into which the rebellion of Absalom at first put him; but yet was not restored to his kingdom. Unto which, when he returned, he committed this meditation to the master of the music, to be sung according to the tune to which Jeduthun, a famous artist, had set the thirty-ninth Psalm.

Ver. 1.] Let the dangers be never so great which threaten my destruction, I am resolved quietly and patiently to submit myself to God; expecting what he will be pleased to do for me, who alone is able to deliver me.

Ver. 2.] Be my enemies never so powerful, I doubt not by his providence to be safe; so secure that though they give me some disturbance, they shall not be able to do it long, much less to throw me quite out of my throne.

Ver. 3.] I wonder at your obstinacy, who continue thus to contrive the ruin of a man, whom God hath so visibly declared that he favours: to what purpose are all your conspiracies, but only to bring sudden destruction upon yourselves? for you shall all perish in this enterprise, and fall to the ground like a wall that is not evenly built; or like a partition made only of loose stones, that have no mortar to cement and hold them fast together.

Ver. 4.] It is plain what they design, and whither all their consultations tend; to dethrone him whom God hath been pleased to advance to the highest dignity: this they hope now to effect by lies and calumnies; in which they please themselves, as formerly they did in fawning and flattery: speaking fairly to me with their mouth, when in their heart they wished my utter ruin (see Ps. lv. 21).

Ver. 5.] But let not this discourage thee, O my

soul; resolve still to wait upon God with quietness and patience: for from him I expect my deliverance.

Ver. 6.] By his providence, as I said before, I doubt not I shall be so safe, so secure, that, do what they can, they shall not be able to take one step more to throw me out of my throne.

Ver. 7.] Both my safety, and my honour, and dignity, depend upon God alone; and not upon their will and pleasure: and I trust not either in fortresses or armies, but make him my confidence, on whom I rely for defence and protection against the strongest enemies.

Ver. 8.] And so I would advise all my people to do continually, in whatsoever condition you be, repose a pious confidence in him; be not fearful, nor too solicitous; but commit yourselves to God by earnest prayer, and implore his help: for he will never fail us.

Ver. 9.] But do not place any confidence in man; for as the multitude are vain, giddy, and unconstant, so the greater sort are false, deceitful, and treacherous: take them altogether, they are no more to be depended on than the vainest thing in the world; which, thrown into the balance against them, will prove more solid and ponderous.

Ver. 10.] And do not by any means, when all human helps may fail you, betake yourselves to frauds, cheating, and calumnies, for support; much less endeavour to enrich yourselves by rapine, spoil, and robbery. Be not so vain as to trust to ill-gotten goods; for if your riches increase by honest means, they are not things wherein to place either your confidence and hope, or your love and joy.

Ver. 11.] For God hath frequently declared, in the course of his providence, as well as in his word; I myself have been witness of it more than once; that by his power he disposes things quite otherways than men project; dashing all their worldly confidences in pieces, and especially defeating the hopes of those that think to prosper in evil courses.

Ver. 12.] And that thou, O Lord, art also exceeding gracious to those that piously trust in thee; preserving and providing for them, when they are destitute of human succour: for thou art not an idle spectator of men's actions, nor acceptest any man's person; but an exact dispenser of rewards and punishments, to every man according to his work.

PSALM LXIII.

A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.

1 O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth

for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;

PSALM LXIII.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm, the title informs us, represents the thoughts which David had when he was

in the wilderness of Judah. But whether by that he meant the forest of Hareth, wherein, after other places, he secured himself when he fled from Saul

2 To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.

3 Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.

4 Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up mine hands in thy name.

5 My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips:

6 When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches.

7 Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.

8 My soul followed thee hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me.

9 But those that seek my soul, to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth.

10 They shall fall by the sword: they shall be a portion for foxes.

11 But the king shall rejoice in God; every one that sweareth by him shall glory: but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.

(1 Sam. xxii. 5); or the wilderness he went through, when he fled from Absalom (2 Sam. xvii. 29), may be questioned. Theodoret takes it for the former; but I incline to the latter, for the same reason I gave before; because he calls himself a king (ver. 11), which he would not have done, as I said (upon Ps. lxi.), during the reign of Saul; because it would have given him too just cause to persecute him; and made the people look upon him as a traitor. Unless we say that he did not publish this Psalm, but reserved it for his own private use, till he came to the kingdom. When he delivered it to the chief musician, for the service of the tabernacle: where he longed very much to be, when he was in his banishment. As appears by this Psalm; in which he expresses exceeding great love to God (as Theodoret notes), and predicts the destruction of his enemies.

Ver. 1.] O God, the governor of the world, who hast ever been my gracious God, and art my only confidence; to thee I early direct my morning thoughts, most earnestly beseeching thee to take pity upon me, in this desolate condition: wherein I languish, and am ready to faint, as I travel through this dry and tiresome wilderness (2 Sam. xvii. 29), where there is no water to refresh me.

Ver. 2.] It is not so much some satisfaction to my hunger and thirst that I desire, as to be restored again to worship thee before the ark of thy presence (2 Sam. xv. 25); which is the token of thy power and majesty residing among us: and there to enjoy thee, as I have done heretofore; when I had the liberty to go into thy sanctuary.

Ver. 3.] My lips shall then praise thee with the same devotion that I now pray unto thee: for nothing is so dear unto me as thy favour and love, without which, life itself, and all the pleasures of my court, would be of little value.

Ver. 4.] The greatest pleasure of my life shall be continually to bless thee for such a happy restoration; and with the most thankful acknowledgments for what thou hast done for me, to implore thy future kindness towards me.

Ver. 5.] My hungry appetite would not now receive greater satisfaction, if the best cheer in the world were presented to me; than my soul shall be filled withal in that sweet employment: when, with the highest expressions of joy, my mouth shall, with a loud voice, sing thy praises.

Ver. 6.] Meantime, I comfort myself with the hope of that happiness; calling to mind, as I lie upon my bed, and seriously considering, as oft as I awake, how gracious thou hast been unto me.

Ver. 7.] From whence I conclude, that since thou hast relieved me in my greatest straits, I shall be safe under thy almighty protection; and at last triumph over all my enemies.

Ver. 8.] Though thou seemest to cast me off, my soul notwithstanding cleaveth fast unto thee, and will not part with its hope in thee: and I feel the happy fruit of it; for by thy mighty aid I am supported and preserved from sinking under these sore calamities that have lain upon me.

Ver. 9.] Which now shall fall upon those that endeavour to destroy me: who, seeking to take away my life, shall lose their own (2 Sam. xviii. 7, 8, &c.).

Ver. 10.] They shall perish by the sword; and their carcases have no other sepulchres but in the bowels of foxes, and other such-like ravenous creatures, who live as they do, by stealth and deceit.

Ver. 11.] But I, their sovereign, shall be filled with joy; and so shall all pious men, who preserved their loyalty, and would by no means violate their oath, wherein they stood engaged to me: they shall triumph when my calumniators (2 Sam. xv. 2, 3), and all perfidious persons, shall be so silenced, and they shall not have a word to say for themselves.

PSALM LXIV.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

I HEAR my voice, O God, in my prayer: preserve my life from fear of the enemy.

2 Hide me from the secret counsel of the

wicked; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity:

3 Who whet their tongue like a sword, and

PSALM LXIV.

ARGUMENT.—The enemy of whom David here complains, it is most probable, was Saul: whose hatred to him was very much heightened, and made more malignant, by the calumnies and false stories which were told of him by some ill men in his court: who were always plotting and contriving in their cabals (as we speak), how to compass his destruction (and found no means more effectual for that end than lies

and calumnies); though, in truth, they were all that time (as he foretold) devising their own. In memory of which he delivered this Psalm, together with several other (which he made on the same subject), to the master of music, to be sung in the tabernacle.

Ver. 1.] O God, the governor of all the world, who seest the danger I am in by a dreadful enemy; be thou my friend, I humbly beseech thee; and preserve

band *their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words:*

4 That they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.

5 They encourage themselves in an evil matter: they commune of laying snares privily; they say, Who shall see them?

6 They search out iniquities; they accomplish a diligent search: both the inward *thought* of every one of them, and the heart, is deep.

the life of thy persecuted servant, who by earnest prayer commends himself unto thy custody.

Ver. 2.] Protect me from the secret plots, and the open violence of those wicked men who make a great stir against me, and unjustly seek my ruin.

Ver. 3.] Their tongue is their principal weapon; which they have in readiness (as soldiers have their swords) upon all occasions, to wound my reputation: calumnies, and slanders, like so many poisoned arrows, are ever at their tongues' end:

Ver. 4.] Which, when they are in private with Saul, they shoot at me; who never did him or them any wrong; but am perfectly guiltless of that which they charge me withal: yet I find these false accusations, which I never expected, spread abroad by those who have no fear of God to restrain them from doing mischief to their innocent neighbours.

Ver. 5.] They use their utmost endeavours to make their calumnies be believed, and confirm one another in their resolved prosecution of their wicked designs: which they consult how to effect, though it be by falsehood and treachery, or by wiles and crafty practices, so subtly contrived, that nobody, they hope, shall be able to discover them.

Ver. 6.] They employ all their wit and diligence in

7 But God shall shoot at them *with an arrow:* suddenly shall they be wounded.

8 So they shall make their own tongue to fall upon themselves: all that see them shall flee away.

9 And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of his doing.

10 The righteous shall be glad in the Lord, and shall trust in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory.

these wicked devices: and leave nothing unattempted to produce the most exquisite and absolute piece of villany than can be invented by men of the deepest reach and policy.

Ver. 7.] But all to no purpose; for, when they little think of it, they and all their projects shall perish, by a sudden stroke of the divine vengeance.

Ver. 8.] Their slanders shall reflect upon themselves; and their wicked counsels prove so pernicious to those that gave them, that they shall be forsaken even of their friends; and they that were wont to visit them, shall fly away from them.

Ver. 9.] And all other men shall be afraid to imitate them; not being able to deny the just vengeance of God, the judge of all, upon them: for they shall be convinced that it was not by chance, but by his counsel, that they were not only defeated, but ensnared in their own contrivances.

Ver. 10.] Which shall both fill my heart, whom they unjustly maligned, with such joy in the Lord, as shall encourage me to commit myself unto him for ever in well-doing; and make all true lovers of piety triumph in the victory, which integrity and simplicity have gotten over falsehood and subtily.

PSALM LXV.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm and Song of David.

1 PRAISE waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion: and unto thee shall the vow be performed.

2 O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.

PSALM LXV.

ARGUMENT.—The latter part of this excellent Hymn of Praise (as the title calls it; see more, Ps. lxxvii.) hath moved some judicious interpreters to think, that it was delivered by David to the master of the music after some great drought; which had brought, or threatened to bring, a dearth upon the land: and there are those who imagine it relates to the three years' famine after the rebellion of Absalom (2 Sam. xxi.), which being removed by plentiful showers of rain, the Psalmist gives God public thanks in this Hymn for sending them seasonably to his people; whom he had formerly obliged by several other great benefits, as he doth all other nations; which David here first of all commemorates.

I can find nothing more probable than this. For as to the title which we find in the Vulgar Latin, out of some Greek copies, that it is a *Psalm sung by Jeremy and Ezekiel, with the people of the captivity, when they were about to go into, or come out of it* (I know not well which they mean); there is no sense that I can see to be made of it. For Jeremiah was not carried captive, as Theodoret observes, but left at liberty to go whither he pleased; and Ezekiel was gone long before: nor are there

any such words, as the same Theodoret notes, to be found either in the Hebrew, or in other interpreters; no, not in the LXX. which was in the Hexaplus. But somebody, who neither attended to the sense of the Psalm (as he passes his censure), nor understood the history, added this inscription.

Yet he himself thinks it was spoken by them in captivity, when, far from their own land, they longed to sing God's praises; but could not do it publicly in Babylon; and therefore prayed God, in the words of this Hymn, to turn their captivity, and to bring them again to Zion; which I know not how to contradict: but seeing no proof of it, I shall not meddle with that sense in my paraphrase.

Ver. 1.] It becomes us, O God, above all other people, to praise thee in thy sanctuary (though we cannot worthily express, but must rather silently adore, thy incomparable excellences), and to pay the vows which we made unto thee in the time of our distress.

Ver. 2.] And more especially to magnify thy clemency in hearing my prayer (2 Sam. xxi. 1), which may invite all mankind, even those that are most miserable, to make their addresses unto thee.

3 Iniquities prevail against me: *as for* our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.

4 Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, *even* of thy holy temple.

5 By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation; *who art* the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea:

6 Which by his strength setteth fast the mountains; *being* girded with power:

7 Which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people.

8 They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy tokens: thou makest the

outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice.

9 Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, *which* is full of water: thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it.

10 Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof: thou makest it soft with showers: thou blessest the springing thereof.

11 Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness.

12 They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness: and the little hills rejoice on every side.

13 The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing.

Ver. 3.] Nor need their sins discourage them; for thou hadst matter enough of that kind against me to have hindered the prevalency of my prayer, if thou hadst charged my iniquities upon me: but thou hast been graciously pleased to forgive not only me, but all thy people their transgressions, whereby they have provoked thee.

Ver. 4.] O how happy is the condition of a priest, or a Levite, whom thou hast chosen to minister before thee, and hath the privilege to be continually employed in thy service! Though we cannot all be so blessed, yet, such is thy goodness, we enjoy most sweet refreshments in thy house, when we offer our prayers and praises to thee, and taste of the sacrifices of thanksgiving which we there present for the benefits we have received from thee.

Ver. 5.] Who hast done wonderful and astonishing things for us out of thy mere mercy and bounty, when in our necessity we implored thy help, O God; who not only marvellously savest and deliverest us in this nation from destruction, but art the support and safeguard of all mankind in the remotest parts of the earth or islands of the sea.

Ver. 6.] For God's power, which is ready at all times to execute his pleasure, is not inferior to his mercy; but hath settled the mountains in their places, and sustains their vast weight from sinking down into the earth.

Ver. 7.] Against which, when the sea beats tempestuously, he composes and silences its swelling and roaring waves: as he doth with the same ease the rage and fury of the people, when by the breath of unquiet seditious spirits they rise up tumultuously, and break out into rebellion.

Ver. 8.] The most barbarous people who live in the remotest corners of the earth, behold with wonder and amazement the heavenly bodies, which thou

hast appointed for sign and tokens (Gen. i. 14); by the rising of the sun, the moon, and stars in the morning and evening, thou fillest them with joy as well as admiration.

Ver. 9.] But we are more particularly bound unto thee, whose land, which was lately visited with drought, thou hast now refreshed and enriched with such liberal showers out of the clouds (which like a vast river are never exhausted), as have made it exceeding fruitful; for from thence thou hast ordained it should be constantly replenished.

Ver. 10.] And accordingly, when the ground is ploughed up, thou sendest abundance of rain upon its ridges, which settle the clods, and make them sink down upon the seed that is newly sown: and when the ground grows too hard, and hinders its sprouting forth, thou softenest and openest it with gentle showers, which bring up the blade; and that thy blessing makes to prosper and thrive till it grow up into corn.

Ver. 11.] Thus thy goodness hath made this a most plentiful year, and magnificently adorned it with variety of fruits: for thy clouds have wheeled about, and everywhere distilled a fattening juice into the earth.

Ver. 12.] They have made green pastures even in desolate places; and the little hills, which before looked ruefully, appear now most beautiful; and have, as it were, put on the garments of joy and gladness.

Ver. 13.] The pastures, which were bare before, are clothed now with flocks, as they are with grass; the fields also are so covered with corn, that the face of the earth cannot be seen: they keep a kind of festival, which hath filled us all with a universal mirth, and made us triumph in thy goodness.

PSALM LXVI.

To the chief Musician. A Song or Psalm.

1 MAKE a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands:

2 Sing forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious.

PSALM LXVI.

ARGUMENT.—The Vulgar Latin here again (so little trust is to be given to it) hath an inscription, which, as Theodoret witnesses, is not to be found in other interpreters, no more than in the Hebrew; no, not

in the Septuagint translation, which was in the famous Hexaplus. Nor can any good reason be given why they call it *A Song-psalm concerning the Resurrection*; unless thereby we understand the resurrection of the dry bones, of which Ezekiel prophesied, ch. xxxvii. which was the bringing the

3 Say unto God, How terrible art thou in thy works! through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee.

4 All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing to thy name. Selah.

5 Come and see the works of God: he is terrible in his doing toward the children of men.

people in Babylon, where they seem to be buried, to their own land again, ver. 12. And so Theodoret himself takes it for a Psalm which David, by a prophetic spirit, composed for the people in captivity, not praying for their return (as he fancies they do in the Psalm foregoing), but upon their way home, and praising God for their liberty.

Certain it is this Psalm was made after a very remarkable deliverance from some sore calamity under which the nation had groaned. And it not being said by whom it was penned, nor who the enemies were that oppressed them, it is generally thought not to be David's, whose name it doth not bear in the title, as the foregoing does; but to have been made by some holy man after, or in their return from the forementioned captivity. But he that collected the Psalms contained in this second book, though he did not find David's name in the front of it, yet took him I believe to be the author both of this and of the next Psalm, as well as of the foregoing: otherwise he would not have placed them between those on both sides which certainly belong to him, when he intended, it appears by the conclusion of this book (lxxii. 20), to put together all the prayers that he had then met withal of David's. He that considers also that the seventy-first and seventy-second Psalms have not David's name in the title, and yet are generally thought to be of his composing, will not take the want of the usual inscription here to be a sufficient argument why we should seek for some other author of this Psalm.

Which was penned, I judge, after God had advanced David to the throne, and peaceably settled him in his kingdom. Till which time they had been in a very unsettled condition, not only during the rule of the judges (when, as he speaks here, ver. 12, many of their neighbours rode over their heads, or, as we now speak, domineered over them as they pleased), but also in the reign of Saul, when the Philistines were so powerful that the Israelites durst not look them in the face, but hid themselves in caves and thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits (1 Sam. xiii. 6). For they had disarmed them, so that when they came to fight, there was not a man had a sword or a spear but only Saul and Jonathan (ver. 22). And though they prevailed over the Philistines afterward in several battles (ch. xiv. xvii.), yet they grew so strong again, that they penetrated into the country as far as mount Gilboa, where Saul and his sons were slain (ch. xxxi.); and the people thereupon were so dismayed, that they about Jordan forsook their cities, and the Philistines came and dwelt in them (ver. 7). To these things the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth verses of this Psalm may have respect. And then the freeing the country from that oppression, and forcing those insolent enemies to submit to David (ver. 3, where there is the same expression in substance with that which he uses Ps. xviii. 45, after he had overcome all his enemies), may be the thing for which he here gives praise to God: exciting all the country to join with him in blessing

6 He turned the sea into dry land: they went through the flood on foot: there did we rejoice in him.

7 He ruleth by his power for ever; his eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah.

8 O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard:

his divine majesty, not only for this, but for former deliverances he had vouchsafed to that nation. Which he would have acknowledged with their most cheerful thanksgiving (which may be the meaning of a *Song-psalm*, see lxxvii.), especially in the public service of God at the tabernacle. Into which he promises to go, ver. 13, 14 (a sign the Psalm was not made at their coming out of Babylon, when there was no house to go unto) and pay his vows, which he had made before these victories. But at their return from Babylon it is likely they might use this Psalm, and apply it to that purpose, going to the place where the house of God formerly stood.

Ver. 1.] Let all the people of this land shout aloud, and triumph in the liberty which God hath restored unto us.

Ver. 2.] Sing psalms in honour of his most glorious majesty, and do not merely praise him, but do it in the most splendid manner; and place your principal glory in this, that you have the honour to sing his praises.

Ver. 3.] Saying, O God, thy stupendous works fill us with wonder and amazement, but we are not able to express the greatness of them: they strike terror into the hearts of thy enemies, who, feeling the dreadful effects of thy power, dare not oppose thee any longer, but, dissembling their hostility, shall come and offer thee their service (2 Sam. viii. 1).

Ver. 4.] For which be thou adored by all the inhabitants of this country: let them all sing joyful hymns unto thee; let them sing the praise of thy power, which hath thus daunted our enemies, and delivered us.

Ver. 5.] Approach, I beseech you, and attentively consider what our God hath done, and then I need not exhort you to praise his name: for the works and counsels of his providence over all mankind are very astonishing.

Ver. 6.] Especially over us, for whose fathers, to their unspeakable joy (Exod. xv.), he opened a passage through the Red sea, when they were so shut up between that before, and the army of Pharaoh behind, that there was no way left for their escape (Exod. xiv. 16). And also led them dryshod through the river Jordan, when it was so full of water that it overflowed its banks (Josh. iii. 15—17), which created a new joy in the hearts of our nation.

Ver. 7.] And it ought to continue still in succeeding ages, since the same divine power which did those wonders governs the world throughout all generations: he sees and observes the motions of all nations, who may learn, by the Egyptians and Canaanites, that they who contemn his authority in vain endeavour to exalt themselves to greater eminence, for they shall certainly be abased.

Ver. 8.] We have reason to say that he is our God, and takes care of us, as well as of those before us; and therefore let all the tribes of Israel agree together to bless him and proclaim his praises; that it may be for ever known how good he is, and how grateful they are.

9 Which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved.

10 For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried.

11 Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins.

12 Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.

13 I will go into thy house with burnt offerings: I will pay thee my vows,

14 Which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble.

Ver. 9.] For he hath wonderfully preserved us from perishing in our affliction: and not suffered our enemies to pursue their advantages to our utter overthrow and ruin.

Ver. 10.] Thou hast proved our constancy, indeed, O God, by most severe chastisements; and as a refiner tries his silver by throwing it into the fire, so thou hast dealt with us as well as with our forefathers, whose labours in the iron furnace of Egypt we have been forced to imitate under our oppressors.

Ver. 11.] Our enemies have pursued us, and brought us (like to wild beasts taken by the hunter) into most grievous straits (1 Sam. xiii. 6). They have used us like beasts of burden, and laid sore loads upon us, which they have fast bound upon our backs (ver. 19, 20).

Ver. 12.] Thou hast made us slaves to the vilest of men, who exercise the most insolent tyranny over us: we have endured variety of the sorest miseries; and yet, such is thy goodness, thou hast carried us through them all; and at last brought us into a state of perfect liberty, ease, and plenteous prosperity.

Ver. 13.] I will go therefore into thy house, and give a good example to all my people: for I will not present myself before thee with empty praises; but acknowledge thy benefits with burnt-offerings, and faithfully discharge the vows wherein I stand engaged.

Ver. 14.] Which I was not more forward to make

15 I will offer unto thee burnt sacrifices of fatnings, with the incense of rams; I will offer bullocks with goats. Selah.

16 Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.

17 I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue.

18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:

19 But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer.

20 Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.

with open mouth when I was in distress, than I will be to perform with all solemnity now that thou hast graciously delivered me out of it.

Ver. 15.] For as I will not come empty into thy house, so I will not bring thee a niggardly present; but offer sacrifices of all sorts, and the best and choicest in every kind.

Ver. 16.] And together therewith I will make a thankful commemoration of his loving-kindness (which is the most acceptable sacrifice), and let all pious men know (O that they would come and hearken to me while I relate!) how good God hath been unto me.

Ver. 17.] For the ardent prayers which I made unto him in a very low condition, are now turned into the highest praises of his powerful goodness, whereby I am advanced unto a throne.

Ver. 18.] Which hath brought along with it a testimony of my sincerity, far more valuable than my kingdom: for if I had been guilty of any such crimes, or entertained so much as a thought of them, as my enemies charged me withal, the Lord, who hates iniquity, would have denied me my request.

Ver. 19.] Which now sure you all see he hath graciously granted; and thereby cleared my innocence from all the aspersions that were cast upon me.

Ver. 20.] To the praise of God's infinite goodness be it spoken (not of my own righteousness), who did not reject my prayer, but vouchsafed me the mercy which I desired.

PSALM LXVII.

To the chief Musician upon Neginoth. A Psalm or Song.

1 God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us. Selah.

2 That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.

PSALM LXVII.

ARGUMENT.—This excellent Psalm, all agree, hath the same author with the former; which I have made it probable (see Ps. lxxvi.) was composed by David; who, being settled in his throne after miserable confusions, and having brought the ark to Jerusalem, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings (as he promised in the Psalm foregoing, ver. 15), blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts (2 Sam. vi. 17, 18); pronounced, that is, this Psalm (as I conjecture), wherein he manifestly imitates that form of blessing which the priests were appointed to use on solemn occasions (as you may read Numb. vi. 23—25); beseeching God to continue his favour to them, and to make them such an example of his loving-kindness, that it might invite all nations to whom the fame of it should come, to submit themselves unto his government.

It is no argument against this, to say that he doth not bless them here in the name of the Lord, which is used in the blessing which Moses taught them. For it is certain he alludes, in the blessing of the next Psalm, to the form of prayer used at the setting forward of the ark (Numb. x. 35), and yet there also he uses the word *Elohim* instead of *Jehovah*, as he doth in this Psalm; which he delivered upward to the master of music, to be sung as the fourth Psalm.

But what difference there is between a *Song-psalm* and a *Psalm-song* (in which the titles of the fifty-fifth and of this and the next differ from the foregoing, as the title of the thirtieth doth from the forty-eighth), I am not able certainly to resolve. For some think that a *Psalm-song*, or *Psalm of a Song*, began with voices, the musical instruments following after; and a *Song-psalm*, or *Song of a Psalm*, began with instruments, the voices follow-

3 Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.

4 O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Selah.

5 Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.

6 *Then* shall the earth yield her increase; and God, *even* our own God, shall bless us.

7 God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.

ing after: others give a quite contrary account; for taking a *Psalm* to be properly the sound of instruments (whereof there were six or seven sorts), and a *Song* to be the voice of singers, they will have a *Psalm-song* to be that where, the sound of instruments preceding, the singing voices followed; and a *Song-psalm*, that where, the voices preceding, the instrumental music followed. But Kimchi ingeniously confesses, in his preface to the book of Psalms, that their nation can give no account of such-like things which we meet with in the title of the Psalms.

Ver. 1.] Be gracious unto us, O God, and complete the happiness which thy almighty goodness hath begun to bestow upon us; let us not fall again into those dismal calamities out of which thou hast delivered us, but declare thou lovest us, by continuing thy gracious presence with us.

Ver. 2.] That the fame of thy wonderful providence over us, and of the deliverances thou workest for us, being spread not only here in this country, but throughout all other nations, they may be moved thereby to acknowledge and worship thee as the only God.

Ver. 3.] O that we might see that happy day; O that the people would confess and praise thee, O God;

that all the people every where, with one consent, would confess and praise thee.

Ver. 4.] O that the nations were so sensible what a happiness it is to be under thy care, that they might rejoice and shout for joy, to know that thou art the governor of the world! who by thy power oppressest none, but distributest equal justice unto all; and graciously providest for the welfare of those who become thy subjects, and commit themselves unto thy conduct.

Ver. 5.] We cannot often enough wish to see them so happy; but must again and again repeat our desires that the people would confess thee, O God, to be the Lord of all: that all the people every where would with one consent celebrate thee with their praises, and confess that thou alone canst make them happy.

Ver. 6.] As thou dost us, whose land of late hath been so exceeding fruitful (2 Sam. vi. 19), that we may look upon it as an earnest of future blessings, which may it please our good God, whose people we are by peculiar covenant, to multiply upon us.

Ver. 7.] With this prayer let us conclude as we began, that God would be pleased still to pour down his benefits upon us: that so the people who live in the remotest parts of the earth may all devoutly worship and serve him.

PSALM LXVIII.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm or Song of David.

1 LET God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him.

2 As smoke is driven away, so drive them

away: as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish in the presence of God.

3 But let the righteous be glad; let them re-

PSALM LXVIII.

ARGUMENT.—David having brought the ark to Jerusalem with a great deal of joy and triumph (2 Sam. vi.), after it had long been neglected in the reign of Saul (1 Chron. xiii. 3), which was one cause, it is like, that he had no better success against his foreign enemies; hoped God would be more propitious to him, according to the prayer he had made in the foregoing Psalm. For now he had (to repair that negligence of Saul) not only brought the ark near to his own palace, in the chief city of the kingdom, but prepared a noble place for its reception (2 Sam. vi. 16; 2 Chron. I. 4), which it had been a long time without. For ever since its falling into the hands of the Philistines (1 Sam. iv. 11), it had been separated from the tabernacle of the congregation built for it by Moses, which was God's habitation or dwelling-place; and after the destruction of Shiloh was removed to Nob (1 Sam. xxi. 1), and from thence, after Doeg had slain the priests, to Gibeon, where it remained till the building of Solomon's temple. All which time, it is manifest, it had no ark of God's presence in it, for that was in Kirjath-jearim (1 Sam. vii. 1), from whence David fetched it (1 Chron. xiii. 5) to mount Zion; where he having made a tabernacle for its

entertainment, the Lord God might be said (as we render it, ver. 18 of this Psalm) to *dwell among them*, with an intention not to remove from thence (as the ark had done before) to any other mountain (ver. 16). And, indeed, here he dwelt more magnificently than he had done before, and was more royally attended and solemnly served; David appointing, a little before he died (as he had begun to do before, 1 Chron. xvi.) the priests and Levites, in their courses, constantly to wait upon him, with songs and instruments of music; and settling all other officers belonging to a house, and suitable to the greatness of the majesty that dwelt there (1 Chron. xxiii.—xxvi.).

Which honour being done to God, he hoped, as I said, that God would favour him in his enterprises better than he had done Saul, who took care of no such matters. And being shortly to engage some potent enemies (2 Sam. viii.), he earnestly begs the presence of God with him (of which the ark was a token) in this excellent Psalm. And he begs in that very form of words (ver. 1) which Moses had directed the priests to use every time that they took up the ark to set forward in their march to the land of Canaan (Numb. x. 35). Upon which occasion he calls to mind what wonders God had done for them, in leading them by the ark of his

joyce before God: yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.

4 Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him.

5 A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation.

6 God setteth the solitary in families: he bringeth out those that are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry land.

7 O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness; Selah:

8 The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: *even* Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel.

9 Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary.

10 Thy congregation hath dwelt therein: thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor.

11 The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it.

12 Kings of armies did flee apace: and she that tarried at home divided the spoil.

13 Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.

14 When the Almighty scattered kings in it, it was white as snow in Salmon.

15 The hill of God is as the hill of Bashan; an high hill as the hill of Bashan.

presence through the wilderness into their good land. Where he hoped he would establish and settle his people, now that he had in so pompous and triumphant a manner ascended into the high hill of Zion (out of which David had expelled the Jebusites, 2 Sam. v. 6), and by his special direction and conduct already given them such great victories over the Philistines, their mortal enemies (2 Sam. v. 19. 23), that it was an emblem of the far more glorious ascension of the Lord Christ, after he had overcome death itself, the last and greatest enemy of mankind, into the highest heavens. Of the title of the Psalm, see lxxvii.

Ver. 1.] O that God, who by his powerful presence conducted his people, in spite of all opposers, into this land (Numb. x. 35), would now graciously appear, to disperse and put to flight those numerous armies which, out of mere hatred to him, come to dispossess us of it.

Ver. 2.] They are no more able to stand before him, than the smoke (whatsoever show it makes) is to stand before the wind: or the wax (how firm soever it seem) before the fire; but shall be dispelled, and melt away, like those feeble things: just so shall those wicked people perish, if God will be pleased to manifest himself to be among us.

Ver. 3.] Which shall fill the hearts of all his faithful servants with joy and gladness: they shall leap for joy before him (as I lately did when I brought up the ark unto mount Zion, 2 Sam. vi. 14. 16), and be so extraordinarily transported, that they shall not find words enough to express the joy they have in his gracious presence with them.

Ver. 4.] O begin your cheerful hymns unto his majesty; sing the praise of his powerful goodness, and of all the rest of his glorious attributes, whereby he is known to you: magnify him, and prepare a triumphal pomp for him, who turns about even the highest heavens, and rules them at his pleasure: O rejoice exceedingly before him, who hath plainly shown, by what he hath lately done, that he is the eternal, unchangeable God, who faithfully keeps his promises for ever.

Ver. 5.] The poorest and meanest persons on earth need not doubt of his patronage; for though he be higher than the highest heavens, yet he hath taken up his dwelling among us; that the fatherless and widows, when they have no helper, may fly unto his fatherly care, and appeal to him as their righteous judge to redress the wrongs that are done unto them.

Ver. 6.] God provides for those who are utterly destitute, and settles them in comfortable habita-

tions: he unties the chains of captives, and gives them a happy deliverance; but brings rebellious oppressors into that want and scarcity whereunto they have reduced others.

Ver. 7.] A famous instance of which we saw at our coming out of Egypt; when thou, O God, wentest before thy people, night and day, in a pillar of cloud and fire (Exod. xiii. 21), and conductedst them, as their captain, through a barren and dangerous wilderness.

Ver. 8.] The earth trembled, yea, the heavens dissolved into thunder, lightning, and rain (Exod. xix. 16), when the divine majesty descended upon mount Sinai: the mountain itself quaked (ver. 18), before his glorious majesty, who is still present with his people Israel.

Ver. 9.] For whom, O God, thou didst miraculously provide, by sending them liberal showers in those dry and desert places; and, having chosen them for thy own peculiar people, didst rain down bread from heaven (Exod. xvi. 4), to refresh and strengthen them when they were faint and weary.

Ver. 10.] A vast congregation of people, with their flocks and their herds, found a convenient habitation in that wilderness, by thy bounty, O God: who didst furnish those who were in danger to starve, with all things necessary for them.

Ver. 11.] Yea, the Lord made them so victorious over all those who opposed them, that they still returned from the battle with songs of triumph in their mouths; and a great army of women met them (according to the custom, Exod. xv. 23, &c.), to join with them in publishing his praises; saying,

Ver. 12.] The kings and captains of those hosts who thought to have destroyed us were put to flight (Exod. xvii.; Numb. xxi. 2, 3, &c.). They fled away in haste, and left their spoil behind them, to be divided among us, that were too weak to go into the field, Numb. xxxi. 8. 11; Judg. viii. 21. 26).

Ver. 13.] But we welcome home our victorious countrymen with this encouragement, that though you have endured great hardships in Egypt, where you looked not like valiant soldiers, but rather like vile scullions besmudged among kettles and pots, you shall hereafter appear most beautiful and splendid, and the wings of your armies shall shine like those of a dove, when they glisten as if they were covered with silver and gold.

Ver. 14.] And their word was fulfilled at our entrance into Canaan; when, by scattering all their kings the Almighty appeared most illustrious at Salmon, and gave us possession of the country on this side Jordan.

16 Why leap ye, ye high hills? *this is the hill which God desireth to dwell in; yea, the LORD will dwell in it for ever.*

17 The chariots of God *are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the LORD is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place.*

18 Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell *among them.*

19 Blessed be the LORD, *who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah.*

20 *He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death.*

21 But God shall wound the head of his enemies, *and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses.*

22 The LORD said, I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring *my people* again from the depths of the sea:

23 That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of *thine enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the same.*

24 They have seen thy goings, O God; *even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary.*

25 The singers went before, the players on instruments *followed after; among them were the damsels playing with timbrels.*

26 Bless ye God in the congregations, *even the LORD, from the fountain of Israel.*

27 There is little Benjamin *with their ruler, the princes of Judah and their council, the princes of Zebulun, and the princes of Naphtali.*

28 Thy God hath commanded thy strength: strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us.

29 Because of thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee.

30 Rebuke the company of spearmen, the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the people,

Ver. 15.] As, on the other side of it, he subdued the country of Og king of Bashan (Numb. xxi. 33, &c.), which hill became the hill of God: the hill with so many fertile risings, the famous hill of Bashan, became part of his inheritance.

Ver. 16.] But do not grow proud of this, ye lofty mountains: for neither the height of Salmon, nor of Bashan, shall invite him there to make his habitation: Zion is the hill which he hath chosen to honour with that favour; yea, there the Lord hath resolved to fix his tabernacle, and never (till the Messiah come) to remove to any other.

Ver. 17.] Nor let the heathen brag of the multitude of their chariots, wherein consists their strength; for in Zion there are ten thousand times more innumerable hosts of angels attending upon the divine majesty; who is with them there, as he was upon mount Sinai, which now is in the sanctuary.

Ver. 18.] Thou hast declared as much, O God: who art gone up thither, and hast highly exalted thyself by illustrious victories: which through their invisible ministry thou hast given us over our enemies (as the Messiah, who shall be thy sanctuary, will do far more magnificently, when, after the conquest of death, &c. he shall ascend in a bright chariot, Acts i. 9, attended with the heavenly hosts, into the highest heavens, to be exalted at thy right hand), whom by thy aid, we have carried away captive, and their spoils together with them, to be distributed among thy people (an emblem of the rich gifts the Messiah shall bestow upon us, and distribute among us, after his ascension); yea, the rebellious opposers of thee in other nations shall become proselytes to dwell with thee, O Lord God, and worship at thy sanctuary (as the gentile world shall by that effusion of divine gifts submit themselves to the Messiah, the Lord God of all the world).

Ver. 19.] Blessed be the Lord, who day by day exercises as tender and careful a providence over us, as a mother over her children (Isa. xlvi. 3), that mighty God be blessed, to whom we owe all our deliverances.

Ver. 20.] And they are very great and very many, which it is not in the power of any other god to bestow, but of him alone that dwells in Zion; who as the author of all men's being, and their supreme Lord and governor, disposes of their lives, and assigns them what passages he pleases out of the world.

Ver. 21.] And certainly God, the righteous judge,

will now break in pieces all those enemies that lift up their heads so high, in hope to destroy us; their fierce captain (2 Sam. viii. 3), whose shaggy hair makes him look very terribly, shall not escape, if he go on still presumptuously to offend thee.

Ver. 22.] Thus the Lord hath determined within himself, saying, I will renew the wonders I wrought in former times; and make my people as victorious over all these mighty armies, as they were over Og the king of Bashan (Numb. xxi.), and over Pharaoh, when they marched through the Red Sea (Exod. xv.).

Ver. 23.] The victory shall be so complete, and such a slaughter made, that thou mayest wade, and thy dogs put their tongues, in the blood that shall flow from those enemies, and from him that leads them.

Ver. 24.] For thy people, O God, have seen to their joy, and thy enemies to their terror, what a solemn entrance thou madest (by the ark of thy presence), with what pomp thou, my mighty God, and my king, wast brought into the sanctuary (2 Sam. vi. 13. 15. 16).

Ver. 25.] Part of the Levites went singing before, and the rest with musical instruments followed after (1 Chron. xv. 16. 28), and, to complete the melody, the damsels playing with timbrels came between them both.

Ver. 26.] And as they went along, they sang this song; O bless your good God, in all your assemblies: bless the Lord, all ye that are the offspring of Israel.

Ver. 27.] Who were universally assembled to accompany that pomp (1 Chron. xiii. 5, xv. 3); for not only the nearest tribes were there, viz. Benjamin, little indeed in number (Judg. xxi. 6), but from whom the first king of Israel came; and the princes of the tribe of Judah, the great support and prop of the kingdom; but the princes also of those which were most remote, as Zebulun and Naphtali, came to attend at that solemnity.

Ver. 28.] This happy union, thy God, O Israel, hath brought about; and thereby made thee strong and formidable to thy enemies: and may it please thee, O God, to continue and confirm it; for as it is begun, so it must be perfected by thee alone.

Ver. 29.] Pour down thy blessings upon Jerusalem out of thy sanctuary, (1 Sam. i. 9, iii. 3), which now thou hast settled there; and so shall heathen kings bring presents, (2 Sam. viii. 9—11), in token of their subjection to thee.

till every one submit himself with pieces of silver: scatter thou the people *that* delight in war.

31 Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.

32 Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto the Lord; Selah:

33 To him that rideth upon the heavens of

Ver. 30.] Destroy that fierce prince (2 Sam. viii. 3), who like a wild beast of the forest comes against us; with a great number of captains as furious as bulls; and of soldiers as insolent as young heifers: who prances in arms plated with silver, and, unprovoked by us, makes war upon us merely to satisfy his vain ambition, or desire of wealth: scatter, good Lord, all such people as have no better reason for the blood they delight to shed.

Ver. 31.] Which shall invite even the Egyptians to send princely ambassadors to Jerusalem: and the neighbouring countries also (1 Kings iv. 21), shall make haste to stretch out their hands unto the divine majesty, in oblations and prayers (which the most idolatrous nations in the world shall, in abundance, offer unto the Lord Christ, when he reigns).

Ver. 32.] Nothing shall conduce so much to their happiness: and therefore, O ye kingdoms of the earth both far and near, sing joyful songs unto God: set

heavens, *which were* of old; lo, he doth send out his voice, *and that* a mighty voice.

34 Ascribe ye strength unto God: his excellency is over Israel, and his strength is in the clouds.

35 O God, *thou art* terrible out of thy holy places: the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto *his* people. Blessed be God.

forth the praises of the great Lord of all the world with hymns and psalms.

Ver. 33.] Whose empire is the most ancient of all other, and extends beyond the highest heavens; hearken when it thunders, and consider how terrible his majesty is; for that is his voice, which makes the mightiest men on earth to tremble.

Ver. 34.] I would advise you all to acknowledge his divine power, by hearty submission to him; whose care over Israel as plainly appears in many magnificent works, as thunder declares his strength in the clouds.

Ver. 35.] O God, thy dreadful majesty is to be most humbly adored, who striketh terror into thy enemies, both out of thy sanctuary here in Zion, and out of thy sanctuary in heaven: but art most gracious to thy people, whom, as thy peculiar portion, thou enduedst with mighty strength and invincible courage. Blessed be God for his goodness to us.

PSALM LXIX.

To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim. A Psalm of David.

1 SAVE me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul.

2 I sink in deep mire, where *there is* no stand-

ing; I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.

3 I am weary of my crying: my throat is

PSALM LXIX.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm, the title assures us, was composed by David; and the matter of it sufficiently declares, that he was in extreme great danger when it was penned. I should suppose it might have been about that time, when he concluded, that he should one day perish by the hand of Saul (1 Sam. xxvii. 1), were it not for what we read here, ver. 35 of this Psalm, concerning God's love to Zion: which was not then in the possession of the Israelites. And therefore it must rather be indited when he was persecuted by his rebellious son Absalom: who pressed him so sorely, and reduced him to such lamentable straits, that, as he feared he should never be able to extricate himself; so he could find no words high enough to express the agonies into which they cast him. But this is not so considerable a difficulty, as to be sufficient to incline those who read the whole Psalm seriously, to conclude that it hath no reference to Saul's persecution: unto which some passages in it seem more plainly to belong than to the other. And therefore I suppose he only reviewed it (see Ps. lxx.), and added the thirty-fifth verse, in the rebellion of Absalom: which was likewise so grievous and dangerous, that he could find no words fitter to represent his sad condition, than those he had formerly used in the like distress. And some of the expressions, it is manifest, are such as were not literally fulfilled in him, in either of those afflictions, but in our Saviour Christ; of whom David was a figure; both in his sufferings, and in his ad-

vancement after them to a kingdom. There is no mystery, I suppose, in the word *Shoshannim* (as some of the Jews fancy), but it only denotes that the master of the music was to take care this Psalm should be sung as the forty-fifth: to which I refer you for an account of this word.

Why Theodoret should think this Psalm was made without respect to David, for the Jews in the captivity of Babylon, praying for deliverance out of that servitude, I cannot imagine. But what he adds concerning our Saviour's sufferings, which are here foretold, together with the utter overthrow of the Jewish nation, who were the authors of them, is very considerable. For because, said he, they were so audaciously wicked, as to do that to their benefactor and Saviour, which they had suffered from their spiteful enemies; God the righteous judge condemned them to suffer that themselves, which they prayed might fall on the heads of those enemies.

Ver. 1.] O most mighty God, in whom alone I hope for safety; deliver me, I beseech thee, out of this miserable condition; wherein I am overwhelmed with so many calamities, that my life is in extreme danger, unless thou mercifully preserve it.

Ver. 2.] There is no hope otherways, that I should escape: for I am like a man that sinks deeper and deeper into the mud, and can find no bottom; or that is fallen into the very deepest place in a river; and carried away out of the reach of human help, by the violence of the stream.

Ver. 3.] I have long also implored thy help, with

dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God.

4 They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, *being* mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored *that* which I took not away.

5 O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee.

6 Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed for my sake: let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel.

7 Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face.

8 I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children.

9 For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.

10 When I wept, and *chastened* my soul with fasting, that was to my reproach.

11 I made sackcloth also my garment; and I became a proverb to them.

12 They that sit in the gate speak against me; and I *was* the song of the drunkards.

13 But as for me, my prayer is unto thee, O LORD, in an acceptable time: O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, in the truth of thy salvation.

14 Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink: let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters.

15 Let not the waterflood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.

16 Hear me, O LORD; for thy lovingkindness is good: turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies.

17 And hide not thy face from thy servant; for I am in trouble: hear me speedily.

most earnest prayers; even till I am tired with my crying: I can now scarce speak a word, nor lift up my eyes towards heaven, from whence, with great intention of mind, I have expected some relief; but cannot yet obtain it of my God, who hath been formerly most gracious to me.

Ver. 4.] No, rather my enemies are grown more formidable, both for their number, which exceeds the hairs of my head, and for their power, which enables them to destroy me: to which they want no will, having conceived an implacable, but unreserved, hatred to me. Who have been so far from provoking their malice, that I am content, rather than quarrel with them, to part with my own right; and make them satisfaction for a wrong that I never did them.

Ver. 5.] O God, the righteous judge, I make my appeal to thee, who knowest the very worst of me: and protest, that whatsoever my mistakes of my wilful sins have been, which cannot escape thy sight, I never did them any injury, nor gave them cause to persecute me.

Ver. 6.] Which will move thee, I hope, to take some compassion on me; for it will extremely dishearten all pious men, if thou sufferest innocence to be thus ruined: for thy sakes, as well as for mine, be pleased to relieve me: O let not those that rely alone on thee, O Lord, the mighty God, who commandest all the powers in heaven and earth, hang down their heads for shame, to see me deserted by thee: let not those, O God (who hast engaged thyself unto us by a gracious covenant), that commend themselves to thee in well-doing, be confounded; as they will, if they see me forsaken by thee.

Ver. 7.] For it is upon thy account (merely because I adhere to thee, and will use no unlawful means to right thyself, 1 Sam. xxvi. 10, &c.) that I have thus long suffered so many reproaches and abuses, as have made me extremely contemptible.

Ver. 8.] Not only to those that do not know me, but to my cousins and familiars; nay, to those who lay in the same womb with me: who behave themselves towards me as if I were a perfect stranger; or a man of another country and religion.

Ver. 9.] Whereas thou knowest, it was nothing but ardent zeal for thy honour and service (not any childish ambition) which made me hazard my life for them; and was the first occasion of this hatred they bear me (1 Sam. xviii. 6—8, as it will be of the death of the Messiah, John ii. 17). I could not endure the blasphemies which I heard against thee, but they

moved my indignation (as they will do his, Rom. xv. 3) as much as if they had been against myself (1 Sam. xvii. 10. 26. 45).

Ver. 10.] These things grieved me exceedingly; and it hath cost me many a tear, while I humbled my soul with fasting, to bewail their impiety, and the dishonour that was done thee: but they took occasion from thence only to despise me; and to load me with greater reproaches, either of weakness or of hypocrisy.

Ver. 11.] And still the more sorrowfully I debased myself, wearing sackcloth in token of my heaviness, the more I was scorned and derided; and it was the common saying (when they would express their utmost hatred or contempt of any man), I value him no more than I do David.

Ver. 12.] This is the language even of the grave senators, and judges of the land, who ought in reason rather to have vindicated my innocence (Gen. xxiii. 10. 18. xxxiv. 20; Ruth iv. 1; Prov. xxii. 22), as well as of the idle and dissolute companions, who, in their drunken meetings, make abusive songs and libels on me.

Ver. 13.] While I in the mean time do nothing but only commend myself with the greater earnestness unto thee, O Lord; who, now that I am so despicable, wilt think it, I hope, the fittest time to be favourable to me: hear my prayer, O God, I beseech thee, and thereby magnify thy abundant mercy, and thy faithfulness, in such a seasonable deliverance of me.

Ver. 14.] For I am in extreme great danger of perishing in this distress, unless thou interpose (as I most humbly again beseech thee that thou wilt, ver. 1, 2) for my deliverance: O leave me not in this miserable condition into which I am plunged; but deliver me from my bitter enemies, and all the troubles and difficulties wherein they have involved me.

Ver. 15.] Which are great and many, and extremely dangerous; enough to make me despair of safety, did I not depend on thee; that thou wilt not suffer me to be carried away, overwhelmed, and buried in this heap of calamities which oppress me so sorely, that I am ready to sink under the weight of them.

Ver. 16.] Do not fail my expectation, O Lord, whose loving-kindness, as it is the only comfort I have, so it gives me abundant consolation: for it is prone to pity and relieve those that are distressed; and will incline thee, I hope, to look now favourably upon me, as thou hast done, many and many a time, with most compassionate mercy towards me.

Ver. 17.] Who, as despicable as I am, yet am thy

18 Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it: deliver me because of mine enemies.

19 Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonour: mine adversaries are all before thee.

20 Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none.

21 They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

22 Let their table become a snare before them; and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap.

23 Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake.

24 Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them.

25 Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents.

servant; and upon that score claim the patronage of my most gracious Lord and Master: O disown me not, especially now that I am in such helpless straits; but rather make the greater haste to relieve me.

Ver. 18.] For nothing less than my life (which is in imminent danger) will satisfy the rage and hatred of my enemies: therefore interpose thy power for my rescue, and let not them have the pleasure (which will make them still more insolent) to see me ruined.

Ver. 19.] Thou art perfectly acquainted with the reproaches, the shameful and contumelious abuses of all sorts, which I have suffered; and must still (without thy seasonable deliverance) endure from my cruel enemies: none of whom, nor of their secret plots, and subtle lies, whereby they seek to defame and undo me, are hidden from thy all-seeing eyes.

Ver. 20.] Which behold, likewise, what an intolerable burden it is to me to be thus loaded with reproaches, and to have no means to clear myself from their false imputations: it even breaks my heart, and I am oppressed with heaviness, looking still for some help to arrive; but alas! I cannot meet with so much as the comfort of any body to condole with me.

Ver. 21.] Instead of that they exasperated my grief; and because I was so miserable, reproached me the more bitterly: just as if, when a man is hungry, one should give him gall to eat; or when he is thirsty, they should give him (as they really will do Christ, John xix.) vinegar to drink.

Ver. 22.] Which barbarous usage shall meet with a suitable vengeance; for they shall have no friends neither: but they that eat of their meat shall betray them, and their prosperity shall prove their ruin (this shall be the recompense of those that abuse the Messiah, as now they do me, Rom. xi. 9).

Ver. 23.] They shall be deprived of all judgment, and not be able to see the evils that are coming on them; or if they do, let them not be able, O Lord, to prevent them; but make their counsels uncertain, and let them have no power to execute any good design for their preservation.

Ver. 24.] Pour out on a sudden so many evils upon them, that they may not be able to escape; but feel they suffer the most dismal effects of thy severest and lasting displeasure against them.

Ver. 25.] Let their most magnificent structures be laid waste; and root them out so entirely, that there may not be a man left to dwell in their poorest cottages (Matt. xxiii. 38; Acts i. 20.)

26 For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten; and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded.

27 Add iniquity unto their iniquity: and let them not come into thy righteousness.

28 Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.

29 But I am poor and sorrowful: let thy salvation, O God, set me up on high.

30 I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving.

31 This also shall please the Lord better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs.

32 The humble shall see this, and be glad: and your heart shall live that seek God.

33 For the Lord heareth the poor, and despiseth not his prisoners.

34 Let the heaven and earth praise him, the seas, and every thing that moveth therein.

35 For God will save Zion, and will build the

Ver. 26.] For they had no pity upon the miserable; but instead of comforting him, when they saw him afflicted by thee, they took that opportunity to insult over him, and oppress him: nay, made a pastime of his calamity; and added to all his other sufferings, their scoffs and jeers, their lies and calumnies, or at least their uncharitable censures of thee.

Ver. 27.] Let such obstinate offenders be quite deserted by thee; and by thy just judgment be suffered to go on to complete their iniquity, and never obtain any mercy from him.

Ver. 28.] Let them be cut off before their time, in the midst of their jollity; and let them enjoy none of the blessings which thou hast promised to the righteous.

Ver. 29.] But let me, O God, who now am despised and dejected, be graciously delivered by thee, and raised above the contempt or power of such men to depress me.

Ver. 30.] And I will not be unmindful of the benefit, but praise thy power and goodness in joyful hymns; and acknowledge how great they are, in thankful commemorations of them.

Ver. 31.] Which will be, I know, more acceptable sacrifices to the Lord, than if I should bring him a whole ox, when he is young and in his prime, and offer him at his altar.

Ver. 32.] For other pious men, reading in my songs the goodness of the Lord, will be filled with joyful hopes, when they fall into such-like troubles as I am in: they will think they hear me saying to them, Do not despond, but be of good comfort, whosoever you are that seek God, and faithfully depend upon him.

Ver. 33.] For the Lord, you see, doth not fail to relieve the afflicted and helpless men, when they cry unto him, and rely on him alone: but owns them for his servants, when they are no better than slaves; by delivering them from their hard and cruel bondage.

Ver. 34.] Let the whole world therefore join together, to celebrate him with their highest praises: for one tongue is not sufficient to proclaim his most excellent goodness, and to thank him for all his benefits.

Ver. 35.] Which shall be continued towards Zion; for God will preserve it from being destroyed in these tumults: and will repair the ruins of the other cities of Judah; that his people may dwell quietly, and not be disturbed in their possessions.

Ver. 36.] And their posterity also may hereafter

cities of Judah : that they may dwell there, and have it in possession.

36 The seed also of his servants shall inherit

inherit it; provided they faithfully serve him, and heartily love him and his religion : for then they shall

it: and they that love his name shall dwell therein.

dwell securely in Zion ; and offer the continual sacrifice of praise unto him.

PSALM LXX.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David, to bring to remembrance.

1 *MAKE haste*, O God, to deliver me ; make haste to help me, O LORD.

2 Let them be ashamed and confounded that seek after my soul : let them be turned backward, and put to confusion, that desire my hurt.

3 Let them be turned back for a reward of their shame that say, Aha, aha.

4 Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee : and let such as love thy salvation say continually, Let God be magnified.

5 But I *am* poor and needy : make haste unto me, O God : thou *art* my help and my deliverer ; O LORD, make no tarrying.

PSALM LXX.

ARGUMENT.—It is easy to determine, whether this Psalm was only separated from the fortieth (whereof, for the main, it is a part), that it might serve those that are in any distress, as a short form recommending themselves and their condition to God ; or that David in some new danger (probably that into which he fell by Absalom's conspiracy, as Theodoret thinks) took a review of what he had there said, and, with some small alterations, composed this as a distinct prayer, to be used by him constantly, during the time of that sharp affliction. I incline to this latter, because there is some difference (though not very much, in the fourth verse) between every verse of this Psalm and those in the latter end of the fortieth, from which it is taken ; just as there is between the fifty-third and the fourteenth. See what I have said there ; and in the title of the thirty-eighth Psalm, you will find why this is called, *A Psalm to bring to remembrance*.

Ver. 1.] O God, the judge of all the world, thou seest the danger I am in is so exceeding great, that I am undone without thy speedy relief : which I beseech thee therefore not to delay ; but to make haste, O Lord, to declare thy power in sending me sea-

sonable help for my rescue, now that I am ready to perish.

Ver. 2.] My enemies fancy that I cannot escape their hands : but do thou most shamefully disappoint all those that restlessly endeavour to take away my life : defeat them, and put them to flight with open disgrace, whosoever they be that study to do me mischief.

Ver. 3.] Let a total rout of their forces be the recompense of their shameful deeds ; whereby they thought to have exposed me to shame, when they insulted over my calamity, and make a mock both of it, and of my hope that thou wouldest deliver me.

Ver. 4.] But let all those that depend on thee alone, and seek by no other means, but such as thou allowest, for safety, have perpetual cause to rejoice in thee exceedingly : let such as expect and delight to see thee appear for the deliverance of thy people, never cease to say, Let the righteous judge of the world be praised ; let the glory of his wonderful works be every where published and extolled.

Ver. 5.] O God, I beseech thee again, delay not to speed the relief I expect from thee ; that this may be my song also ; for at present I am stripped of all, and utterly destitute of human help ; nay, so forlorn, that I shall perish presently, unless thou prevent it, O Lord ; on whom alone I rely for help and deliverance, which I once more beseech thee to send me speedily.

PSALM LXXI.

1 In thee, O LORD, do I put my trust : let me never be put to confusion.

2 Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause

me to escape : incline thine ear unto me, and save me.

3 Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I

PSALM LXXI.

ARGUMENT.—Though this Psalm want an inscription, yet it is generally thought that David was the author of it : and if he was, there is no doubt he composed it upon the occasion of Absalom's unnatural rebellion. For the matter of the Psalm sufficiently informs us, that when he made it he was in extreme great danger of perishing ; and this danger also happened in the time of his old age (ver. 9,) when he was gray-headed (ver. 18). Now he was not so during the time of Saul's persecution (2 Sam. v. 4), but in that of Absalom's he was ; which though it did not last so long as the other, yet in this regard

was more grievous to him ; that it fell out in his declining years, when men are more unapt for toil and labour, and naturally desirous of quiet and repose. And therefore he begins the Psalm almost in the same words as he doth one of those which he made when he was distressed by Saul (Ps. xxxi.), in his younger years, when he was better able to bear it.

As for the title, which some of the Greek translators, and from them the Latin, have prefixed to this Psalm (which they will have to be a Psalm of the sons of Jonadab and the first captives), it is so far from the business, that it is hard to give any account of it. For Theodoret pertinently observes, that the sons

may continually resort: thou hast given commandment to save me; for thou *art* my rock and my fortress.

4 Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.

5 For thou *art* my hope, O Lord God: *thou art* my trust from my youth.

6 By thee have I been holden up from the womb: thou art he that took me out of my mother's bowels: my praise *shall be* continually of thee.

7 I am as a wonder unto many; but thou *art* my strong refuge.

8 Let my mouth be filled *with* thy praise and *with* thy honour all the day.

9 Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth.

10 For mine enemies speak against me; and they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together,

11 Saying, God hath forsaken him: persecute and take him; for *there is* none to deliver *him*.

12 O God, be not far from me: O my God, make haste for my help.

13 Let them be confounded and consumed that are adversaries to my soul; let them be covered *with* reproach and dishonour that seek my hurt.

14 But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more.

15 My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers *thereof*.

16 I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of thy righteousness, *even* of thine only.

of Jonadab were not among the first captives; and that he who made this inscription, confesses he did not find it in the Hebrew, but placed it there himself. Yet that learned father, I know not for what reason, takes this Psalm to have been composed by David, in the person of those who were captive in Babylon; wishing deliverance from that servitude, and desiring to be restored to their own land.

Ver. 1.] Thou seest, O Lord, that in all these troubles which have befallen me, I have no confidence in any thing, but only thy powerful goodness; which I hope will not fail me now, no more than it hath ever done heretofore; for I shall be lamentably ashamed, if thou shouldst frustrate my expectation.

Ver. 2.] Magnify thy mercy and fidelity in delivering me, and finding a way for my escape from these dangers that surround me: let me obtain this extraordinary favour of thee, and preserve me from falling into the hands of those who have conspired to destroy me.

Ver. 3.] For I am forced to quit my habitation, and have no place of safety (so universal is the revolt) to retreat unto; but whensoever I fly to thy almighty protection, do thou always keep me as secure as if I reposed myself in an impregnable castle; it is thy purpose, I am confident, to preserve me; for I never trusted in any other strong hold or fortress, but thee alone.

Ver. 4.] Deliver me, therefore, from falling into the power of that turbulent man, who hath no fear of thee before his eyes: from the power of him that cares not by what perfidious arts, or cruel violence, he brings his ends to pass.

Ver. 5.] For in thee, O Lord, who hast a sovereign dominion, which alters not, have I placed all my hope; and from thee is my expectation: when I was but a youth, I confided in thee (1 Sam. xvii. 33. 37), and was marvellously preserved by thee.

Ver. 6.] Who didst take care of me, even before I could trust in thee; for I have been supported by thee, and preserved in innumerable dangers, ever since I came out of my mother's womb: where I had perished also, if thy power had not drawn me thence, and brought me into the world, to praise and bless thee, as I have ever done, and will never cease to do, to the end of my days.

Ver. 7.] There are many, indeed (especially the great ones), that stare upon me, as if I were a monster; marvelling as much at this confidence I place in thee, as they do at my sudden fall into this deplorable condition: but, for all their taunts, I do not look

upon myself as abandoned by thee; but have a strong hope that thou wilt deliver me.

Ver. 8.] And that I shall still have abundant cause to praise without ceasing thy most magnificent goodness towards me.

Ver. 9.] I have deserved, I know, very ill of thee; but let me prevail with thee, notwithstanding, for the continuance of thy favour towards me; and do not reject me now in my old age: O forsake me not, when I have most need of thy help, and am least able to do any thing for myself; but let that good providence, which watched over me in my youth, be still my security.

Ver. 10.] For my enemies are no less subtle than they are cruel; having defamed me, and taken away my reputation: as they now seek for an opportunity, and for that end are combined in a strong conspiracy to take away my life (2 Sam. xv. 3. 12).

Ver. 11.] Encourage one another in their enterprise with such words as these: God, it is manifest, hath forsaken him, for the hearts of all Israel are turned from him, and his own heart faileth him (2 Sam. xv. 13. 14); pursue him closely now, and we shall certainly take him; for he hath not forces enough to withstand us, and to deliver him out of our hands (2 Sam. xvii. 1. 2).

Ver. 12.] But how false soever my subjects are, it daunts me not, if thou, O God, who judgest righteously, will not be estranged from me: O my God, who hast hitherto so wonderfully preserved me, let this their vain confidence, and insulting language, incline thee to make the greater speed to relieve me.

Ver. 13. Let those implacable enemies, that will not be satisfied but with my life, be most shamefully disappointed; and see all their forces wherein they trusted quite dissipated, and come to nothing: expose them that design my ruin to the open shame and contempt of all the world; when they find that they have only ridiculously contrived their own destruction.

Ver. 14.] And I will learn thereby, both to hope in thee perpetually (as now I do) even in the greatest straits and difficulties; and to add new songs of praise over and above all those which I have already composed, to magnify thee for the vast heap of benefits which thou hast conferred on me.

Ver. 15.] That shall be the subject of my songs, to publish thy mercy and truth in judging righteously between me and my enemies: this shall be my continual employment; though I shall never be able to tell the least part of that mercy, which will appear in my deliverance from such formidable enemies.

Ver. 16.] I will enter notwithstanding upon this

17 O God, thou hast taught me from my youth : and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.

18 Now also when I am old and greyheaded, O God, forsake me not ; until I have shewed thy strength unto *this* generation, and thy power to every one *that* is to come.

19 Thy righteousness, O God, *is* very high, who hast done great things : O God, who *is* like unto thee !

20 *Thou*, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depth of the earth.

21 Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.

22 I will also praise thee with the psaltery, *even* thy truth, O my God : unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel.

23 My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee ; and my soul, which thou hast redeemed.

24 My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long : for they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my hurt.

work, of pondering in my mind, and publishing with my mouth, the mighty things which I expect, from the sole powers of the great Lord and governor of all things : I will not ascribe them to my own deserts, or to the courage or fidelity of those few friends that still adhere to me ; but to thy undeserved favour, and faithfulness to thy word ; and to that alone will I give the praise.

Ver. 17.] O good God, thou hast given me many instances of this kind power and faithfulness of thine ever since I was a youth (ver. 5) : and from thence unto this present moment thou hast been doing wonderful things for my preservation and preferment ; which I have not failed to proclaim and thankfully commemorate.

Ver. 18.] And therefore do not now, O God, abandon the care of me, when I need it most : but continue the same kindness to me in thy declining years, which I found when I was a youth : and let me survive these calamities, to proclaim thy power in fresh instances of it to this present generation ; and let all posterity know how mighty it is, in making a few victorions over very great multitudes.

Ver. 19.] Which I do not despair to see, when I consider how infinitely thy mercy, O God, surpasses all our deserts, nay, expectations ; and what stupendous things thou hast already done for me, such as have no example : for who is there, O God, that can be compared to thee, either in goodness to design well for us, or in power to do what thou thinkest good ?

Ver. 20.] I never was in such straits and distresses (and yet I have been in the greatest and sorest) but I

found relief from thee : and therefore I doubt not thou wilt revive me, now that all men give me up for dead ; and draw me out of this extreme danger into which I am plunged, and wherein I shall perish without thy help.

Ver. 21.] Nay, thou wilt not only restore me to my former greatness, but much augment the splendour of it : and though now I seem forsaken by thee, wilt return again, and so surround me with thy favour, that my future comforts shall far exceed my present troubles.

Ver. 22.] And then sure I shall be no less forward to bless thee than thou art to bestow thy benefits on me : I will bless thee, O my God, in the most joyful manner, with the psaltery and harp, and the rest of my musical instruments : which shall play to the songs I will compose in praise of thy faithfulness and constancy to thy word ; O thou, whose incomparable excellencies are peculiarly known unto, and celebrated by, thy people Israel.

Ver. 23.] It is not possible to express the joy wherewith not merely my lips, but my heart and soul, shall sing triumphant songs : for the miraculous deliverance which I expect from thee.

Ver. 24.] Which shall not only be the subject of my solemn songs, but of my constant discourse ; wherein I will perpetually magnify thy goodness and truth towards me, and thy just vengeance upon my enemies : whom I look upon already as utterly defeated ; and hanging down their heads, to see that ruin fall upon themselves which they designed for me.

PSALM LXXII.

A Psalm for Solomon.

1 GIVE the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son.

2 He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment

PSALM LXXII.

ARGUMENT.—That David was the author of this Psalm, we may be satisfied from the conclusion of it. From whence we may also gather, that it was made by him towards the conclusion of his life : when, by his command, Nathan the prophet, and Zadok the priest, took Solomon and set him upon his throne (1 Kings i. 39, &c.), that David might have the satisfaction to see all the great men do homage to Solomon, and acknowledge him for their succeeding sovereign before he died ; which you find they did (see 1 Chron. xxix. 24). And thereupon the spirit of the holy man being transported with an extraordinary joy, he indited this hymn, and sent it to So-

lomon : wherein he first recommends him to the divine benediction, and then instructs him how to make his people happy ; by describing the qualities of a good king, and the prosperous state of the kingdom under his government. Which his eyes began to behold before he died (1 Chron. xxix. 25), and he hoped others should behold when he was gone : to the example and admiration of all following generations. For what we translate in the future time, as if it were a prophecy, may be construed to be only a prayer. Which he carries on in so high a strain, in some places, that the words had not a full accomplishment in Solomon, nor in any one else, till the appearing of that great king, Christ. Of the happiness of whose reign, and of the justice of

3 The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness.

4 He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.

5 They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations.

6 He shall come down like rain upon the mountain grass : as showers that water the earth.

7 In his days shall the righteous flourish ; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.

8 He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.

9 They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow

before him ; and his enemies shall lick the dust.

10 The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents : the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts.

11 Yea, all kings shall fall down before him : all nations shall serve him.

12 For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth ; the poor also, and him that hath no helper.

13 He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy.

14 He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence : and precious shall their blood be in his sight.

whose government, together with the mightiness, and the largeness, and the eternal continuance of his kingdom, his father David here prophesies.

Of that there can be no reasonable doubt (for the Jews themselves acknowledge it, as appears by the Chaldee Paraphrase, Midrasch Tehillim, the book Siphre, and many others) : but that in this Psalm he prophesies of nothing else, and hath no respect to Solomon, as Theodoret supposes in his interpretation, seems as far wide from the truth, as to say, that he looks no farther than Solomon. For the Psalm doth in part agree as aptly (if not more) to Solomon, as the name of Solomon doth to the Messiah, our Saviour Christ : who was indeed the prince of peace, and left his peace with his disciples when he left the world (as Theodoret notes), and made peace wheresoever his doctrine was entertained, and his government settled over men's hearts. Yet he is not the only person here spoken of ; but, as St. Jerome hath excellently stated the matter, in Solomon himself there was the shadow and image of the truth, which was more perfectly fulfilled in our Lord and Saviour.

Ver. 1.] O God, the supreme judge of the world, bestow I beseech thee upon Solomon, who is now anointed to sit on my throne, such a right judgment in all things, and such uprightness and integrity of heart, that he may govern thy people according to thy laws ; and, tempering justice with mercy, may be a worthy successor to me, who have now resigned my charge unto him.

Ver. 2.] The weight of which I know is so exceeding great, that he needs thy special guidance and assistance : by which he may be able to administer all affairs with such impartial justice and clemency ; that the poorest subjects he hath may be as dear unto him as they are unto thee ; and recover their rights, or be preserved in them, from the power of those who would oppress them.

Ver. 3.] So shall all parts of the kingdom be most happy ; living in peace, and enjoying the blessed fruits of it : while all the judges of the land, both great and small, make it their study to maintain them in their just rights and liberties.

Ver. 4.] And his authority is not abused to the oppression of the poor ; and the making those more miserable, who have nothing but beggary left them for their inheritance : but employed for their defence and preservation ; and for the crushing of those, that, by fraud and force, are injurious to them.

Ver. 5.] Which righteous administration shall rebound to his everlasting honour, and win him such reverence and observance from his people, as shall make him a lively emblem of the great king, Christ : whose

happy subjects shall never cease to worship and praise him day and night to the world's end.

Ver. 6.] For he shall not endeavour to be formidable to them like a tyrant, whose government imitates the thunder, storms, and tempests : but condescend most graciously to the meanest ; and rule them in so soft and gentle a manner, as shall make his authority no less acceptable and beneficial, than the rain is to the after-grass, or dripping showers, which fall in the summer heat, to refresh the parched earth.

Ver. 7.] The wicked shall have no preferment in his days ; but righteous and virtuous men shall grow to a great height, and flourish as the plants do after those cherishing showers : whereby such lasting peace and tranquillity shall be established, as nothing can exceed, but the blessed times of the prince of peace, whose kingdom shall have no end.

Ver. 8.] Nor shall his empire be confined within the bounds of Judea ; but, according to the promise made to our forefather Abraham (Gen. xv. 18), and renewed to his children (Exod. xxiii. 31 ; Deut. i. 7. xi. 24 ; Josh. i. 3, 4), he shall extend it from the Red sea to the sea of the Philistines, and from the river Euphrates to the border of Egypt (1 Kings iv. 21 ; 2 Chron. ix. 26 ; Ezra iv. 20), and be the most illustrious type of that glorious kingdom of Christ, which shall spread itself throughout the world.

Ver. 9.] The most barbarous nations shall come and do him homage ; and they that refuse it shall be humbled, and forced at last to submit and prostrate themselves with the lowliest reverence at his feet.

Ver. 10.] The kings of the most distant countries, they of Tarshish (1 Kings x. 22), as well as Cyprus and Crete, and the rest of the isles, shall honour him with their presents ; and so shall they of Arabia, as far as the Persian gulf, approach him with gifts.

Ver. 11.] Yea, so many kings and nations shall make their obeisance, and subject themselves unto him ; that it shall foreshadow the large extent of the kingdom of Christ, who shall be universally acknowledged, worshipped, and obeyed, by all kings, and all nations of the earth.

Ver. 12.] Nor shall they be induced to these submissions so much by the greatness of his power, the vastness of his riches, and the magnificence of his court, as by the fame of his justice, mercy, and compassion (wherein he shall resemble the Lord Christ). For no sooner shall any miserable wretch, who hath no friend in the world, implore his protection, but he shall instantly succour, defend, and relieve him.

Ver. 13.] He shall take pity upon such helpless creatures, and add no heavier burden unto that of their lamentable poverty ; nor shall he be prodigal of their lives, but as tenderly secure them as those of his greatest subjects.

15 And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised.

16 There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.

17 His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men

shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.

18 Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things.

19 And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory: Amen, and Amcn.

20 The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.

Ver. 14.] He shall preserve them from being ruined either by the fraud or violence of those who are too subtle or too mighty for them, and love them so dearly, as never to satisfy his own ambition, covetousness, or revenge, with the expense of the precious treasure of their blood.

Ver. 15.] Whereby his reign shall be long and prosperous; and the longer he reigns, the richer presents shall be brought unto him (as there shall be to Christ from the eastern countries): together with their perpetual prayers for his continued prosperity; and the highest praises and commendations which shall ever be in men's mouths, of his just and gracious government.

Ver. 16.] Which God shall bless with such plenty, that a handful of corn sown in the earth, even upon the top of barren mountains, shall spring up so thick, with ears so plump and full, that when they are shaken with the wind they shall make a noise like the cedars of Lebanon; nor shall the city be less fruitful than the country, but become as populous and well stored with all good things as the earth is with grass or flowers in the spring.

Ver. 17.] His memory and fame shall never die, but be propagated from father to son, as long as the sun shall shine; and when they would wish well to

another, they shall say, "God make thee as happy as Solomon:" for all people that hear of him shall look on him as the most excellent prince that ever was, except the king Messiah, whom all nations shall magnify and extol, and above all things desire his blessing.

Ver. 18.] For which good hopes, and for all other his benefits, I renew my thanks (1 Chron. xxix. 10) to the great Lord and sovereign of all the world; who hath graciously chosen Israel for his peculiar people: let him be most heartily blessed and praised, whose bounty is stupendous, and incomparably beyond all that can be said or thought of it.

Ver. 19.] Let his supereminent perfections be forever celebrated with our praises; and not with ours only, but let the whole world be possessed with a sense of the surpassing greatness of his wisdom, power, and love, and join together with us in his praises. Let it be so, let it be so; let us all consent to say, again and again, The Lord be praised, the Lord be praised.

Ver. 20.] This was the last Psalm which David the son of Jesse composed, not long before he died: and was all of his that the collector of this book could find before he published it.

PART III.

PSALM LXXIII.

A Psalm of Asaph.

1 TRULY God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.

2 But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped.

PSALM LXXIII.

ARGUMENT.—Here begins a new collection of seventeen Psalms, most of them very disconsolate and full of sad complaints, which make up the third book of this volume, as the Hebrews divide it. They were most of them composed by Asaph (and but one of them by David), though who he was is not resolved by interpreters: who suspect, indeed, there might be another author of some of these Psalms; but have no other Asaph to name but Asaph the singer, who was famous in the days of David (1 Chron. vi. 39. xvi. 5; 2 Chron. v. 12). And accordingly Apollinaris thus descants upon the title: "The divine invention of David failing in the composing of songs, Asaph arose, and by the divine spirit resounded this hymn." But it seems to me that there is another person of this

name mentioned in the holy books (who may be more probably entitled to this work), called *Asaph the seer* (see Ps. 1.), who lived in the days of Hezekiah (2 Chron. xxix. 30), and whose son, I suppose, was then recorder (2 Kings xviii. 37; Isa. xxxvi. 3). Some of them, indeed (as I shall take notice in due place), may be thought rather to belong to another Asaph in aftertimes: but for the present Psalm (and most of the rest) I can find no person so likely to whom it may be entitled, as him now named: who composed it, I conceive, either when he saw the miserable havoc which strangers made among them in the days of Ahaz (2 Chron. xxvii. 17—19. xxix. 8, 9), or when Sennacherib invaded them, notwithstanding the reformation which Hezekiah had made: or, which is most probable, upon the occasion that David wrote the thirty-seventh Psalm, to comfort himself and good

3 For I was envious at the foolish, *when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.*

4 For *there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm.*

5 They *are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued as other men.*

6 Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment.

7 Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish.

8 They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily.

9 They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth.

10 Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full cup are wrung out to them.

11 And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most high?

12 Behold, these *are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.*

13 Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency.

14 For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning.

15 If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children.

16 When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me.

17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.

18 Surely thou didst set them in slippery

men, when they saw the lowlier sort among them thrive and prosper, and the pious sometimes sorely afflicted; quite contrary to the sanctions of their law, which promised all good things to those that observed it, and threatened the evil to those that broke it. This extremely afflicted his spirit, and staggered his faith, till he considered the matter more deeply; and then he broke out into this meditation, saying,

Ver. 1.] I will never hereafter, whatsoever confusions I behold, question the justice of God's providence; but constantly affirm that he is not merely just, but very good; yea, hath a most singular love to his faithful people; who, notwithstanding the evils they endure, will never consent to do any evil.

Ver. 2.] Time was, indeed, when I, even I, who have had such long experience of his care over me, began to doubt and stagger in my faith: nay, was in danger to tumble headlong into unbelief.

Ver. 3.] The reason was, that having a just indignation against the folly, or rather madness, of wicked men, it first vexed me to see them, notwithstanding their ill deservings, in a very flourishing condition; and then tempted me to think it very hard, that sober men should not equal, if not exceed them in such happiness: especially when I saw no likelihood that it would end, but that they continue in their prosperity.

Ver. 4.] For as they carry on all their designs smoothly, and meet with no rub in their way, nor are in any danger (so great is their power) to be bound over by human justice to answer for their crimes, how many soever they commit: so they are not afflicted with sore diseases by the hand of God, nor brought to their graves with pains and torment; but after a long life, in firm and vigorous health, depart easily out of the world.

Ver. 5.] Their life is nothing so laborious and toilsome as that of many honest, but poor and wretched men: and they escape untouched, or are little hurt by such calamities as are common to all mankind.

Ver. 6.] Which makes them so unsufferably proud and vainly conceited of themselves, that they not only tyrannize over their neighbours, but openly boast of the power they have to do them mischief: and glory in all the violence and cruelty whereby they maintain and increase their pompous greatness.

Ver. 7.] In which they pamper themselves to such an excess, that in their very countenance they express the haughty swelling of their minds and hearts: which are strangely puffed up, by their being raised (not only beyond the expectation of all other men, but)

far above all that they themselves at first imagined or could design.

Ver. 8.] They mock at all those who scrupulously tie themselves to the rules of justice, or tell them of the danger they run by their violation: for they threaten to undo all those that oppose them, and publicly declare, in the height of their arrogance, that they will not be bound by any laws.

Ver. 9.] No, not those of God himself, who (with all the invisible powers of which men talk), they say, is but a name; which they do not dread: and therefore no wonder if such blasphemers of his majesty spare neither high nor low, but let their tongues loose to abuse and calumniate whomsoever they please upon earth.

Ver. 10.] And yet, as bad as they are, there is none of them but hath his followers and admirers; whom he first invites, and then retains, like beasts, by filling their bellies: which abundantly contents them, though others be squeezed and oppressed to give them this poor satisfaction.

Ver. 11.] Nay, they drink in their opinions, and join with them in their impiety, saying, How can God know what we do here? or if he do, why should we think that he who is so high, troubles himself about our affairs?

Ver. 12.] For behold, there are none that condemn him more than these men; and yet he is so far from inflicting any punishment on them, that none enjoy such a continued course of prosperity as they, whose wealth and power increase every day.

Ver. 13.] And verily, if these men discourse aright, I have taken a great deal of pains to little purpose; while I have studiously endeavoured to keep my heart pure from so much as ill designs, as well as to refrain the doing of any evil actions, from the charge of which I can safely purge myself.

Ver. 14.] And yet I am plagued perpetually by the restless malice of these wicked doers; which, as constantly as the sun rises, falls on me a deal sooner than on other men.

Ver. 15.] But whatever confused and foolish thoughts came on a sudden into my mind, I concluded, upon more mature deliberation, that if I said as these men do, I should basely betray the cause of all them who are truly dear unto thee.

Ver. 16.] And therefore resolved with myself, before I pronounced my sentence, to study this point more seriously; which at first sight appeared so hard, that it grievously perplexed me.

Ver. 17.] And retiring myself into the holy places, to consult with thee, and with those to whom thou communicatest thy secrets, I was presently sensible how short their felicity is: unto which death having

places: thou castedst them down into destruction.

19 How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors.

20 As a dream when *one* awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image.

21 Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins.

22 So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee.

23 Nevertheless I *am* continually with thee: thou hast holden *me* by my right hand.

24 Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.

25 Whom have I in heaven *but thee?* and *there is none* upon earth that I desire beside thee.

26 My flesh and my heart faileth: *but God is* the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

27 For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish; thou hast destroyed all them that go a whoring from thee.

28 *But it is good* for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy works.

put an utter end, it is followed with a dismal after-reckoning in another world.

Ver. 18.] And next I considered, that all of them do not stand so firm as they imagine, but merely flatter themselves with vain hopes of continuing in their station to the end of their days: for being raised to the highest preferments, they find them to be very slippery places; from whence, to the amazement of themselves and of all spectators, they come tumbling down into a most horrible ruin.

Ver. 19.] O what an astonishing change is this! which is the most frightful, when on a sudden the divine vengeance seizes on them; and, when they least expect it, an end is put to their greatness; nay, they are quite destroyed in a most terrible manner, as if they had never been.

Ver. 20.] So that it is but a dream of happiness wherein they live, and they pride themselves in a mere imaginary glory; which not only vanishes away when thou, O Lord, dost arise to judge them, but becomes as contemptible, in that very city where they appeared in all their pomp and splendour, as the fine things which a man sees in his sleep are when he awaketh.

Ver. 21.] And therefore, when my spirit boiled with vexation, and grew sour at the sight of their prosperity (ver 2, 3); when I was so vehemently provoked to passionate complaints, feeling the sharpest touches of grief and anger;

Ver. 22.] I now ingenuously acknowledge it was for want of such manly and religious thoughts as these, which should have been in my mind when I thought of thy administrations; if I had not been dull and stupid, as void of sense as the beasts, which look only at things before their eyes, and have no regard to what is to come, or is not seen.

Ver. 23.] For if I had looked beyond my senses, I might have seen that I am under the care of thy good providence, and that thou hast been my guide and my supporter, even when I had these brutish thoughts, and didst not suffer these wicked men to destroy me.

Ver. 24.] And therefore I ought in all reason still to conclude, that thou wilt direct me to behave myself so wisely that I shall never fall into their snares: but, after I have suffered awhile, be preferred to those dignities from whence they fall; and, which is more, be so graciously accepted by thee, as to continue in them unto immortal glory.

Ver. 25.] This I expect from thy almighty goodness, who art the sole object of my hope. For thou knowest there is none in heaven whom I depend upon for help and protection but thee alone; none upon earth whose favour I seek, but only thine, which shall perfectly content me.

Ver. 26.] It is possible I may still be pressed with such sore afflictions, that not only my bodily strength, but also my courage, may begin again to fail me; but then I will recover myself, and fortify my soul by flying unto thee, O God, for safety; in whose love I will always think myself happy, and enjoy everlasting satisfaction.

Ver. 27.] For there is nothing more certain or more remarkable than this; that they who, by forsaking thee, have put themselves far from under thy care, will never be able by any other means to save themselves from perishing: for thou hast already made such men a terrible example of thy displeasure, and utterly destroyed those who, quitting thy service, have devoted themselves to the worship of other gods (2 Chron. xxviii. 6, 18, 19; xxix. 7—9).

Ver. 28.] And therefore I will learn by their mis-carriages, that it is the best and safest course for me to adhere to my good God, and to make my humble addresses to him alone. I have done so hitherto, and no danger shall tempt me hereafter to quit this hold, and to confide in any thing but only in the sovereign of the world, who never fails those that depend upon him; and will, I hope, be so gracious unto me, that I shall have abundant cause to publish and proclaim to all others the works of his providence, in preserving the good, and in throwing the wicked down at last to the ground.

PSALM LXXIV.

Maschil of Asaph.

1 O God, why hast thou cast *us* off for ever? *why* doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture?

2 Remember thy congregation, *which* thou

hast purchased of old; the rod of thine inheritance, *which* thou hast redeemed; this mount Zion, wherein thou hast dwelt.

3 Lift up thy feet unto the perpetual desola-

PSALM LXXIV.

ARGUMENT.—The desolation of Jerusalem, and of the temple, as well as the rest of the country, made by

Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, was the sad occasion of this Psalm. For it is altogether improbable that it hath respect to the days of Antio-

tions; *even all that the enemy hath done wickedly in the sanctuary.*

4 Their enemies roar in the midst of thy congregations; they set up their ensigns for signs.

5 A man was famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees.

6 But now they break down the carved work thereof at once with axes and hammers.

7 They have cast fire into thy sanctuary, they

have defiled *by casting down the dwelling place of thy name to the ground.*

8 They said in their hearts, Let us destroy them together: they have burned up all the synagogues of God in the land.

9 We see not our signs: *there is no more any prophet: neither is there among us any that knoweth how long.*

10 O God, how long shall the adversary re-

clus Epiphanes, as some fancy; because, as Theodoret pertinently notes (to omit all other reasons), we read nothing in any history of his burning the temple, or so much as of his laying the city waste, which are both here most sorrowfully bewailed by Asaph. Who was not therefore that Asaph in David's time (unless we should grant him to have written by the spirit of prophecy, and predicted what should be in after times, as a great many think), because there was no such temple in those days, nor had been, as is here described: nor was it Asaph the seer in Hezekiah's days (of whom see argument of the foregoing Psalm), who saw no such desolation made by Sennacherib (for he did not take Jerusalem, nor shoot so much as an arrow into it), nor, in all likelihood, prophesied of the destruction here spoken of; because the description of it in this Psalm is so plain, that we may most reasonably think the author of it had it before his eyes, and did not merely see it by the spirit of prophecy; which is not wont to foretell things in so clear a manner, but more obscurely and darkly.

I conclude, therefore, it was some other Asaph who composed this Psalm, in the time of the captivity, and in the middle, or rather towards the conclusion of it; because he complains (ver. 9) that they had no prophet (as there was in the beginning of the captivity, particularly Jeremiah) to tell them how long it should last. And, considering that in the second verse he speaks of himself as one that dwelt still in the land of Israel, pointing to mount Zion as a place near to him, I take him to have been some pious man of the posterity of Asaph, who was suffered to remain there with the Chaldeans.

And if it were fit to suppose him to have written this Psalm very young, and to have lived to a great age, when I have no proof of either, I should guess him to be Asaph, the keeper of the king's forest, in the days of Nehemiah; who desired Artaxerxes to write to him, to furnish him with timber out of Lebanon, for the rebuilding some of those places which the Psalmist here complains were destroyed. Among which, the porch of the court of the sanctuary remained unbuilt even unto those times.

Howsoever, from the mention of mount Zion in the second verse, it is manifest Grotius forgot himself, when, in his notes upon ver. 6, he applies this Psalm to the destruction of Shiloh, which he supposes to have here bewailed. For mount Zion had then never been in their possession, as it was afterward, and had lain so long waste (ver. 3), when Asaph wrote this Psalm, that it looked like a perpetual desolation. Besides, the tabernacle was not burnt when Shiloh was destroyed, but remained, though without the ark, till the days of Solomon, 2 Chron. i. 3 (see Ps. lxxviii.). And of the meaning of *Maschil*, see Ps. xxxii.

Ver. 1.] O God, the sovereign judge of the world, who has justly expelled us out of our land, and continued our banishment so long, that little hope appears

of our being restored to it again; behold the anguish of our souls wherein we cry unto thee for mercy: for we are confounded to see thee so highly incensed against those who were once under thy most indulgent care, as if thou wert resolved never to be reconciled to us any more.

Ver. 2.] Thou hast not forgotten, we know, though it be very long ago, with the expense of how many miracles thou didst make our ancestors thy peculiar people: for which reason, though we be exceedingly undeserving, we beseech thee to let all the world see, thou wilt not utterly abandon the poor remainders of that nation, which thou didst acquire at so great a price; that kingdom, which thou didst rescue out of the most miserable slavery, to be thy own possession; and this mount Zion, wherein (after thou hadst by many wonders brought us into Canaan, and rooted out the old inhabitants) thou wast pleased at last to settle thy abode among us.

Ver. 3.] Make haste, good Lord, to come and visit the ruins of our country and city, which have lasted exceeding long, and will never be repaired without thy powerful help: which we implore against the authors of them; who, to all the other mischiefs they have done, have, with a peculiar spite, not only defaced, but utterly destroyed, thy dwelling-place.

Ver. 4.] They are thy enemies therefore as well as ours, whose fury and rage so transport them, that they roar rather than shout; whilst they triumph in those places where thy people were wont to meet to praise thy name: there they have set up their banners in token of their victory, and brag as if their gods were superior unto thee.

Ver. 5.] Every one of them laid about him, and bestired himself with all his might, as if he hoped to get renown by the mischief he did: which was committed with no more remorse, than if they had been lopping off boughs in the thickets of a forest, where they may be spared.

Ver. 6.] Just so methinks I see (as if it were now doing) how they hacked and hewed with axes, and knocked down with hammers, the curious carved work of the temple: whose elegance would have moved any but barbarians to have preserved it, with as great a zeal as they employed to beat it in pieces.

Ver. 7.] But so mad was their rage, it was not satisfied with this, but set fire unto thy holy place: and what that did not consume, they pulled down; till they had utterly profaned the habitation consecrated to thy majesty, by laying it level with the ground.

Ver. 8.] Nor did all this give a stop unto their fury; but they rather grew the more outrageous: for, designing quite to destroy our religion, both in this and in future generations, they left not so much as one place wherein we might meet to say our prayers, or hear the law, throughout the land.

Ver. 9.] And, which is the saddest thing of all, thou seemest to have left us too; and we see no token of thy divine presence with us: so far we are from beholding any miraculous works, as our fathers did, for our deliverance, that there is not so much as a prophet to be found to give us any advice, or speak

proach? shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever?

11 Why withdrawest thou thy hand, even thy right hand? pluck it out of thy bosom.

12 For God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth.

13 Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength: thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters.

14 Thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces, and gavest him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderness.

15 Thou didst cleave the fountain and the flood: thou driedst up mighty rivers.

16 The day is thine, the night also is thine: thou hast prepared the light and the sun.

17 Thou hast set all the borders of the earth: thou hast made summer and winter.

a word of comfort to us: not a man among us that can tell when these calamities will have an end.

Ver. 10.] What a reproach is this, O God? which hath quite tired our patience, and made us cry unto thee to make haste to avenge thyself of these insulting enemies: stop their blasphemous mouths, O God, and let them not say any more, as they have done too long, that thou art not able to deliver us.

Ver. 11.] For we are confounded, and know not what to say, while thou thus withdrawest thy powerful presence from us; that mighty power which was wont to do such wonders for us: exert it again, we beseech thee, and stretch it out for the destruction of those who have spoken of it so contemptuously.

Ver. 12.] Why should I despair of it! since the great God, whom they deride, hath many ages ago undertaken the government and protection of us: working for us such deliverances in this land, which now lies waste, as astonished all the world.

Ver. 13.] Thou art that God, to whose power the raging sea is subject; which at thy command retired, and opened a way for us to pass through; but came back again with its wonted violence, and overwhelmed the Egyptians; who, like so many scoundrels, thought to have devoured us.

Ver. 14.] Pharaoh, that fierce tyrant, as terrible as the vastest whales, thou didst utterly destroy there; with all his stern captains and commanders: whom the sea spewed up (Exod. xix. 30), to find their tombs in the bellies of the wild beasts and birds, which people the neighbouring wilderness.

Ver. 15.] Where, when our fathers wanted drink, thou madest water to gush out of a rock (Exod. xvii. 6; Numb. xx. 9); which followed them in a full stream, till they came to the borders of Canaan: and then thou driedst up the waters of Jordan, at a time when they ran violently, and (as if many rivers had been joined in one) it overflowed all its banks (Josh. iii. 15. 17).

Ver. 16.] And still there are such instances of thy power, which the whole world, if they would but mind, have always before their eyes. For as thou didst sometimes change the dry land into a river, and a river into dry land; so thou dost continually change the day into night, and the night into day: having settled the moon to govern the one, and the sun to govern the other, in their turns.

Ver. 17.] By thy almighty wisdom also it is, that the motion of the sun not only makes the days and nights, but the different climates of the earth, and the

18 Remember this, that the enemy hath reproached, O LORD, and that the foolish people have blasphemed thy name.

19 O deliver not the soul of thy turtledove unto the multitude of the wicked: forget not the congregation of thy poor for ever.

20 Have respect unto the covenant: for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty.

21 O let not the oppressed return ashamed: let the poor and needy praise thy name.

22 Arise, O God, plead thine own cause: remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee daily.

23 Forget not the voice of thine enemies: the tumult of those that rise up against thee increaseth continually.

seasons of the year: which are sometimes hot, and sometimes cold: sometimes flourishing, as we see in the summer, with all manner of fruit; and sometimes stripped, as we see in the winter, of all its ornaments, that afterward it may be the more fruitful.

Ver. 18.] And we sure have endured a very tedious winter; wherein all things have looked most ruefully. May it please thee now to return, like the sun, unto us, and let thy enemies know thou hast not forgotten how they have reproached thee, O Lord! (whom they ought to have honoured as the mighty Creator of all things) but wilt vindicate thy glory, by punishing these insolent people, who, foolishly puffed up with their victories, have despised and derided thy omnipotent majesty.

Ver. 19.] Deliver, we beseech thee, thy church, which, like a turtle-dove, can do nothing but meekly mourn, and make her silent complaints unto thee, from those violent men, who, like birds of prey, seek utterly to destroy her: let them not take away its life and being; but, though we be at present deserted by thee, yet hear our cries, and at last relieve a poor helpless company, who flee unto thee, and depend upon thee alone for safety.

Ver. 20.] Though we are unworthy to be regarded by thee, yet have regard unto thy own promises; wherein thou hast engaged thyself unto our fathers, to give to them and their posterity the land of Canaan: which is so far from being now inhabited by thy people, that every blind corner of it is a den of thieves and murderers; who have filled it with rapine and cruelty.

Ver. 21.] O let not thy poor afflicted servant, who implores thy aid against these barbarous oppressors, be denied his suit; and go away ashamed, to see himself disappointed of his hope: but let him, and all the rest of thy miserable people, who were never in greater need of thy help, be restored to praise thy goodness in their ancient possessions; from whence they have been thus long banished.

Ver. 22.] Appear, O God, in our behalf; and thereby vindicate thyself from reproach: let me again beseech thee, to show that thou art not unmindful of all the scoffs, which prosperous fools belch out against thee every day.

Ver. 23.] It is time to punish all the insulting language of thy enemies: for the insolent brags and furious threats of those that oppose thee increase still more and more, and rise up to a greater height of audacious impiety.

PSALM LXXXV.

To the chief Musician. *Al-taschith.* A Psalm or Song of Asaph.

1 UNTO thee, O God, do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks : for that thy name is near thy wondrous works declare.

2 When I shall receive the congregation I will judge uprightly.

3 The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved : I bear up the pillars of it. Selah.

4 I said unto the fools, Deal not foolishly : and to the wicked, Lift not up the horn :

5 Lift not up your horn on high ; speak not with a stiff neck.

6 For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.

7 But God is the judge : he putteth down one, and setteth up another.

8 For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup, and the wine is red ; it is full of mixture ; and he poureth out of the same : but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them.

PSALM LXXXV.

ARGUMENT.—I take this Psalm to have been made by Asaph the seer, mentioned 2 Chron. xxix. 30 (see Ps. lxxiii.), after the great deliverance, which, by the strange destruction of Sennacherib's army, God gave the good king Hezekiah. For whose use Asaph composed this Psalm, and delivered it to the chief master of music in the tabernacle ; that he might therein make his public profession of his obligations to almighty God, and his resolution to serve him, and to depend upon him : as he advises all men else to do, if they would not be undone ; or if they hoped for any good, of which he is the sole and absolute dispenser.

If *Al-taschith* be more than a note, that this Psalm was to be sung like to the fifty-seventh, and those that follow ; it may signify as much as, *thou shalt not, or wilt not, destroy* : and be applied either to Sennacherib, who, the prophet told them, should not accomplish his design of destroying them, as he had done other nations (2 Kings xix. 17 ; 2 Chron. xxvii. 14), or to God, who had not given him commission, as he pretended, to destroy Jerusalem (2 Kings xviii. 25), but would defend it (2 Kings xix. 34), and not suffer it to be laid desolate.

Symmachus gives a more spiritual sense of the word, and calls this a *triumphal song concerning immortality* : because it contains, as Theodoret explains it, a prediction of the righteous judgment of God in the destruction of the wicked, and rewarding the lovers of virtue : which should admonish us not to suffer any godly thoughts we have in our mind to perish ; but to preserve them whole and entire, that we may inherit immortality.

What is to be understood by a *Psalm-song*, see in the argument of Psalm lxxvii.

Ver. 1.] Unto thee, O God, the righteous judge, who art the sole author of this great deliverance, do I and all my people give most solemn thanks : nor can we ever thank thee enough, but we must again and again renew our acknowledgments unto thee ; whose almighty power is still ready at hand, we clearly see by the wonders thou hast done, to succour all those who gratefully commemorate thy benefits.

Ver. 2.] And I will not content myself with these verbal praises alone ; but as soon as I shall meet with a fit opportunity, and we can have our solemn assemblies again (which by this invasion have been interrupted, 2 Chron. xxxii. 1), I will perfect the reformation which I have begun : and see that equal justice be done to all my people ; as well as that they be preserved in thy true religion.

Ver. 3.] The whole country hath been in a miserable confusion ; while their hearts melted with fear of an utter desolation : but as then I supported their spirits, and encouraged the great men and the officers to do their duty (2 Chron. xxxi. 6—8), so I will hereafter establish such magistrates and judges, as shall bring all into better order.

Ver. 4.] I have told them my mind already, and do still solemnly proclaim and declare, that I will proceed with the utmost severity against the contemners of thy laws ; and therefore I advise them not to be so madly rude and insolent : for the proudest of them all shall know, that it is safest for them to be more modest, than to glory, as they do, in their impiety ; or to boast of the power they have to be injurious to their neighbours.

Ver. 5.] Do not vaunt of this, I once more advise you, nor bear yourselves high, as if you would out-brave heaven itself ; be not refractory and stubborn, nor arrogantly say, that you will have your way, and that none shall curb you.

Ver. 6.] For which way soever you turn yourselves, whether to the east, or to the west, or to the mountainous deserts that lie on the north and south of us ; in vain do ye think to escape the righteous judgment of God.

Ver. 7.] Who, being the sovereign Lord and governor of the world, easily lays those low that proudly exalt themselves against his authority ; and lifts up those that humbly submit themselves unto him.

Ver. 8.] For he never wants power to inflict the most dreadful punishments ; which (like an intoxicating wine, full of stupefying ingredients, that loosens the very joints, and takes away all a man's strength to resist) never fail to have their effect : and the godly may taste of them, may suffer sorely for a time ; but the heaviest and most grievous punishments (like the dregs at the bottom of such wine) shall fall to the share of all the wicked of the land ; who shall be forced to endure the utmost expressions of the divine vengeance upon their sins.

Ver. 9.] And this I, who am his minister to execute his judgments, will not cease to declare, as long as I live, that none may pretend ignorance for their excuse : and I will sing praises unto God (who delivered Jacob from all evil), not only for his late miraculous preservation of us by his vengeance on Sennacherib (whom he hath made an example of his wrath to all proud contemners of him), but for making me the instrument of so happy a reformation.

Ver. 10.] For this is my resolution, not merely, as I said, to praise him, but to pull down the haughty spirit, and cut short all the power of the wicked, that

9 But I will declare for ever; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.

they shall not be able to do such mischief as they desire: and to raise the righteous into such authority,

10 All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off; but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted.

that they shall not fear what their most insolent enemies can do unto them.

PSALM LXXVI.

To the chief Musician on Neginoth. A Psalm or Song of Asaph.

1 IN Judah is God known: his name is great in Israel.

2 In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion.

3 There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle. Selah.

4 Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey.

5 The stouthearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep: and none of the men of might have found their hands.

6 At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep.

7 Thou, even thou, art to be feared: and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry?

8 Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still,

9 When God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth. Selah.

10 Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.

PSALM LXXVI.

ARGUMENT.—It is visible to every eye, that the Psalmist here commemorates some notable victory over very powerful enemies: whereby God delivered (when it was in great danger) the whole country, particularly Jerusalem: which is called here Salem (ver. 2), by an usual form of speech among the Hebrews, who are wont, in names of places, to cut off the former part; instead of Abel-shittim, saying only Shittim; and Nimrim, for Beth-nimrim; Lechi, for Ramath-lechi; Sheba, for Beer-sheba, and many such-like, as Bochartus hath shown in the second book of his Phaleg, cap. 25, and in the first part of his work concerning the animals named in scripture, book ii. ch. 25.

And there is as little reason to doubt that the particular deliverance here aimed at is that from Sennacherib's army, which Asaph the seer, mentioned 2 Chron. xxix. 30 (see Ps. lxxiii.), was not content to celebrate in the former hymn, which he made for the use of the king; but added this also, for his own use, and all other pious persons: who he hoped would join in it, especially when it was sung in the temple, as he directed the master of the music, after the same manner as Ps. iv.

Some of the Greeks seem to have perceived something of this: for though there be no such title in the ancient Hexaplus of Origen, yet, in aftertimes, Theodoret tells us, he found in some copies this inscription, which still continues, *An Ode against the Assyrians*: which Apollinarius follows. Of a Psalm-song see Ps. lxxvii.

Ver. 1.] God hath so illustriously demonstrated himself among us (in this unexpected and terrible execution) to be the sovereign ruler and judge of the world, that he must shut his eyes that doth not see it: his power, and all his other glorious perfections, which are conspicuous every where, are in no country so magnified as they are in Israel.

Ver. 2.] Our enemies themselves, who reviled him (2 Chron. xxxii. 17, 19), and despised Jerusalem (ver. 10), are now sure convinced that there this mighty Lord maketh his abode: in the top of that mountain where he hath chosen to fix his dwelling-place.

Ver. 3.] Before the walls of which he hath slain, with an invisible dart, the fiery archers; (who have

not shot so much as one arrow into it, 2 Kings xix. 32); and made the shields, and swords, and the rest of their military preparations, altogether useless and unprofitable.

Ver. 4.] Whereby thou, O Zion, art become more glorious than all the mountains, where the fiercest beasts of prey, or the most desperate robbers, have their resort, who never made such slaughters.

Ver. 5.] For they whose courage made them fear no danger but confidently promised themselves the spoils of Jerusalem, are given unto us for a spoil: they lay down to sleep, but never awaked (2 Kings xix. 35); not a man among the most mighty of them was able to strike a stroke, or do any thing to defend himself against that hand which cut them off.

Ver. 6.] But the most experienced horseman, as well as they that rode in chariots, sunk down dead, at the sudden check, the severe rebuke, which they received from thee, O God of Jacob, whom they reproached (Kings xix. 22, 23).

Ver. 7.] Thou, and none but thou, art to be dreaded: and what king is he, that is able, for so short a time as a moment, to resist thy power? which in an instant can destroy all those who incur thy heavy displeasure:

Ver. 8.] We have an example of it before our eyes; for when we made our solemn appeal to thee (2 Kings xix. 3, 4, 15, 16), thou wast pleased to pronounce a sentence of condemnation from heaven upon our enemies, which struck such terror into those that survived, that they who before were full of rage, and made a tumultuous noise (ver. 27, 28), were as still as lambs, and durst not stir a foot, but only to return from whence they came (ver. 28, 36).

Ver. 9.] They were afraid to continue their attempts against us, when God, who had long suffered their insolence, sent an angel to chastise it, and to do execution upon them; and thereby delivered the helpless people of this land, who had patiently borne their horrible oppression.

Ver. 10.] Which may well be a warning to all fell tyrants, not to be so fierce and outrageous; which will only present thee with a fairer opportunity to glorify thyself, and raise thy praise to a greater height; as thou hast now done, by suppressing the Assyrians' fury; who, if they have any relics of wrath, which may boil up again in their hearts, thou shalt chain it up, and not suffer it to break forth to our further disturbance.

11 Vow, and pay unto the Lord your God : let all that be round about him bring presents unto him that ought to be feared.

Ver. 11.] And let this excite you all, who are thus marvellously delivered, to make more liberal promises of grateful sacrifices; as well as to perform those which you have already vowed, to the great Lord, your most gracious God: who so far excels all others, that the nations round about us, who hear the fame of this, shall reproach you (if you be forgetful of his benefits) by the presents which they shall make to

12 He shall cut off the spirit of princes: *he is* terrible to the kings of the earth.

him (2 Chron. xxxii. 23), who ought to be feared by all his friends, and is most terrible to his enemies.

Ver. 12.] For he can easily, with a sudden stroke, not only take down the proud stomach, but take away the life of the fiercest captains and commanders (2 Chron. xxxii. 21), yea, make the greatest monarchs (who keep the world in awe) quake and tremble at his dreadful executions.

PSALM LXXVII.

To the chief Musician, to Jeduthun. A Psalm of Asaph.

1 I CRIED unto God with my voice, *even* unto God with my voice; and he gave ear unto me.

2 In the day of my trouble I sought the LORD: my sore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted.

3 I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah.

4 Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot sleep.

5 I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times.

6 I call to remembrance my song in the night:

I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search.

7 Will the LORD cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more?

8 Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore?

9 Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Selah.

10 And I said, This is my infirmity: *but I will remember* the years of the right hand of the most High.

11 I will remember the works of the LORD: surely I will remember thy wonders of old.

PSALM LXXVII.

ARGUMENT.—A Psalm composed by Asaph, and sent by him to that song-master, who was over the children of Jeduthun; in which I imagined, at first sight, that he represented the sad condition of Hezekiah, and the motions of his heart towards God in his sickness (2 Chron. xxxii. 21; Isa. xxxviii. 1). But, upon farther consideration, it appears, from the latter part of it, when he bewails the calamity of all the nation: either when Sennacherib overran the country, or else in the captivity of Babylon. If we refer to the latter, then it was not Asaph the seer, whom I mentioned before (Ps. lxxiii.), that made this Psalm; but some other in aftertimes (see Ps. lxxiv.), who laments the long continuance of their captivity; which looked like an utter forsaking by God; but he comforts himself, at last, with the remembrance of what God had done formerly for them, when he delivered them out of the Egyptian bondage.

Ver. 1.] I have incessantly made my prayer to God, and I will still most earnestly entreat his favour: to him who hath justly afflicted us, and can alone relieve us, have I again and again renewed my importunate suit; which I hope will at last prevail with him for deliverance.

Ver. 2.] I have not negligently discharged this duty, but as the distressed is great wherein we are, so I have restlessly implored help from the Lord: in the night, when men are wont to bury their troubles in sleep, I have with unwearied diligence spread out my hands unto him (in token that all my dependence is upon his power alone), resolving to admit of no consolation, till I obtained a gracious answer from him.

Ver. 3.] I remembered, indeed, how kind God had been unto us in former times; but this only gave me

the greater trouble when I compared it with our present miseries; and the more I mused on it, the more my spirit was disturbed, and miserably afflicted.

Ver. 4.] Inasmuch that I could not close my eyes, to take a wink of sleep; nor open my mouth (such was my perturbation and astonishment) to express the heaviness of my grief.

Ver. 5.] All that I could do, was to recount thy merciful providences over our forefathers in times past; and ponderseriously what wonders thou didst for them many ages ago.

Ver. 6.] I called to mind all the songs I had indited, to celebrate the memory of those ancient benefits: and spent whole nights in silent meditations, and diligent inquiries, which I revolved to and fro in my mind; why he who had taken such care of our ancestors, had so long rejected us.

Ver. 7.] Will the Lord, thought I, abandon us for ever? Is he so incensed against us that he will never be reconciled, nor intend to show us any more favour?

Ver. 8.] Is his infinite mercy, which is the fountain of all his benefits, quite exhausted? and will he never hereafter speak a word of comfort to us?

Ver. 9.] Hath God, whose property it is to show mercy, quite laid aside all thoughts of exercising his clemency towards us? or have we so highly provoked him to anger, that he hath no regard at all unto our miseries?

Ver. 10.] But having thus complained, and said within myself, This is the thing which sorely afflicts me, to see such alterations in the proceedings of the Most High, that the same hand which formerly protected us now severely scourges us;

Ver. 11.] I presently considered, that there might be a change again; and resolved to comfort myself with the remembrance of the former works of the Lord; and to go back as far as the miracle thou didst

12 I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings.

13 Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary : who is so great a God as our God !

14 Thou art the God that doest wonders : thou hast declared thy strength among the people.

15 Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.

16 The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee ; they were afraid : the depths also were troubled.

for us (in bringing us up out of the land of Egypt), when our deserts were as small as in these days.

Ver. 13.] Of all the ensuing wonders I will think, rather than on our present miseries : I will not omit one of them ; but, instead of these complaints, make them the constant subject of my discourse.

Ver. 13.] From which I cannot but conclude, that the method of thy providence, O God, is not only perfectly holy and just, but quite out of our reach : nor is thy power inferior ; but, as thou dost not proceed in the common way of our thoughts, so none can resist what thy incomparable majesty thinks fit to effect.

Ver. 14.] For thou art the mighty God, who canst do miracles as easily as the most ordinary works : and hast made all the world sensible, that thy power exceeds both the strength and the opinion of all creatures.

Ver. 15.] Having delivered thy people, descended from Jacob, and miraculously preserved by Joseph, from the Egyptian bondage, by a long series of stupendous judgments upon Pharaoh and his servants (Exod. vi. 8 ; Deut. vi. 21, 22. vii. 8).

Ver. 16.] Which were followed presently with a greater wonder, when the waters of the Red sea felt thy power, O God : they felt thy power to the very bottom of them ; which so disturbed them, that they retreated, as if they had been affrighted at thy pre-

17 The clouds poured out water : the skies sent out a sound : thine arrows also went abroad.

18 The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven : the lightnings lightened the world : the earth trembled and shook.

19 Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.

20 Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

sence, and left a plain way for thy people to march through upon dry ground :

Ver. 17.] But returned again upon the Egyptians (who pursued after us), accompanied with a terrible storm of rain, and thunder, and hailstones ; which flew about their ears, and break the very wheels of their chariots (Exod. xiv. 24, 25).

Ver. 18.] The noise of this thunder filled all the air thereabout ; and so did the lightning that flashed in their faces ; which, together with a dreadful earthquake, made the very inhabitants of Canaan tremble (Josh. ii. 10, 11).

Ver. 19.] We might well say then, that thy way is quite out of our reach (ver. 13), who madest a passage through the sea, a broad path through the boisterous waters : which, as none ever trod before or after, so they cannot trace the footsteps, which the waters have overflowed and obliterated (Exod. xiv. 26, 27).

Ver. 20.] Nor did thy care over thy people end there ; but, by the ministry of thy servants, Moses and Aaron, thou didst conduct them with the same tenderness that a good shepherd doth his sheep, through a horrid wilderness, in which thou feddest them, till they came to Canaan. [And thither the same power can, and the same goodness will, I hope, restore us : though now we seem neglected by thee, as our fathers were, for a time, in the land of Egypt.]

PSALM LXXVIII.

Maschil of Asaph.

I GIVE ear, O my people, to my law : incline your ears to the words of my mouth.

PSALM LXXVIII.

ARGUMENT.—When God gave his law to the Israelites, he commanded them not only to be careful to study it themselves, but to inculcate it upon their children (as the Psalmist here remembers, ver. 5), that they might propagate the knowledge of it to all future generations (Deut. iv. 9. vi. 7, 8, &c. xi. 18, 19, &c.), and particularly to instruct them in the reason of their feasts ; which were appointed for the commemoration of several benefits, which he would not have forgotten (Exod. xiii. 8, 14). In prosecution of which end, as Theodoret well observes, this Psalm was indited, by the prophetic grace (as his words are) ; that they and all their posterity might preserve in mind the wonderful works of God. An epitome of which (for the help of their memory) he here presents them withal ; from the time of their coming out of Egypt, till David's promotion to the throne.

2 I will open my mouth in a parable : I will utter dark sayings of old :

Where this narration concluding, it makes it probable this Psalm was composed by that Asaph, so often mentioned, as one of the principal singers in those days ; who, setting before the people's eyes, as in a table, the benefits their fathers had received, with their shameful ingratitude, and the punishments inflicted upon them for it, teaches and instructs them who succeeded (for which reason some will have it called *Maschil*, see Ps. xxxii.), to learn greater gratitude and fidelity to their benefactor ; for fear they should incur his higher displeasure, if they did not beware by such bad examples.

Ver. 1.] Attend reverently, O my countrymen, for whom I have a particular affection, unto the admonition which now I intend to give you : listen diligently I beseech you, to the following instruction.

Ver. 2.] It is no vulgar lesson which I would have you learn ; nor will I be sparing in my instruction ; but I will abundantly inform you in the most remark-

3 Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.

4 We will not hide *them* from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.

5 For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children :

6 That the generation to come might know *them*, even the children *which* should be born; *who* should arise and declare *them* to their children :

7 That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments :

8 And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation *that* set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God.

9 The children of Ephraim, *being* armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle.

10 They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law ;

11 And forgot his works, and his wonders that he had shewed them.

12 Marvellous things did he in the sight of their fathers, in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan.

13 He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through; and he made the waters to stand as an heap.

14 In the daytime also he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire.

15 He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave *them* drink as *out of* the great depths.

16 He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers.

17 And they sinned yet more against him by provoking the most high in the wilderness.

able passages of God's providence in former times; which are more worthy your knowledge, than the skill of resolving the darkest riddles.

Ver. 3.] And I will not report uncertain or doubtful things to you; or things done in another nation; but such as are of unquestionable credit; which you have heard and known to be recorded in your holy books: and our forefathers, who were eye-witnesses of them, have faithfully registered and transmitted unto us.

Ver. 4.] Who will not be so treacherous as to lose the memory of them in our days; but diligently propagate them to posterity: endeavouring that all future generations may understand, how much the Lord deserves to be praised, for the mighty and stupendous works which he hath done in former ages.

Ver. 5.] And, indeed, when God gave us the law, he strictly charged our forefathers, and made a particular injunction about it, which he frequently repeated (Deut. iv. vi. xi. see the argument); that they should be careful to leave the knowledge of these things as a sacred legacy, or inheritance, unto their children.

Ver. 6.] In order to the conveying them, by their hands, to the next generation; who were then unborn: who should be taught also, when they were grown up, to deliver them with the same diligence to their descendants; and so preserve the memory of them to all succeeding generations.

Ver. 7.] To the end, that they might learn by such wonderful instances of his powerful goodness, to adhere unto him, and confide in him alone; and, by the constant commemoration of his benefits, be provoked religiously to observe his precepts.

Ver. 8.] And take warning by the punishments inflicted on them, not to imitate the ingratitude of their forefathers, who were not only a refractory generation, but so fickle, that they fell off from God to the worship of idols, presently after they came out of Egypt: for they did not lay to heart what he had done for them, and so were never rightly disposed to his service; or if in a good fit they were inclined to it, they soon revolted from him.

Ver. 9.] What could be more shameful, than their base refusal to go and engage the Canaanites, when they were so well appointed for the fight; and were commanded by God, in whose power they had no confidence, to go up and take possession of the land

(Deut. i. 26)? unless it were their foul cowardice when they did engage them against his command (ver. 43, 44); and the Ephraimites themselves, though a valiant tribe, and excellent archers, ran away, and were chased in a shameful manner by their enemies.

Ver. 10.] For they brake their word with God (who therefore would not be with them, Numb. xiv. 43), and would not be governed by *his* will, but by their own.

Ver. 11.] Never thinking of the illustrious works which their eyes had seen; and so distrusting his power, notwithstanding all the miracles, whereby he had demonstrated the greatness of it to them.

Ver. 12.] Nor were the next generation any better; though the memory was then fresh of that heap of wonders, which their fathers saw him do publicly: not in a corner, but in all the land of Egypt; yea, in and about the principal city of the kingdom.

Ver. 13.] From whence when he had delivered them, and they were in great distress at the Red sea, he made it give way to them, that they might walk through it on dry ground: the fluid water swelling into little hills (Exod. xv. 8), which stood like a solid wall on either hand, to secure them in that dangerous passage (Exod. xiv. 22).

Ver. 14.] Through which he conducted them, as he did at all other times, by a glorious cloud: whose dark side served also in the day-time, for a shadow from the scorching rays of the sun; and its bright side in the night, for a torch to guide them when they travelled; or if they rested, to light them in their tents.

Ver. 15.] And when they wanted water in the wilderness, he brought it out of the rocks (which he commanded Moses to smite more than once); first at Rephidim (Exod. xvii. 6), and then in Kadesh (Numb. xx. 8. 11), and they had it in such plenty, both for themselves and their cattle, as if it had been a great pond or lake.

Ver. 16.] And yet it was no standing, but a flowing water; which ran continually out of the dry rock as out of its fountain, in several streams; or rather, like unto rivers; which followed them in their travels.

Ver. 17.] But all these miraculous works did not alter their depraved nature, which broke out into new and greater provocations; in that very place, where,

18 And they tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust.

19 Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?

20 Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people?

21 Therefore the LORD heard *this*, and was wroth: so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel;

22 Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation:

23 Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven,

24 And had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven.

25 Man did eat angels' food: he sent them meat to the full.

26 He caused an east wind to blow in the

heaven: and by his power he brought in the south wind.

27 He rained flesh also upon them as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea:

28 And he let *it* fall in the midst of their camp, round about their habitations.

29 So they did eat, and were well filled: for he gave them their own desire;

30 They were not estranged from their lust. But while their meat *was* yet in their mouths,

31 The wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen *men* of Israel.

32 For all this they sinned still, and believed not for his wondrous works.

33 Therefore their days did he consume in vanity, and their years in trouble.

34 When he slew them, then they sought him: and they returned and enquired early after God.

without the singular providence of their most high benefactor, they had all been starved.

Ver. 18.] For they were not content with the bountiful provision which he had made for them (Exod. xvi.), but muttered within themselves against him: and wished, if he was so powerful and kind as was pretended, that he would give them a new proof of it; by sending them meat to satisfy their wanton appetite.

Ver. 19.] And, at last, they openly declared that distrust of his power which was in their hearts; saying, Is God able to make us a feast here in this barren wilderness? (Numb. xi. 4, 5, &c.)

Ver. 20.) It is true, he hath brought water out of a rock for us in great abundance (which perhaps was lodged there before in the caverns of it, and might have flowed out of itself); but can he give us more substantial bread (not such light stuff as this manna is, which he also hath sent us, Numb. xi. 6), here where no corn grows? and make an ample provision for all this multitude, of such flesh as this place doth not afford?

Ver. 21.] Which rude and insolent language highly incensed the divine displeasure: so that he sent lightning from heaven (Numb. xi. 1) to consume those whom he had before cherished: and he resolved also to punish them more severely, before he had done with them (ver. 33).

Ver. 22.] Because they had so mean an opinion of him, that they durst not confide in him, and commend themselves to his good providence; to preserve and conduct them safe to Canaan.

Ver. 23.] No, not after such extraordinary benefits as they had received from him: for he had undertaken in a miraculous manner (as is fit to be more particularly remembered) to dispense food to them from above, and to make the clouds the granary, whose doors he opened to them.

Ver. 24.] And, instead of rain (to make the earth with long labour become fruitful), to send showers of manna out of the air (Exod. xvi. 4), which was a kind of corn ready prepared for them (Numb. xi. 8, 9).

Ver. 25.] There was not a man among that vast multitude, but was fed with that strong and hearty, or rather princely, food; brought to them from the habitation, and by the ministry, of angels. This was their daily entertainment, as long as their travels in the wilderness lasted; and they had it in such abundance, that none of them could pretend they were not sufficed (Exod. xvi. 16, 17, 35).

Ver. 26.] And therefore it was not to satisfy their hunger, but to reprove their unbelief, that he was pleased to comply with their desires; and, when the wind blew violently out of the east, turned it by his power into the south:

Ver. 27.] Which brought a great cloud of quails (a delicious bird) from the coasts about the Red sea: which (either tired with long flight, or beaten down by the wind) came pouring down like showers of rain; and lay on the ground, as thick as the dust or the sand on the sea-shore, from whence they came (Numb. xi. 31).

Ver. 28.] There was no need of labour, or of any art, to catch them; neither needed they go far to take them up: for they dropped down in the midst of their camp; and lay also many miles round it, in such heaps, that they, who would, might fetch enough to serve them for a whole month (Numb. xi. 20, 31).

Ver. 29.] So they had not only a taste of his liberality, but were glutted and crammed with them: for he satisfied their longings to the full.

Ver. 30.] And they were not hindered from eating as much as they pleased; nor was this diet becoming at all nauseous to them; but they greedily feasted on these birds to the end of the month: and at that very time had these sweet morsels in their mouths (Numb. xi. 33).

Ver. 31.] When the divine vengeance seized on them, by a very great pestilence (Numb. xi. 33), which swept away the strongest and goodliest persons that were in Israel.

Ver. 32.] But these punishments wrought no more change in their hearts than his benefits, for they added new sins to all the former; and were not moved by any of his wonderful works, to believe that he was able to bring them into the land of promise (Numb. xiv. 2-4).

Ver. 33.] For which cause he resolved they should never come thither, but be consumed in the wilderness (Numb. xiv. 28, 33, &c.): where, though they travelled up and down very much and long, yet it was to no purpose; for they were never the nearer to their journey's end, nor were ever free from one plague or other, till they were utterly destroyed.

Ver. 34.] They relented, indeed, sometimes, and when God cut off some of them, the rest began to deprecate his displeasure (Numb. xiv. 39, 40): and, by promising amendment, most earnestly sought to recover his favour.

35 And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer.

36 Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues.

37 For their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant.

38 But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath.

39 For he remembered that they were but flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.

40 How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert!

41 Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.

42 They remembered not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy.

43 How he had wrought his signs in Egypt, and his wonders in the field of Zoan:

44 And had turned their rivers into blood; and their floods, that they could not drink.

45 He sent divers sorts of flies among them, which devoured them; and frogs, which destroyed them.

46 He gave also their increase unto the caterpillar, and their labour unto the locust.

47 He destroyed their vines with hail, and their sycamore trees with frost.

48 He gave up their cattle also to the hail, and their flocks to hot thunderbolts.

49 He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels among them.

50 He made a way to his anger; he spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over to the pestilence;

51 And smote all the firstborn in Egypt; the chief of their strength in the tabernacles of Ham:

52 But made his own people to go forth like

Ver. 35.] And professed that they would trust in God hereafter for safety and deliverance: who they acknowledged was superior to all other gods, and had been their mighty redeemer.

Ver. 36.] But all this was little more than speaking him fair, while they lay under his correcting hand: and they did not sincerely intend to do as they promised, when it was removed.

Ver. 37.] For their hearts were not rightly disposed, nor firmly resolved to adhere unto him; as appears by their frequent revolts from their engagements; which they never faithfully observed, but as constantly broke, as they renewed their covenant with him (Numb. xvi. 3. xx. 3, 4. xxi. 5. 7. xxv. 1, 2, &c.).

Ver. 38.] Yet he was so full of compassion, that after he had threatened utterly to destroy them (Numb. xvi. 11, 12), he remitted very much of the severity of the sentence; and did not cut them off at once (ver. 15. 17, 18), but very often spared them when they deserved to be punished; or when he punished them, did it less than their deserts.

Ver. 39.] For he considered how frail they were, and that they could not continue long (though he did not snatch them away), but would moulder of themselves into dust; and vanish like a blast of wind, which makes a bustle and noise for a little time, and then is dispersed and heard of no more.

Ver. 40.] How many times, before this terrible threatening, did they provoke him to anger in the wilderness? (Numb. xiv. 22) and afterward did things exceeding offensive to him, in other parts of the desert? (Numb. xvi. xx. xxi. xxv.)

Ver. 41.] Being so vilely ungrateful, as to talk of returning into Egypt (Numb. xiv. 4); or requiring, upon every occasion, new proofs of his power: nay, questioning whether it could do all things, though he had wrought so many wonders; and appointing him, who had so often shown himself to be incomparably greater than all other gods, what he should do (as I said before, ver. 19, 20), if he intended to have them believe on him.

Ver. 42.] For they quite forgot (this was the reason of their naughtiness, ver. 11, 12, which is fit again to be repeated), or never laid to heart, the mighty things he had done for them: especially that memorable time, when he, by his power alone, delivered them from the tyranny of Pharaoh, who most miserably oppressed them.

Ver. 43.] They did not seriously ponder the evi-

dent demonstration he gave of his uncontrollable power, in the miraculous judgments which he sent upon the Egyptians; even upon the court of Pharaoh, and the principal city of the kingdom.

Ver. 44.] When, for instance, he left them no water to quench their thirst; by turning the river Nile (Exod. vii. 17. 19, 20), with all the streams that were derived from it, and all their ponds and pools of water, into blood.

Ver. 45.] And sent an infinite swarm of the most pestilent, and to them the most odious sorts of flies (Exod. viii. 21, 22), which bit the Egyptians, as they used to do their dogs: as not long before he had sent such an army of frogs to invade all places (ver. 3. 8, 9, &c.), and so to spoil their meat and drink, and every thing else, that if this plague had lasted, they must have left their country, or not have lived.

Ver. 46.] After which he exposed the fruits of the earth, for which they had taken long pains, to be devoured by various kinds of locusts; with which the whole country was so overspread, that nothing else but they were to be seen upon the face of the earth (Exod. x. 5).

Ver. 47.] Which had been miserably harrassed before, by storms of hail, both small and great: whereby not only the grapes and such-like fruit were smitten down, but the trees themselves (for instance, the vines, and the wild fig-trees) quite killed, and corrupted at the very root (Exod. ix. 18, 19. 25).

Ver. 48.] For there was a dreadful thunder, and lightning mixed together with it; which let no living creature escape, but destroyed even the cattle and the flocks, which were left abroad in the fields (Exod. ix. 22, 23, &c.).

Ver. 49.] Many other ways he plagued them, which were tokens of his severest displeasure; by a grievous murrain, by fiery boils, by a most dismal darkness (Exod. ix. 10), till at length he sent evil angels (who had frightened them in that darkness, Wisd. xvii. 3), as the ministers of his heavy wrath.

Ver. 50.] Which irresistibly and speedily seized on them, wheresoever he found them; and spared not their lives: but took away the first-born of all their cattle by a pestilential disease (Exod. xii. 30).

Ver. 51.] As well as the first-born of all their children (the prop of their families, in whom the hope of future succession was principally laid), throughout the dwellings of the posterity of Cham, the father of the Egyptians (Gen. x. 6; Exod. xii. 30).

sheep, and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.

53 And he led them on safely, so that they feared not: but the sea overwhelmed their enemies.

54 And he brought them to the border of his sanctuary, *even* to this mountain, *which* his right hand had purchased.

55 He cast out the heathen also before them, and divided them an inheritance by line, and made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.

56 Yet they tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies:

57 But turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers: they were turned aside like a deceitful bow.

58 For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images.

59 When God heard *this*, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel:

60 So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent *which* he placed among men;

61 And delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand.

62 He gave his people over also unto the sword; and was wroth with his inheritance.

63 The fire consumed their young men; and their maidens were not given to marriage.

64 Their priests fell by the sword; and their widows made no lamentation.

65 Then the LORD awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine.

66 And he smote his enemies in the hinder part: he put them to a perpetual reproach.

67 Moreover he refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim:

Ver. 52.] And by that means brought forth his people from among them (Exod. xii. 31), as peaceably as a shepherd doth his sheep out of their folds (not so much as a dog moving his tongue against them, Exod. xi. 7), and then directed them the way they should go in the wilderness (Exod. xiii. 18. 21), where he graciously provided for them.

Ver. 53.] He conducted them secretly, even through the Red Sea, without any apprehension of danger (Exod. xiv. 19. 22), but overwhelmed Pharaoh and his followers, in that very path where *they* travelled in safety.

Ver. 54.] And never ceased his care over them, (notwithstanding all their provocations), till he brought them into his holy land; and (in the issue) to this mount Zion: which, not their prowess, but his mighty power, by the hand of David, won for them (2 Sam. v. 6, &c.).

Ver. 55.] And after he had expelled the old inhabitants, who were not able to stand before them (Josh. xii.), he distributed, by lot, to every tribe their portion of land, which they should inherit (Josh. xiv.), and settled them in a quiet possession of it (Josh. xxi. 43, 44).

Ver. 56.] Yet, after so many, and so great benefits, they behaved themselves no better, in that good land, than they had done in the wilderness: but as soon as Joshua and the elders were dead (Judg. ii. 7. 10), they disbelieved the threatenings of their law, and would make a trial whether they were true or not; provoking the great Lord of all the world, by slighting his commandments, which he had so strictly enjoined them to observe.

Ver. 57.] They imitated their forefathers, both in their frequent apostasies from God, and in their falsehood to their promises, when they pretended to repent of them (Judg. ii. 13. 18, 19. iii. 7, &c.); having depraved minds and hearts, which (like an ill-made bow, that never sends the arrow to the mark) would turn aside into crooked ways, and not be directed according to the will of God.

Ver. 58.] For they highly incensed him, by their altars and images (Judg. vi. 25), which they built after the manner of the heathen (Numb. xxii. 41), in the high places; where they worshipped a number of false gods (Judg. x. 6), to his great offence and dishonour.

Ver. 59.] Which was so notorious, that the judge of the world could not but take notice of it, and severely punish it; by abandoning that people, for whom he had done such wonders, into the hands of

the Syrians, the Moabites, the Midianites, Philistines, and the children of Ammon (see the book of Judges), who made them as contemptible unto others, as they were loathsome unto him.

Ver. 60.] Inasmuch that, at last, he quite forsook the city of Shiloh, where, in his tabernacle, he had been graciously pleased to be present with them (1 Sam. iv. 3, 4), and would never return unto it any more (Jer. vii. 12, and see argument of Ps. lxxviii.).

Ver. 61.] Nay, he let the ark of the covenant, the special token of his presence with them, from whence his power was wont to appear most gloriously for them, not only fall into their hands; but be carried away captive by the Philistines (1 Sam. iv. 11. 22. v. 1).

Ver. 62.] Whose sword slew a great number of his people (1 Sam. iv. 10); so exceeding angry was he with those, whom he had formerly taken into his special care, above all other nations (Deut. xxxii. 8, 9).

Ver. 63.] For it was by his divine vengeance, more than the Philistines' valour, that they lost abundance of brave young men; the very flower of their army: by which means many of their virgins were constrained to remain unmarried; and they that found husbands were fain to omit all tokens of joy, in a time of public sorrow.

Ver. 64.] For some of their priests, who were peculiarly consecrated to God's service, were slain in this battle (1 Sam. iv. 11), and their wives, oppressed with grief, did not long survive, to make any public funeral for them (ver. 20).

Ver. 65.] The Lord himself also (who was wont to fight for us) seemed no more concerned in all these calamities, which befell both us and our religion, than a mighty commander is at that which is done to his army when he is asleep, or overcome with wine: till at last, like such a great warrior (who being awakened calls for his arms, and charges the enemy with greater fury), he vindicated his honour in a terrible manner, and made a very great destruction among them (1 Sam. v. 9. 11).

Ver. 66.] For, besides the fall of Dagon before the ark, he smote several cities of the Philistines, with a grievous sort of hemorrhoids; whereof many died, and the rest languished under most miserable torments (1 Sam. v. 6. 9. 12); the monuments of which they themselves were forced to make, and send back with the ark; to his great glory, and their eternal reproach (vi. 3, 4, 9).

Ver. 67.] Yet he would not return to Shiloh again

68 But chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved.

69 And he built his sanctuary, like high *palaces*, like the earth which he hath established for ever.

70 He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds:

(which was in the tribe of Ephraim, the son of Joseph), nor have the ark of his presence placed there any more.

Ver. 68.] But first it was brought to Kirjathaim, (1 Sam. vi. 21), a city of the tribe of Judah (Josh. xv. 6), where he resolved hereafter to have his special residence: and so from thence (after a short stay at the house of Obed-edom) unto mount Zion (1 Chron. xiii. 6. xvi. 1. 3. 29), which he preferred before the hill of Kirjathaim (1 Sam. vii. 1), or any other place in all the country.

Ver. 69.] There Solomon built him a stately temple, which, as it was a high and lofty fabric, so was not movable like his former habitation; but remained perpetually fixed, like the earth on which it stood.

Ver. 70.] For as he had rejected Shiloh, and chosen

71 From following the ewes great with young he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance.

72 So he fed them according to the integrity of his heart; and guided them by the skillfulness of his hands.

Zion for the place of his dwelling; so he had likewise rejected Saul, and chosen David (the father of Solomon) to be the king of his people: a man, who served him as faithfully in that office, as he had done his father in keeping of his sheep.

Ver. 71.] From that mean employment he took him and raised him to the highest charge and dignity; that the care he had employed in looking after the ewes, and their lambs when they should fall, he might exercise in governing his people; and endeavouring that they, whom he had chosen for his own peculiar inheritance, did no way miscarry.

Ver. 72.] And he did not deceive his expectation; but governed them with equal integrity and prudence: never designing any thing but their good; and dexterously accomplishing whatsoever he designed.

PSALM LXXIX.

A Psalm of Asaph.

1 O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps.

2 The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth.

3 Their blood have they shed like water round

about Jerusalem; and *there was* none to bury *them*.

4 We are become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us.

5 How long, LORD? wilt thou be angry for ever? shall thy jealousy burn like fire?

6 Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that

PSALM LXXIX.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm was penned, in all probability, upon the same occasion with the seventy-fourth; viz. the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar: see what I have said there, in the argument of that Psalm; and it will appear altogether unlikely, that this should have respect to the times of Antiochus Epiphanes: as many imagine, and among the rest, Theodoret: which is the more strange, because the same reason he gives there why the seventy-fourth Psalm doth not belong to those times (which he repeats again upon Ps. lxxx. 17), lies as strongly against the application of this Psalm to the fury and rage wherewith that prince fell upon the Jewish nation. Whose miserable calamity under Nebuchadnezzar we find bewailed by Jeremiah, who then lived (Jer. x. 25), in the very words of the sixth and seventh verses of this Psalm; which is some indication that they both belong to the same matter: but whether Jeremiah took them from Asaph, or Asaph from him, I cannot certainly determine. The latter is most likely; because this Psalm seems to have been written after that desolation had for some time continued.

We read, indeed, in the first book of Maccabees (vii. 16, 17), two other verses of this Psalm (viz. 2, 3), applied to the slaughter of threescore of the devout sort of Jews, presently after Antiochus's death. But that author quotes them, it is plain, as words which had been written in former days;

and by him only made use of to his purpose: which was to show, that the same cruelties were in great part acted over again, which their fathers had seen at the destruction of Jerusalem.

Ver. 1.] O God, the supreme judge of the world, thou art not ignorant, we know, of our calamity, for it comes by thy order; but give us leave to represent unto thy majesty, the sad condition of the people and place which were once very dear unto thee; for profane nations have not only invaded our (or rather thy) country, to which thou hast a peculiar title, but polluted thy own house, which was separated to thy service alone; and laid it, together with Jerusalem, in ruinous heaps.

Ver. 2.] Under which thy servants the priests, and other holy men, whom they have slain, could not have the honour to be buried; nor obtain the common civility of a grave: but the dead bodies of those whom thou lovedst, they have barbarously exposed to be devoured by ravenous beasts and birds.

Ver. 3.] For they valued the shedding of their blood no more than the pouring out of water: which flowed in such abundance about Jerusalem, that they left not men enough alive to take care of the interment of the dead.

Ver. 4.] And we that remain lead a most despicable life, being not only scorned and abused, but openly derided, and made the sport of the Edomites and other nations, which formerly stood in awe of us.

Ver. 5.] And, which is saddest of all, we have long

have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name.

7 For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling place.

8 O remember not against us former iniquities : let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us : for we are brought very low.

9 Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name : and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake.

10 Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is their God? let him be known among the

complained of this, and find no relief ; but only in our most passionate cries to thee, O Lord : the effects of whose just anger and jealousy we groan under (because we have forsaken thee, and been unfaithful to our covenant with thee), but hope they will not always last : nor proceed to make an utter end of us.

Ver. 6.] Pour them out rather (in as full a measure, and with as little pity, as they did our blood, ver. 3), upon the Babylonians : who, though they have conquered many kingdoms, do not acknowledge thee at all, nor ascribe their successes to thy power : but to their idols whom they serve and honour with that worship which is due to thee alone.

Ver. 7.] They have been the instruments, indeed, of thy vengeance ; but have executed it with such cruelty, that, not content with the conquest of us, they have sought our total extirpation : having depopulated our country, and made that pleasant land a wilderness ; which thou gavest to Jacob and his seed for their habitation.

Ver. 8.] O let not his virtue, and the covenant thou madest with him, be forgotten ; when thou reckonest with us for the sins of our forefathers ; the punishment of which we beseech thee that we may bear no longer : speed our deliverance, good Lord ; and how unworthy soever we be, let thy tender compassion prevail with thee, to save us from utter ruin, which is very near : so few, so broken and spent we are, unless seasonably prevented by thy mercy.

Ver. 9.] Send us that seasonable help, O God, from whom alone we expect it, and have heretofore very often received it : for it will tend much to the honour of thy almighty goodness (which in former times was

heathen in our sight *by* the revenging of the blood of thy servants *which is shed*.

11 Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee ; according to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die ;

12 And render unto our neighbours sevenfold into their bosom their reproach, wherewith they have reproached thee, O LORD.

13 So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever : we will shew forth thy praise to all generations.

much celebrated, but of late hath been exceedingly disparaged) to save us now, when none is able to preserve us : upon that account be pleased to pass by our sins, and to interpose for our deliverance ; lest thou suffer together with us.

Ver. 10.] While the idolatrous nations utter this insolent language (which is exceeding grievous, nay, insupportable, to us), If their God be so great in himself, and so kind to them, as they pretend ; why doth he not take their part, and appear for their deliverance ? O that thou wouldst put them to silence, by taking such an open and remarkable vengeance on these blasphemous nations for the blood they have shed ; that not only we, but all the world, may see, thou hast a care of us thy servants.

Ver. 11.] Let the sighs and groans of those who lie in prison be as prevalent with thee as these prayers : and magnify thy power by preserving the lives of those whom they have condemned to die.

Ver. 12.] And when thou hast done with the Babylonians, reckon with our neighbours also, who have insulted over us, and derided us, or rather have spoken so reproachfully of thee, O God, that they justly deserve, not only to be paid home in their kind, but to be made seven times more contemptible than we have been.

Ver. 13.] So we thy people, being conducted again to our land, and happily restored to live under thy government there, will never cease to give thanks unto thee, for thy benefits bestowed upon us ; and be careful to transmit the memory of them to those who shall come after us, that all future generations may perpetuate thy praises.

PSALM LXXX.

To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim-eduth. A Psalm of Asaph.

1 GIVE ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock ; thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth.

2 Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh stir up thy strength, and come and save us.

PSALM LXXX.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm is something of kin to the former ; deprecating the displeasure of the Almighty in a time of great calamity. Which, as all that I have met withal think, was either in the captivity of Judah and Benjamin by Nebuchadnezzar ; or of the ten tribes by Shalmaneser. But it seems to me rather to have been penned between these two, in the time of Hezekiah : who had written a letter you find (2 Chron. xxxi. 6), to the remnant that were escaped out of the hand of the king of Assyria ; especially to Ephraim and Manasseh, the tribes nearest to them, that they would come to the

house of the Lord at Jerusalem, and keep the pass-over with them : which summons several of them obeyed (ver. 11. 18) ; and kept the feast as long again as they were wont (ver. 23). And when this was finished, they all went through the country, and threw down all the high places and altars that they found ; not only in Judah, but in Benjamin also, Ephraim, and Manasseh (2 Chron. xxxi. 1).

But after this happy settlement, you read there (xxxii. 1), that the land was invaded by Sennacherib, and sorely distressed ; to the great discouragement, no doubt, of those who had joined in the reformation ; which moved Asaph (mentioned 2 Chron. xxix. 30, see the argument of Ps. lxxxiii.) most earnestly to

3 Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.

4 O Lord God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people?

5 Thou feedest them with the bread of tears; and givest them tears to drink in great measure.

6 Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbours: and our enemies laugh among themselves.

7 Turn us again, O God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.

8 Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it.

9 Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land.

10 The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars.

11 She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river.

12 Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her?

13 The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it.

beseech God (ver. 2, of this Psalm), that he would be pleased to stir up himself before Ephraim and Manasseh, as well as Benjamin (who was so linked to Judah, that part of Jerusalem and of the temple stood in that tribe); and let them see, by a remarkable deliverance, that their zeal for the purity of their religion was acceptable to him.

Another reason, indeed, there may be given (which I have not omitted in my paraphrase) why these three are joined together, rather than any other, because they were the tribes (as we read in the second of Numbers), who, when they were in the wilderness, always marched behind the tabernacle when it moved; and had that part where the propitiatory was, from whence God sent his oracles, and the tokens of his power, just before them. But then there is this to be added, to make it probable that this Psalm was not penned in the time of the captivity, because, as then there was no ark; nor did God sit between the cherubims (concerning which phrase the learned reader may see *Lud. De Dieu* upon 1 Sam. iv. 4), as he is said here to do; nor were Ephraim and Manasseh then mixed with them, that we read of: so, first of all, it is too full of elegancies for that time of utter desolation: and, secondly, the Greek expressly calls it, *A Psalm concerning the Assyrian* (who is the wild boar, I suppose, that broke into God's vineyard, mentioned ver. 13), and lastly Hezekiah, I observe, applies himself to God (in the time of that distress by the king of Assyria), in the very language of the Psalmist; and begins his prayer just as Asaph doth here, to him that sits between the cherubims, desiring him to incline his ear to his requests (2 Kings xix. 15, 16; Isa. xxxvii. 16, 17.)

It was delivered to the chief master of music, to be sung as the sixtieth Psalm, upon the instruments of six strings: which were wont to be used in solemn thanksgivings (see the argument of that Psalm): for he nothing doubted God would hear his prayers, and destroy Sennacherib: or, perhaps, it was ordered afterward to be sung in that manner.

Ver. 1.] O thou, who art the ruler and protector of thy people Israel, who didst long ago give a famous instance of thy power, in preserving Joseph, when he fell, like an innocent lamb, among a company of wolves (Gen. xxxvii. 18, &c.), and conducting him to the highest preferment; reject not our humble petitions, which we put up unto thee in the like distress; but show that thou favourest us, by some illustrious token of thy presence among us, in thy holy place, from whence thou canst send angels to defend and deliver us (2 Kings xix. 35.)

Ver. 2.] Let the posterity of Joseph, who beheld heretofore so many enemies fall before thee, when they attended upon the ark of thy presence in the wilderness (Numb. ii. 18. 20. 22), and have lately been very zealous in thy service (2 Chron. xxx. i. xxxi. 1).

see thy power to be as great as ever (though for some time it hath not appeared at all for us): and that thou art as forward, in due time, to grant us a glorious deliverance.

Ver. 3.] Restore us, O God, to our former happiness; and for that end restore us into thy favour: and then there will soon be an end of our calamities.

Ver. 4.] For what can the greatest armies (2 Kings xviii. 17) do against thee, who art the supreme Lord of all, the absolute commander of the hosts of heaven? whose help we have most importunately implored, and long waited for, as men impatient to see our enemies so prevalent, though hitherto thou hast been so exceeding angry with us, that thou hast not heard the prayers of thy people.

Ver. 5.] But hast turned our joyful feasts into fasting and weeping; and our plenty into scarcity of all things, but only of tears: which we pour out in large measure; when we think of the danger we are in, to perish by famine and by thirst (2 Chron. xxxii. 21).

Ver. 6.] Our neighbours, the Edomites and others, either pick quarrels with us, or strive among themselves who shall make the greatest booty of us: while our enemies, that besiege us, mock at our inability to help ourselves; and at our confidence which we place in thee (2 Kings xviii. 22, 23; 2 Chron. xxxii. 15).

Ver. 7.] Convince them, O Lord, that it is not vainly placed, by restoring us again to our former happiness: which it is easy for thee to do, who hast all the host of heaven at thy command; if thou wilt but be pleased to favour us (as we again beseech thee thou wilt), then no harm shall befall us.

Ver. 8.] We were once very dear unto thee, when thou didst transplant us, like a choice vine, out of Egypt into this country: from whence thou didst drive out the ancient inhabitants, that we might be settled in their place.

Ver. 9.] Thou preparedst the way for us, making our terror fall upon them before we came (Joshua ii. 9—11), so that we easily expelled them; and being there firmly established, like a vine deeply rooted in a fruitful soil, we increased and multiplied, till we peopled all the land.

Ver. 10.] And as a rich vine covers the hill, on the side of which it is planted, or overtops the lofty cedars, which support it: so we obscured the splendour of the greatest kingdoms, and made mighty kings become tributaries to us (1 Kings iv. 21).

Ver. 11.] For our empire extended itself (just like such a luxuriant vine, which spreads its branches every way) from the Midland sea to the river Euphrates, 1 Kings iv. 21 (see Ps. lxxii. 8).

Ver. 12.] But now, alas! thou hast withdrawn thy protection from us; and we are left like a vineyard without its hedges: all our strong holds and fenced cities are taken (2 Kings xviii. 3); so that we lie open to be made a prey to every one that hath a mind to spoil us.

14 Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts : look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine ;

15 And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch *that* thou madest strong for thyself.

16 *It is* burned with fire, *it is* cut down : they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance.

Ver. 13.] The Assyrian king, like a wild boar, that breaks into a vineyard, treads down all under his feet, and seeks to root us up : there is no savage beast can make greater havoc among the vines, than his barbarous soldiers have done throughout all the land ; which they have eaten up (2 Kings xix. 29).

Ver. 14.] Our only hope is, that thou, the great Lord of hosts, on whom the event of wars, as of all things else, depends, wilt be reconciled unto us, and drive him out again ; deny us not this request, we beseech thee ; but, though we be destitute of all help on earth, yet send us some from heaven ; and, though very unworthy, yet graciously take us into thy care, and repair the breaches which they have made.

Ver. 15.] Be favourable to the remnant of us, which, by thy powerful preservation, is still left ; like the root or stock of a vine, which may sprout out again (2 Kings xix. 30, 31) : and especially to our king, whom thou hast endued with zeal and courageous resolution for thy service (2 Chron. xxx. 32) and for our defence (xxxii. 5—8).

Ver. 16.] Great numbers of us are destroyed already, and may be compared to the numerous

17 Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man *whom* thou madest strong for thyself.

18 So will not we go back from thee : quicken us, and we will call upon thy name.

19 Turn us again, O LORD God of hosts, cause thy face to shine ; and we shall be saved.

branches of that remaining stock, which being cut off, are burnt with fire : and all the rest of us must perish, if thou wilt not be reconciled unto us, but still persevere in thy anger towards us.

Ver. 17.] Which we beseech thee turn away ; and be the mighty helper of our sovereign, who is dearly beloved by thee ; of that excellent prince, whom thou hast endued with zeal and courageous resolution, for thy service, and for our defence and preservation (ver. 15).

Ver. 18.] Which shall be an everlasting obligation upon us, never to revolt from thee to our former idolatry : do but free us from these deadly enemies and we will worship thee alone ; and never cease to praise thee, and acknowledge that we owe our very lives to thy almighty goodness.

Ver. 19.] Hear us, O great Lord, who hast all the angels in heaven at thy command ; hear us, we once more beseech thee, and restore us perfectly to our former happiness ; and, in order to it, restore us to thy favour ; and let there be a speedy end of all these calamities.

PSALM LXXXI.

To the chief Musician upon Gittith. A Psalm of Asaph.

I SING aloud unto God our strength : make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.

PSALM LXXXI.

ARGUMENT.—There was a special command of God, as the psalmist here takes notice (ver. 4), for the making a joyful sound with trumpets, upon all the solemn days, especially their new moons (Numb. x. 10). But more particularly upon the first day of the seventh month ; which is called by this peculiar name, above all other days, a *day of blowing the trumpets*, i. e. from morning unto evening, (Numb. xxix. 1), and a *memorial of blowing trumpets*, (Lev. xxiii. 24). For this solemn day, I suppose, this Psalm was composed ; and the reason is apparent why they were to blow with trumpets longer on this day than any other, because it was the first new moon in the year (for, according to their old computation before they came out of Egypt, their year began on this day, as appears from Exod. xxiii. 16. xxxiv. 22, where the feast of in-gathering their fruits is said to be in the *revolution*, or *the end*, of the year) ; and God intended, it is possible, to awaken them, (as Maimonides conjectures) to prepare themselves by strict inquiry into their lives, and by hearty repentance, for the great day of atonement, which was the tenth of this month.

But of what this blowing trumpets or cornets was a *memorial*, is not easy to resolve ; the Hebrews themselves being at such a loss about it, that they are fain to go as far back as the deliverance of Isaac, and the offering a ram in his stead, for the reason

2 Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery.

of it. The clearest account of which, it seems to me, may be fetched from this Psalm ; which plainly intimates, that the *blowing with trumpets* at that time, related to something which ensued upon their happy deliverance out of Egypt : which, though it began upon the first day of the first month, according to their new computation (which took its original from that deliverance, in memory of which God ordained the feast of the passover to begin on that day, Lev. xxiii. 6), yet they had not a complete body of laws delivered to them by Moses, till the first day of the seventh month, which was the feast of blowing trumpets.

Moses received, indeed, several laws in the third month (Exod. xix. 1. 3, &c.), on the third day whereof (ver. 11. 16. 19, 20) God himself appeared on the top of Mount Sinai, with the sound of a trumpet exceeding loud and prolonged (to which I believe this feast hath respect), and spake the ten commandments ; after which Moses delivered them a body of civil laws (Exod. xxi.—xxiii). But they did not know the manner of the divine service, for which they came out of Egypt into the wilderness, till Moses had been twice forty days, one after the other, in the mount ; and, likewise (as several of the Jews understand those passages in Deut. ix. relating to this matter), had forty days more bewailed their sin in making the golden calf. Which sixscore days, if we add to the time between their coming out of Egypt, and the giving of the law on

3 Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day.

4 For this was a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob.

5 This he ordained in Joseph for a testimony, when he went out through the land of Egypt: where I heard a language that I understood not.

6 I removed his shoulder from the burden: his hands were delivered from the pots.

7 Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee; I answered thee in the secret place of

thunder: I proved thee at the waters of Meribah. Selah.

8 Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee: O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me;

9 There shall no strange god be in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange god.

10 I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.

11 But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me.

mount Sinai, and to the six days which passed before Moses was called up into the cloud, it will fall out exactly to be the first day of the seventh month, when he began to give orders for the building of the tabernacle, and making all things belonging to God's house; according to the direction he had received in the mount. I am sure this was the precise time of their setting up the altar, and beginning to offer burnt-offering, after their return from the captivity at Babylon, before the foundation of the temple was laid. For you read, Ezra iii. 1. 6, it was upon the first day of the seventh month; in the middle of which they also kept the feast of tabernacles, as Moses had appointed; in memory of their dwelling in booths in the wilderness, under the government of the Almighty, unto which the psalmist here hath respect in the next words, which we translate "in the time appointed," that is, at the *full moon* (as De Dieu hath demonstrated), on which the feast of tabernacles was kept in this seventh month: at which feast Solomon dedicated his temple, 1 Kings viii. 2, where it is called the *feast*: and may well be meant here in the last words of the third verse of this Psalm, our *solemn feast-day*. Unless we take both the *new moon feast*, and the *full moon* (i. e. feast of tabernacles), to be meant, and translate it "on the day of our feast." The same first day also was kept holy by Nehemiah, with great solemnity, viii. 1. 8—10, where you find how the book of the law was distinctly read to the people on this day, and the sense of it explained: so that they came the next day again for further instruction (ver. 13).

Now that they might be more mindful of those divine benefits which in this month they commemorated, more than in any other month in the year, Asaph (in the days of David, it is likely) composed this Psalm, and directed it to the master of music, to be sung (as the eight Psalm upon *Gittith*) in the beginning of it, upon the feast of trumpets. And he introduces God himself (before whom they were summoned, as I said, by these trumpets to appear), instructing them in the end of this solemnity; and complaining of their forgetfulness of his benefits, in giving them so great a deliverance out of the Egyptian slavery; and of their hard-heartedness, in preferring their own inventions, and the miseries they brought thereby upon themselves, before his counsels, and the happiness he intended for them. Which happiness is expressed in the last verse, by *satisfying them with honey out of the rock*: concerning which the learned may consult Bochartus, De Sacris Animal. par. ii. lib. iv. cap. 12.

Ver. 1.] Sing praises aloud unto God, to whose mighty power alone we owe the deliverance which we now commemorate: shout with the voice of triumph, in honour of him, who was so good unto your forefathers.

Ver. 2.] Offer to him your cheerful hymns; and,

to complete the melody, and express the greatness of your joy, let some with timbrels, others with the pleasant harp, and others with the psaltery, celebrate the memory of his mercies.

Ver. 3.] And let the priests especially (Numb. x. 8) take care to blow with the trumpets at the sacred solemnity; on the first day of the seventh month, the principal new moon in the year (which is attended with another feast at the full moon of this month): that all the people may call to mind the trumpet of God (Exod. xix. 16. 19), which our fathers heard, at his dreadful appearance on mount Sinai, to give his law unto them.

Ver. 4.] For thus hath the Lord decreed in that law; where the God of our father Jacob requires this service of us (Lev. xxiii. 24, &c.).

Ver. 5.] This he appointed unto the children of Joseph, as well as the rest of the tribes of Israel, for a perpetual memorial of his benefits: when he, going out over all the land of Egypt (Exod. xi. 4. xii. 23. 29), and destroying all the first-born, forced them to let us depart into the wilderness; where we heard, to our great astonishment (for we were never before acquainted with it), the voice of God.

Ver. 6.] Who, considering with himself what a title he had to our service (having taken off the heavy burdens which the Egyptians had laid upon our backs, and rid our hands of those sordid and dirty employments, wherein they made us labour),

Ver. 7.] Admonished us to this effect, saying; You cried to me by reason of your cruel servitude under Pharaoh's task-masters (Exod. ii. 23), and I delivered you out of it (iii. 8); and again answered your prayers, when you cried unto me in a new distress, at the Red sea (xiv. 10. 13), but confounded the Egyptians, with thunder and lightning out of the cloudy pillar (ver. 24, 25; Ps. lxxvii. 18), after all which, I might well expect you should depend upon me: but presently found you full of distrust and infidelity at the waters of strife (Exod. xvii. 7); where I gave you a new proof of my power.

Ver. 8.] Of which, if you will still enjoy the benefit, then give ear, O my people, and I will solemnly declare my will; and give a severe charge unto you, O ye Israelites, if you resolve to be obedient to my admonitions.

Ver. 9.] Then this is the principal thing upon which all the rest depends; you shall not suffer any other gods to be acknowledged among you, but only me (Exod. xx. 3. 23); nor shall you worship the gods of other nations (xxiii. 13. 24. 32).

Ver. 10.] For I, and I alone, am the living Lord, the eternal God; who gave a being to all things; and who am your peculiar benefactor; having brought you out of the Egyptian bondage (Exod. ix. 4. xx. 2): and if you will be faithful and obedient to me, enlarge your desires as far as you please, and I will satisfy them; for all the world is mine (xix. 5. xxiii. 25).

Ver. 11.] But, notwithstanding their seeming com-

12 So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: *and* they walked in their own counsels.

13 Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, *and* Israel had walked in my ways!

14 I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries.

pliance with him, and the fair promises they made him (Exod. xix. 8. xx. 19. xxiv. 3. 7) he presently complained (xxxii. 7—9, as I hear him still do at this day), My people would not be obedient to me; and Israel would not rest contented with me alone:

Ver. 12.] So, provoked by their long stubbornness, I took no farther care of them, but left them to do as they pleased; saying, Let them follow their own inventions.

Ver. 13.] But it had been better for them to have adhered to me; who, out of my tender affection to their good, still wished, even when they were so refractory, that my people Israel had been so wise as to have followed my directions, and been led by my advice; and not their own foolish imaginations.

Ver. 14.] Then I should in a short time have quelled all their enemies; and, by one victory after another, have quite destroyed those adversaries: which (since I brought them into Canaan) have often

15 The haters of the LORD should have submitted themselves unto him: but their time should have endured for ever.

16 He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee.

miserably afflicted and oppressed them (Judg. ii. 2, 3, 14, 15, 19, 20. iii. 1, &c. iv. 2).

Ver. 15.] All that maligned their prosperity, and set themselves against the design of the Lord, to make them victorious over their enemies, should have been so daunted, that they should have dissembled their inward hatred, and been forced, at least, to a counterfeit submission: but his people should have seen blessed days, and enjoyed a substantial and durable happiness without any interruption.

Ver. 16.] He should have made their country exceeding fruitful, and fed them with the richest wheat: and I myself, saith the Lord, would have blessed thee with such plenty, that in the deserts thou shouldst have found the sweetest refreshments; and, without any care of thine, the bees should have laboured honey for thee, in the rocks, and holes of trees, and such-like places (Deut. xxxii. 13; Judg. xiv. 8; 1 Sam. xiv. 25, 26).

PSALM LXXXII

A Psalm of Asaph.

1 GOD standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods.

2 How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah.

3 Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.

4 Deliver the poor and needy: rid *them* out of the hand of the wicked.

PSALM LXXXII.

ARGUMENT.—Though there had been a notable reformation made by Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. xix. 5, 6, &c.) of those corruptions which had been growing in the supreme court of judicature at Jerusalem, as well as in the lesser in other cities, ever since the times of David and Solomon (who took care to see justice done, 1 Chron. xviii. 14; 1 Kings iii. 9, 23); yet it appears, by the frequent complaints of Isaiah, that when Hezekiah (in whose days that prophet lived) came to the crown, there was a general depravation again; and that, notwithstanding the amendment he had made in matters of the divine worship (2 Chron. xxx. xxxi.), and his resolutions and endeavours, no question to reform the abuses which were in the civil judicatures (as I have expounded Ps. lxxv. 2, 3), they continued still exceeding corrupt. Inasmuch that Isaiah calls their judges, “rulers of Sodom” (Isa. i. 10, when he finds no fault with their religious services, ver. 11, 12, &c.), and says, their princes were rebellious, companions of thieves, loving gifts, and following after rewards (ver. 23).

Where it is evident he describes the judges in the highest court of all; who are called by the name of *princes* in several places, particularly in Jeremiah: who being condemned by the priests, and prophets, and people, as a man worthy to die (Jer. xxvi. 8, 9), was brought before the princes (ver. 10, 11), at whose bar he cleared himself so well, that they acquitted him (ver. 16).

And as there they are called *princes*, with respect to their superiority over the people, so here in this

Psalm they are called *elohim, gods*, in respect to the fountain of their power, which was from the most high; who honoured them with his own name; which is so frequent for those of the supreme court, that some, not unreasonably, understand those words (Judg. ix. 13), which we render, “cheers the heart of God and man,” in this manner; Wine alike cheers both princes and people, judges and clients, the meanest persons (called in this Psalm *Adam, man*, ver. 6, 7) as well as the greatest, who, in opposition to them, are called *gods*. Whom Asaph (who lived in the time of Hezekiah, 2 Chron. xxix. 30, see Ps. lxxiii.) admonishes to be more careful in their duty; and to remember that God observed them, and would judge them.

Ver. 1.] Remember, O ye judges, whose ministers you are (2 Chron. xix. 6); and consider, that you are not so powerful, but God, who hath put you in his place, and honoured you with his name (Exod. xxii. 28), is far greater: and, as he is present in your court to observe what you do, so will call you to a strict account, and severely punish you, if you judge amiss.

Ver. 2.] How dare you then pronounce an unrighteous sentence? Is it not time to leave off your partiality? and no longer to favour a bad cause, because the man is rich and great; and can either give you a large bribe, if you will judge it for him; or do you a mischief, if you give sentence against him?

Ver. 3.] Your duty is, to do equal justice to all men that come before you; and to take a particular care, that the poor and the fatherless do not suffer because they have no money to give, nor any friend to solicit, for the defence of a righteous cause: and that the

5 They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course.

6 I have said, *Ye are gods*; and all of you are children of the most high.

men of low condition, and such as are reduced to very great want, be not condemned, when they are injuriously prosecuted by those who are above them.

Ver. 4.] See that you protect and deliver him that is quite exhausted and miserably oppressed with poverty; let them not become a prey to violent men, who have no conscience; but put it out of their power to undo them.

Ver. 5.] These are the constant admonitions which the men of God give the judges; but, alas! hitherto they have little prevailed. For they will not study the laws of God; or if they do, will not think it their interest to be governed by them: but are blinded by bribes, or by their corrupt affections, to do any thing that they would have them; inasmuch that the foundations of the kingdom, which are justice and truth, are shaken; all things are in confusion, and in danger to come to utter ruin (Isa. v. 23, 24. x. 1—3).

Ver. 6.] Hear therefore the sentence of God upon you (whose words these are); I have put my majesty

7 But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.

8 Arise, O God, judge the earth; for thou shalt inherit all nations.

upon you; and, though you be no more than other men in yourselves, have by my constitution raised you to such a dignity on earth, as my celestial ministers have in heaven.

Ver. 7.] Yet this shall not privilege you in your unjust proceedings; but since you have no regard to me, nor to your office, I will have as little regard to you: for you shall perish like one of the common men, without any respect to your honour; and be thrown down from your seats, like the tyrants and cruel oppressors that have been before you.

Ver. 8.] Let us see this sentence fulfilled, O God, the righteous judge; and do not suffer the insolent iniquity of these men any longer; but redress all those evils wherewith such men have filled not only this nation, but all the world; which belongs to thee, and thou wilt one day sure vindicate mankind, as the just owner of them, from the tyranny of those impious governors; who now abuse them, as if they had an absolute dominion over them.

PSALM LXXXIII.

A Song or Psalm of Asaph.

1 KEEP not thou silence, O God: hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God.

2 For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult: and they that hate thee have lifted up the head.

PSALM LXXXIII.

ARGUMENT.—It is the common opinion, that the combination of powerful enemies, against which they here implore the divine assistance, was that mentioned in 2 Chron. xx. in the days of Jehoshaphat. The reason is, because the children of Lot (ver. 8), viz. the Moabites and Ammonites (the ground of whose quarrel with the Jews is set down in Judg. xi.), seem to have been the principal in this confederacy, and the other but assistants; as it is plain they were in that invasion (2 Chron. xx. 1). And then the author of this Psalm must be either Jahaziel, one of Asaph's posterity (upon whom you read there, ver. 14, the Spirit of the Lord then came), or some other in those days, whose proper name this was. Which is much more probable than their conjecture, who think the author was Asaph, in the days of David; who subdued, indeed, the Moabites and Edomites, and other neighbouring nations; but we do not read of any confederacy they made against him; much less that they sent as far as Assyria for help; or that they began the war, as the people here mentioned did.

The same may be said against the application of it to the conquests made in the days of Uzziah, over several people here mentioned (2 Chron. xxvi. 6—8). Or to the invasion made by Sennacherib king of Assyria: who did not join himself (as we read here ver. 8), with other nations; but by the forces of his own kingdom alone, as far as appears, came up against them.

There are those indeed, that take in all the attempts made upon them since that in Jehoshaphat's days, by several nations; the last of which was Assyria; whose king came to do that which the rest had not been able to effect; and then the author is easily

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found to be the same that I have named in the argument of the foregoing, and many other Psalms. And which way soever we are pleased to determine the matter, it is plain, in general, that many nations, both near and remote, who had a hatred to the Jews, set themselves together, when this Psalm was penned, to destroy them: assaulting them not only severally, but conjunctly; entering into consultation also, and conspiring together how to effect it. Which hatred continuing after their return to their own land, from the captivity of Babylon, gave occasion to Theodoret to say, both in his preface to this Psalm, and upon the twelfth verse of it, that the Psalmist here complains of the opposition which several of their neighbours made to the rebuilding of the temple and of Jerusalem.

But this seems more improbable than all the rest; many of those countries here named, being before that time destroyed: and the Assyrians themselves (as he himself observes upon ver. 8), being not then extant. Though whensoever this confederacy happened, there was very great reason for that solicitous and vehement importunity wherewith this Psalm begins.

Why it was called a *Song-psalm*, see Ps. lxxvii.

Ver. 1.] O God, the supreme judge of the world, whose power is so great, that the united forces of all men on earth, or angels in heaven, are not to be compared with it (2 Chron. xx. 6. 12), who with one word of thy mouth canst dissipate this great army; do not refuse now to answer our prayers in this sore distress: O do not shut thy merciful ears to our cries, nor quietly see us perish, most mighty God.

Ver. 2.] For we are surprised with a sudden invasion of numerous enemies (haters of thee and thy worship, as much as of our nation), who make a

3 They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones.

4 They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from *being* a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.

5 For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against thee:

6 The tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites; of Moab, and the Hagarenes;

7 Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek; the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre;

8 Assur also is joined with them: they have holpen the children of Lot. Selah.

9 Do unto them as *unto* the Midianites; as to Siser, as *to* Jabin, at the brook of Kison:

10 Which perished at En-dor: they became as dung for the earth.

11 Make their nobles like Oreb, and like Zeeb: yea, all their princes as Zebah, and as Zalmonna:

12 Who said, Let us take to ourselves the horses of God in possession.

13 O my God, make them like a wheel; as the stubble before the wind.

14 As the fire burneth a wood, and as the flame setteth the mountains on fire;

15 So persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm.

16 Fill their faces with shame; that they may seek thy name, O LORD.

17 Let them be confounded and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish:

18 That *men* may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth.

dreadful noise, like the waves of the sea (2 Chron. xx. 2), and proudly promising themselves a victory, insult as if they had already won it.

Ver. 3.] They have, with equal malice and subtilty, carried on a close design against thy people; and with great secrecy consulted how to destroy, not only us, whom thou hast hitherto wonderfully protected as thy jewels, but thy temple also; and the secret place wherein thou there dwellest.

Ver. 4.] Come, say they one to another, let us agree and join all the power we have together; not merely to make a conquest of them, but for their utter extirpation (2 Chron. xx. 11), that there may be no mention hereafter in the world, of such a people as the commonwealth of Israel.

Ver. 5.] And accordingly ten several nations are combined heartily in this design; and how different soever their inclinations are upon other accounts, they have all entered into a solemn league, and made a covenant of mutual help, and of employing their joint endeavours, totally to subvert that government and religion which thou hast established.

Ver. 6.] Those warlike nations, the Edomites and Ishmaelites, who dwell in tents, are engaged in this enterprise: and so are the Moabites, and others descended from Hagar, the mother of Ishmael.

Ver. 7.] With whom are united our neighbours the Gebalites (Josh. xiii. 5), the Ammonites; our old enemies the Amalekites and Philistines; and they that dwell in and about the famous city of Tyre.

Ver. 8.] And, to add to their strength, they have called the powerful nation of the Assyrians into their association: on whose assistance the Moabites and Ammonites (the authors of this war) do principally rely.

Ver. 9.] The greater need we have of thy assistance and with the greater earnestness we beseech thee to make them an example of human weakness: by defeating them, as thou didst that vast army of the Midianites and their confederates (Judg. vi. 5. vii. 12), whom Gideon overthrew with no greater power than three hundred men (Judg. vii. 21, 22, compared with 2 Chron. xx. 23); and as thou didst in former times to that famous captain Siser (who fell by the hand of a woman, Judg. iv. 21), and to Jabin his king: who, to-

gether with his army, was swept away in the brook of Kison (Judg. iv. 21. 24. v. 21).

Ver. 10.] A great slaughter there was of them near En-dor (compare Judg. v. 19, with Josh. xvii. 11), where their carcases lay and rotted; and served instead of dung, to fatten and enrich the earth.

Ver. 11.] Let their princes and commanders fall like Oreb and Zeeb (Judg. vii. 35), and their kings not be able to save themselves by flight; but be taken and slain, like Zebah and Zalmonna (Judg. viii. 12. 21).

Ver. 12.] Who came with a design (Judg. vi. 3—5), as these nations do now (2 Chron. xx. 10, 11), to possess themselves of that pleasant land, wherein thou dwellest among us in thy holy habitation.

Ver. 13.] O my God, whose goodness hath never failed us in distress; let them not be able to stand their ground; but put them to flight, and make them run as swiftly as a ball down a hill; disperse all their forces like the chaff, when it is blown about with a furious wind.

Ver. 14.] Blast and consume them utterly; as the lightning, or the scorching rays of the sun in a long drought do the leaves of the forest trees, or the grass upon the mountains (Joel i. 19).

Ver. 15.] Raise a dreadful tempest to affright them; and pursue them so with thy vengeance, that they may be shattered and driven away instantly, as in a whirlwind: put them into such a panic fear that they may not know which way to turn, but clash against one another in a terrible confusion (2 Chron. xx. 22, &c.).

Ver. 16.] And make those that escape so ashamed at this disgraceful disappointment, that they may not be able to hold up their heads, nor deny thy power to be superior to theirs, but humbly seek thy favour.

Ver. 17.] This is the worst we wish them, notwithstanding their enmity to us; that they may be so astonished and confounded at their defeat, as never to recover any courage to assault us: nay, together with their credit and their courage, quite lose their power to give us any farther trouble.

Ver. 18.] And thereby be convinced, which they would not believe before, that thou art what thou art called, the true and only God, who givest being to all things; and art the supreme governor, not only of us, but of all the nations upon earth.

PSALM LXXXIV.

To the chief Musician upon Gittith. A Psalm for the sons of Korah.

1 How amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts!

2 My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.

3 Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O LORD of hosts, my king, and my God.

4 Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah.

5 Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them,

6 Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools.

7 They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.

8 O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah.

9 Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.

10 For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

12 O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.

PSALM LXXXIV.

ARGUMENT.—It is uncertain to what times this Psalm belongs: they seem to have most reason on their side, who think it was composed upon the same occasion with the forty-second and forty-third, when David, forced from Jerusalem by the rebellion of his son Absalom, most passionately longed to be restored to the place of God's worship. But it may as well, or better, in my judgment, be thought to have been composed by some pious Levite in the country, when Sennacherib's army had blocked up the way to Jerusalem, and hindered them from waiting upon the service of God at the temple; where he judged the lowest ministry, that of a porter (as we read ver. 10), to be far more honourable than the highest preferment among pagan nations. And thus I shall take the liberty to expound it in my paraphrase: pointing the reader to such places in the history of that sad time, as I think will explain some passages of this Psalm: which, after their freedom was restored, by the destruction of Sennacherib's army, the author of it delivered to the master of music in the temple, to be sung as the eighth Psalm (see there).

Ver. 1.] It is impossible to express the affection I have to thy dwelling-place, O Lord; who art attended there by the ministry of the heavenly host (Isa. xxxvii. 16), and needest none of our services.

Ver. 2.] But we cannot live with any satisfaction while we are absent from thee; for I am ready to faint away in ardent longings to tread again in the courts of the Lord's house: where my tongue and my hands, as well as my mind, would gladly be employed in the praises of our God; who in this excels all other (2 Kings xix. 4. 16. 18), that he lives for ever.

Ver. 3.] It grieves me, O mighty Lord of all the heavenly hosts, whose subject I am, and infinitely engaged to thee, to see the very birds, who know nothing of thee, enjoy that liberty which is denied me: who am here lamenting my distance from thee, when the sparrows and the ring-doves have their constant residence at thy house: and there live so undisturbed that they build their nests, and bring forth their young in the rafters of it.

Ver. 4.] O how happy are they who partake of such a privilege! who live so near thy house, and frequent it so much, as if it were their own! Their delightful employment is, with never-ceasing praises, to pay their thankful acknowledgments unto thee.

Ver. 5.] And happy also is that man (how mean soever his outward condition be) who, relying upon thy divine protection (Exod. xxxiv. 24), goes up three times a year to the solemn feast at Jerusalem: or when he is debarred that liberty, as I now am, is one of those devout persons, whose hearts are more in the highways that lead thither, than at their own home.

Ver. 6.] Who travelling through the troublesome valley of Baca, where there is no water, pass it as cheerfully, as if it abounded with pleasant springs; and, depending on God, as the fountain of what they want, receive from him the blessing of plentiful and seasonable showers, to refresh them in their journey:

Ver. 7.] So that the whole company go from stage to stage, with an unwearied vigour: till they all present themselves before God, to receive his blessing in his temple, upon the hill of Zion.

Ver. 8.] O mighty Lord, who commandest all the heavenly hosts, which attend in that holy place (and are far more numerous than the armies that invade us, 2 Chron. xxxii. 7), make me one of that happy number; and restore me, O God, who deliverest Jacob out of all his troubles, to the liberty of waiting upon thee there.

Ver. 9.] Look graciously upon me, O God, who hast hitherto been our protector against the most powerful enemies; and accept the prayer of our sovereign, who petitions thee still to be our defender (2 Kings xix. 19).

Ver. 10.] For one day spent in thy courts is far more pleasant than a thousand in any other place; and I had rather lie at the gates of thy house, than live in the most splendid condition in idolatrous countries.

Ver. 11.] For though our happiness be sometimes clouded, yet the Lord, like the sun, will dispel the darkness of affliction; and having brought us out of a disconsolate condition, defend and secure us in a better (2 Kings xx. 6): the Lord will give those favour with others, and advance them to great honour (2 Chron. xxxii. 22, 23); he will never be sparing of his blessings, but heap them abundantly on those who sincerely do his will in all things (2 Kings xviii. 5, 6. xx. 3).

Ver. 12.] O most mighty Lord, who commandest all the host of heaven, happy is that man who, by his integrity, preserves this hope and confidence in thee; though for the present he be restrained from the delightful enjoyment of thee in thy temple.

PSALM LXXXV.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm for the sons of Korah.

1 LORD, thou hast been favourable unto thy land: thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob.

2 Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin. Selah.

3 Thou hast taken away all thy wrath: thou hast turned *thyself* from the fierceness of thine anger.

4 Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger towards us to cease.

5 Wilt thou be angry with us for ever? wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations?

6 Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?

7 Shew us thy mercy, O LORD, and grant us thy salvation.

8 I will hear what God the LORD will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly.

9 Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land.

10 Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed *each other*.

11 Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

12 Yea, the LORD shall give *that which is good*; and our land shall yield her increase.

13 Righteousness shall go before him; and shall set us in the way of his steps.

PSALM LXXXV.

ARGUMENT.—It is thought by many that this Psalm was composed by some of the sons of Korah, after David's banishment from Jerusalem by his son Absalom (called a captivity, as we read P̄s. xiv. ult.), and his happy restoration to his kingdom; though not to such a settlement as they desired. But it may be as well, or better, applied to the miraculous providence which drove Sennacherib out of the land (who had taken many captives, Isa. v. 13), and restored them to the happy liberty, whose loss they bewailed in the Psalm foregoing.

Which way soever we understand it, the composure is such, that it might be much better used by them after their return from the captivity of Babylon, than at any other time: when they were infested with many enemies, who disturbed the peaceable enjoyment of their country and religion. And therefore it is possible it might be reviewed, if not made, in those days, and delivered to the chief master of music in the temple, to be sung presently after the foundation of it was laid (Ezra iii. 10, 11, &c.), but the work hindered from proceeding by the opposition of their enemies. And so I shall interpret it.

Ver. 1.] Thou hast been exceeding kind unto us, O Lord; and we most thankfully acknowledge the favour thou hast done us, in delivering us, the posterity of Jacob, out of our sad captivity, and restoring us to the land in which thou thyself hast chosen to dwell (Ezra. i.).

Ver. 2.] Our sins kept us from it in banishment a long time; but now thou hast graciously pardoned both our idolatry, and all the other crimes for which we justly suffered.

Ver. 3.] Thou hast put an end to the sore punishments which in thy heavy displeasure thou inflictedst on us: and turned thy severity, which, like fire, had almost consumed us, into great clemency and mercy towards us.

Ver. 4.] Complete, good Lord, our deliverance, which thou hast thus graciously begun: and let not our ingratitude provoke thee to continue this new vexation and trouble that is befallen us (Ezra iv. 4, 5. 21. 23).

Ver. 5.] Which forced us to sigh, and say, in the anguish of our souls, Will there never be an end of our miseries? Is it not enough that the foregoing generation hath felt the sad effects of thine anger, but it must extend itself to us also, and our posterity?

Ver. 6.] Will it not be more for thy honour, not only to preserve this feeble life which thou hast bestowed on us, but to give us a perfect recovery? that thy people may have nothing to damp their joy and entire satisfaction in thy goodness to them.

Ver. 7.] Make us so happy, good Lord; and though we deserve, indeed, to be more miserable than we are, yet let thy mercy prevail with thee to grant us a complete deliverance.

Ver. 8.] I will wait patiently upon the Lord, the judge of the world, for a gracious answer to these prayers; hoping that he will not condemn us to farther punishment, but settle his people, who devoutly worship him, in a prosperous tranquillity, provided they return not again to their old idolatry.

Ver. 9.] He will be so far from deserting those who fear to offend him, that I am confident the time approaches when he will finish what he hath begun to do for us, in rebuilding our temple (Ezra. v. 2. 8. vi. 7, 8, &c.) and restoring our country to its ancient dignity and splendour.

Ver. 10.] For methinks I see goodness and fidelity, justice and concord (which are the principal glory of a kingdom), meeting together, like ancient friends which have been long absent, and embracing each other.

Ver. 11.] And as truth and honesty, with all other virtues, shall grow and flourish among us (like flowers and herbs in the spring, after a tedious winter), so God shall faithfully fulfil his promises to us, and exercise a most gracious providence over us.

Ver. 12.] Yea, the Lord will do us good beyond our expectation; and reward our fruitfulness in good works with such a large and plentiful increase of the fruits of the earth, as shall demonstrate the bounty of heaven to us.

Ver. 13.] He will govern us with great justice and mercy, having his faithful promises always before his eyes: from that rule he will never swerve, but steadfastly proceed by it, as the constant method he will hold in his divine administrations.

PSALM LXXXVI.

A Prayer of David.

1 Bow down thine ear, O LORD, hear me : for I am poor and needy.

2 Preserve my soul ; for I am holy : O thou, my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee.

3 Be merciful unto me, O LORD : for I cry unto thee daily.

4 Rejoice the soul of thy servant : for unto thee, O LORD, do I lift up my soul.

5 For thou, LORD, art good, and ready to forgive ; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

6 Give ear, O LORD, unto my prayer ; and attend to the voice of my supplications.

7 In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee : for thou wilt answer me.

8 Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O LORD ; neither are there any works like unto thy works.

9 All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O LORD ; and shall glorify thy name.

10 For thou art great, and doest wondrous things : thou art God alone.

11 Teach me thy way, O LORD ; I will walk in thy truth : unite my heart to fear thy name.

12 I will praise thee, O LORD my God, with all my heart, and I will glorify thy name for evermore.

13 For great is thy mercy toward me : and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell-

PSALM LXXXVI.

ARGUMENT.—The title satisfies us that David was the author of this Psalm, which the collector of this third book found, I suppose, after the other two were made up and published, and so placed it here, among those which belong to the same subject. For though it was composed by David when he was so persecuted, either by Saul or Absalom, that he was stripped of all he had, and left in a most forlorn condition (ver. 1), yet Theodoret thinks it was made with a prospect of the attempt which the Assyrians made upon Jerusalem, and the hope which Hezekiah then placed in God for deliverance. Which notion, it is likely, he had from the Jews ; who say that this prayer was made use of by Hezekiah in the time of that sore distress ; for the first words of this Psalm are the same with his in 2 Kings xix. 16, and the eighth and ninth verses may very fitly be accommodated to that history (as I have there observed), but the rest a great deal better to David.

Ver. 1.] There cannot be a fitter object of thy mercy, O Lord, than thy poor supplicant, who beseeches thee graciously to condescend to his request ; for else he is utterly undone, being quite destitute of all human help.

Ver. 2.] And yet my life is in imminent danger, unless thou dost preserve it, as many reasons make me hope thou wilt ; for as thou the righteous judge hast been long my benefactor, and I am perfectly innocent of that my enemies charge me withal, so I myself have been a reliever of others in their need, and besides, am a faithful servant of thine, who depends entirely upon thee, and hath no confidence in any thing but only thy almighty goodness.

Ver. 3.] Whose merciful help I have also implored with most importunate and incessant prayers, which is another reason of my hope that thou wilt take compassion upon me, O Lord.

Ver. 4.] And turn the present sorrow of thy servant into joy and gladness : for I have placed my hope entirely in thee, O Lord, and expect nothing but from thee alone.

Ver. 5.] Who art no less bountiful (which is another exceeding great encouragement to me) than I am indigent, ready also to pardon those that have offended thee ; yea, to show abundant kindness to

every one of them in his greatest distress, when with unfeigned devotion he calls upon thee.

Ver. 6.] As I now do, O Lord, most humbly beseeching thee, with repeated entreaties, to give a favourable answer to these prayers and supplications, whereby I deprecate thy displeasure, and sue unto thee for favour.

Ver. 7.] Which I beseech thee let me the rather obtain, because my distress is so great and so urgent, that thy power will now be the more magnified in delivering me ; as heretofore thou hast been wont to do upon such earnest petitions as these are unto thee.

Ver. 8.] For nothing is too hard for thee, nor art thou unwilling to do more kindnesses for us because thou hast done so many already : but, as appears by thy unparalleled works, dost incomparably excel (whatsoever strangers think, 2 Kings xviii. 15) all those that are worshipped in the world as gods ; who are not able so much as to help and preserve themselves.

Ver. 9.] Which shall move all our neighbouring nations (2 Chron. xxxii. 23), as all the rest shall do in the days of that great king which we expect (Rom. xv. 9), to acknowledge thee, O Lord, to be their creator ; and with humble veneration to submit themselves unto thee, and to honour thee with their highest praises.

Ver. 10.] For they shall clearly see by the magnificence of thy marvellous works, that thou art infinitely superior to all those powers whom they adore ; and that in truth there is no God but thou thyself alone.

Ver. 11.] Which I so firmly believe, that I desire nothing more than to be perfectly instructed in all thy will, which I will sincerely observe : knit my heart, O Lord, in such pious affections to thee, that it may never in the least dissent from thee, nor be disturbed with any vain cares, but entirely bent to study this alone—what is pleasing unto thee.

Ver. 12.] Whom I am bound to praise, both as the supreme Lord of all, and as my most bountiful benefactor, with all the powers of my soul : and, accordingly, I do now most thankfully acknowledge thee ; and will never cease to honour thee, and to do thee service, as long as I have any being.

Ver. 13.] For the benefits thou hast bestowed on me are as inestimable as they are innumerable : I owe my very life to thee, which hath been often snatched out of the extremest dangers ; wherein I had inevit

14 O God, the proud are risen against me, and the assemblies of violent men have sought after my soul; and have not set thee before them.

15 But thou, O LORD, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.

ably perished, if thou hadst not mercifully delivered me (1 Sam. xxiii. &c.).

Ver. 14.] Behold, O God, a new opportunity to glorify that mercy; for proud and ambitious men (2 Sam. xv. 1, 2, &c.) have made an insurrection against me, and raised a most formidable army, (ver. 12, 13) to take away that life which thou hast so miraculously preserved: having no regard to thy providence, nor refusing any means whereby they may satisfy their unjust desires.

Ver. 15.] All our comfort is, that thou, not they, dost govern the world, who art no less compassionate than thou art powerful; readily forgiving offences, for bearing long before thou punishest them; choosing rather to heap thy benefits upon us, and never failing to perform thy faithful promises.

16 O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me; give thy strength unto thy servant, and save the son of thine handmaid.

17 Shew me a token for good; that they which hate me may see it, and be ashamed; because thou, LORD, hast holpen me, and comforted me.

Ver. 16.] In confidence of which, I humbly beseech thy favour and gracious pardon, though I have highly offended thee: assist thy poor servant by thy irresistible power against those mighty forces which are ready to assault me: O deliver me, who am here humbled in the lowest manner before thee; looking upon myself as more absolutely thine, than any slave that is born in our house can be ours.

Ver. 17.] Vouchsafe me now in this great distress such manifest tokens of thy favour towards me, that I may not only be delivered, but all may take notice of it; and good men thereby be encouraged to hope in thee, but they that hate me be utterly confounded, to see him whom they intended to destroy not only preserved, but blessed with comforts proportionable to the sorrow he hath endured.

PSALM LXXXVII.

A Psalm or Song for the sons of Korah.

1 His foundation is in the holy mountains.

2 The LORD loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

3 Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah.

4 I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me: behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this man was born there.

5 And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her; and the highest himself shall establish her.

6 The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah.

7 As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there: all my springs are in thee.

PSALM LXXXVII.

ARGUMENT.—It is as uncertain when this *Psalm-song* (see lxvii.) was composed, as which of the sons of Korah was the author of it. But it is manifest enough that it was written in commendation of Jerusalem, situate in the holy mountains of Zion (where David built his palace, and afterward settled the ark) and of Moriah, where Solomon built the temple. There are those that think it was composed upon the anniversary of the birth or coronation of some great prince, such as Hezekiah, in whose days this city was made more famous, by the glorious deliverance which God gave it from the power of the king of Assyria's army. But this is a mere conjecture; and I shall follow the vulgar opinion: according to which, the beginning of this Psalm must be looked upon as very abrupt; but expresses the greater rapture of joyful admiration wherein the Psalmist was.

Ver. 1.] Great is the strength and beauty of this place, which is founded by God in the high mountains; which he hath peculiarly chosen for the seat of his kingdom, and of his priesthood.

Ver. 2.] Though the Lord loves all the habitations of his people, yet none are so dear unto him as those within the gates of Jerusalem: a principal part of which is Zion.

Ver. 3.] There is no city in the world of which such glorious things are foretold, or of which any thing can

now be said, comparable to what we can truly boast of thee, that art the city which God himself hath separated for his own habitation.

Ver. 4.] I do not deny the due praises which belong to other places and countries, but rather am wont to make honourable mention among my acquaintance and familiars, of Egypt and Babylon; and of those who are nearer to us, the Philistines, Tyrians, and Arabians: bidding them observe that such a notable person was born among them.

Ver. 5.] But what is this to Zion? of whom it shall be said in future times, that (not such a single person, but) this and that man; a great many worthies, and far more eminent, both in learning and in arms, and especially in piety, were born in her; for she hath no meaner instructor than the most High, who shall settle her in a flourishing estate, by educating and forming her inhabitants to the most excellent qualities.

Ver. 6.] So that when he himself, whose eyes nothing can escape, shall look over the register of those nations, and count the famous men they have produced, he shall find only some one great man, and he comparatively of no great value, was born among them.

Ver. 7.] But in thee, O city of God, he shall find multitudes of excellent persons, all eminent in their kind, even among those of lower rank, as well as in the higher. And there shall be a constant succession of such, as there is of water in the spring.

PSALM LXXXVIII.

A Song or Psalm for the sons of Korah; to the chief Musician upon Mahalath Leannoth. Maschil of Heman the Ezrahite.

1 O LORD God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee :

2 Let my prayer come before thee : incline thine ear unto my cry ;

3 For my soul is full of troubles : and my life draweth nigh unto the grave.

4 I am counted with them that go down into the pit : I am as a man *that hath* no strength.

5 Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more : and they are cut off from thy hand.

6 Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps.

7 Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted *me* with all thy waves. Selah.

8 Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me ; thou hast made me an abomination unto them : *I am* shut up, and I cannot come forth.

9 Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction : LORD, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee.

10 Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead ? shall the dead arise *and* praise thee ? Selah.

11 Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave ? or thy faithfulness in destruction ?

PSALM LXXXVIII.

ARGUMENT.—Who this Heman was is uncertain. Not he who was the famous singer in David's time, for he was of the tribe of Levi (1 Chron. vi. 32. xv. 17) : whereas this was descended from Zerah, who was one of the sons of Judah, 1 Chron. ii. 6, where we find, indeed, not only Heman, but Ethan (to whom the next Psalm is ascribed), mentioned as two of Zerah's sons : but we cannot reasonably think that they were, in those early times, the authors of these two Psalms ; because Ethan plainly makes mention of David, and the promise which God had passed to him of a perpetual kingdom.

It remains, therefore, that these two here mentioned were of the posterity of those sons of Zerah (and thence called Ezrahites), and had the names of their noble ancestors given them, to perpetuate the memory of those who were so famous for wisdom (1 Kings iv. 31).

But in what time they lived cannot be certainly determined. It is probable when Jeconiah, otherwise called Jehoiachin (or after him Zedekiah) was taken and carried captive to Babylon, together with abundance of the nobility, and the principal commanders and artisans (2 Kings xxiv. 14—16). In some of which ranks I suppose this Heman was ; who being cast into a dark prison (which hath made some fancy Jehoiachin himself to have made it, ver. 6. 8), or otherwise as miserably treated as if he had been in a dungeon, bewails his private calamity, as Ethan in the next Psalm doth the public.

Why it is called a *Song-psalm*, see upon the title of Ps. lxxvii. It was to be sung by the sons of Korah interchangeably, which is the meaning of *leannoth*, upon a flute or pipe (see Ps. liiii.), to the known tune of *Maschil* (see Ps. xxxii.). Some passages in it may be applied to our Saviour's death and burial in his grave, which the prophet Isaiah compares to a prison ; and so is used by our church upon Good Friday

Ver. 1.] O mighty Lord, by whose gracious care and good providence I have been hitherto preserved, and on whom all my hopes of safety still depend, I have not failed in this sore affliction to implore thy mercy with most earnest cries, without any intermission.

Ver. 2.] Let them at last prevail, I beseech thee ; and do not reject my petition, accompanied with sad

moans and doleful lamentations ; but vouchsafe a favourable answer to it.

Ver. 3.] For my soul is overcharged with great variety of long-continued evils, which have brought me so low, that there is but a step between me and the grave.

Ver. 4.] All that know my condition look upon me as utterly lost ; and I have no reason to think otherwise, being quite spent, and having no power at all to help myself.

Ver. 5.] I am no longer one of this world, from whose society I am quite separated ; there is little difference between me and those, who, being slain in a battle, and cast all together into one common grave, are no farther regarded ; or those whose families are so wholly extirpated, that there are none left to preserve their memory.

Ver. 6.] For thou hast thrust me down into a deep and dismal dungeon (which I can compare to nothing but a grave) ; wherein I lie neglected, and see no hope of being delivered.

Ver. 7.] My spirit is ready to sink under the weight of thy displeasure, while my calamities fall upon me so fast and so heavily (like the mountainous waves of the sea), one after another, that it is impossible to express the soreness of my affliction.

Ver. 8.] I am not allowed to have any familiarity with my friends or acquaintance, no more than if I were in another world ; and as for other men, they abominate to come into such a loathsome place ; where I am kept so close, that I have no means of getting out.

Ver. 9.] Nor can I do any thing there but weep, till I am almost blind by reason of the miseries I endure : only I cease not to look up unto thee, O Lord, continually, who art my only companion in this solitary and helpless condition ; imploring thy aid with fervent prayers and longing expectations ; saying,

Ver. 10.] Make haste, good Lord, to deliver me, if thou intendest any kindness to me, otherwise I shall presently perish ; and then, without the greatest miracle, there is no help for me : for can I with any reason expect that thou shouldst do wonders for me among the dead, when thou wouldest do nothing for me while I was alive ? and raise me out of my grave when thou wouldest not bring me out of prison ?

Ver. 11.] Now is the time to declare the love thou bearest to me, and to perform the promise thou hast made to them that faithfully serve thee ; for if thou dost defer thy relief, I die ; and what can I hope for when I am rotten in my grave ?

12 Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?

13 But unto thee have I cried, O LORD; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee.

14 LORD, why castest thou off my soul? why hidest thou thy face from me?

15 I am afflicted and ready to die from my

Ver. 12.] Shall thy power be apparent there where nothing is seen? and wilt thou convince men how good and how just thou art to thy servants, in the place where they are no more remembered?

Ver. 13.] Thus, O Lord, I cry unto thee in the anguish of my soul, which keeps me awake to present my prayers unto thee before the morning light.

Ver. 14.] Though, alas! they have no effect; but I see myself deserted, notwithstanding all my prayers, in these miserable straits; wherein I lie sighing, to think what the reason should be that thou deniest me thy help, and takest no notice of me.

Ver. 15.] Which is the more strange, because I faint away under my misery, which hath continued many years, and under the sad prospect I have before me of more dreadful calamities; which so astonish me, that I know not what to do with myself.

youth up: while I suffer thy terrors I am distracted.

16 Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; thy terrors have cut me off.

17 They came round about me daily like water; they compassed me about together.

18 Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness.

Ver. 16.] I only bemoan over again my forlorn estate, which grows still more deplorable; I suffer not merely the effects of thy anger (ver. 7), but of thy severest and most terrible displeasure; wherewith I am so overwhelmed and oppressed, that I am scarce able to fetch my breath.

Ver. 17.] Which way soever I turn myself I find that I am environed with them; and they increase continually, like floods of water coming from several places, and at last meeting all together, to enclose and swallow me up.

Ver. 18.] And there is no friend, no neighbour, comes near me to give me the least consolation: but all they whose sweet society was wont to help to mitigate my sorrow, are either dead, or kept from my sight; or hide themselves for fear of being thrust down, together with me, into this doleful place.

PSALM LXXXIX.

Maschil of Ethan the Ezrahite.

1 I WILL sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations.

2 For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for

ever: thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens.

3 I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant,

PSALM LXXXIX.

ARGUMENT.—The author of this Psalm was near of kin to him that made the former (see the argument there); and they lived, I suppose, in the same time. Only Heman bewailed some private affliction, which was befallen himself; whereas Ethan (after a thankful acknowledgment of the benefits God had bestowed upon them, and especially of his promise made to David by Samuel and Nathan, of settling the kingdom upon him and his posterity for ever) laments most sadly the public calamity; by the subversion of the royal family and government in the days of Jehoiakim, or of Zedekiah. Whose miserable fate seems, in the conclusion of this Psalm, to be bewailed with the greater passion, because it looked like a breach of God's promise to David; and gave the Babylonians, and other nations, who assisted in their destruction, occasion to say, that notwithstanding all the promises they boasted of, and the fidelity of their God in their performance, there was now a period put to David's family and kingdom.

That is the clearest account I can give of the meaning of the last clause of the last verse but one; where we read that they "reproached the footsteps of his anointed." The word we render *footsteps*, signifies properly the *heel of a man's foot*: and from thence is translated to signify the *end of any thing*, as in Ps. cxix. 33. Which notion of it, in my judgment, best suits with all that goes before in this Psalm; concerning the stability of David's kingdom: which their enemies now boasted (as we would express it

in our present language), they saw upon its last legs. And the truth is, it was never restored to that family till Christ the son of David came; to whom some passages in this Psalm are applied by the Jews themselves, in both the Bereschiths, and in other books; to which Aben Ezra and R. Solomon consent.

Why this Psalm is called *Maschil*, see Ps. xxxii. But why any should fancy, as some have done, that it was made by Jehoiachin, after he came out of prison (2 Kings xxv. 27, 28), I cannot conceive; unless the first words moved them to think that he who, in the foregoing Psalm, speaks of himself as in a dungeon, gives God thanks here for his deliverance.

Ver. 1.] The innumerable calamities that are befallen us, shall not blot out the memory of the innumerable benefits which the Lord hath formerly bestowed on us; but I will sing of them without ceasing; and endeavour to make all posterity believe, notwithstanding our present desolation, that thou art faithful and constant to thy word.

Ver. 2.] For I am confident thy mercy, which is immovable, and endures for ever, will raise us out of these ruins: thy promises being as firm and steadfast as the heavens; in which we see an image of the unchangeableness of thy nature and of thy will.

Ver. 3.] Which thou didst declare by thy prophet, saying (1 Sam. xvi. 13; 2 Sam. iii. 9, 10. v. 2. vii. 15, 16. 28). I have chosen David my faithful servant to be the governor of my people; and have made a covenant with him, confirmed by an oath,

4 Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah.

5 And the heavens shall praise thy wonders. O LORD: thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints.

6 For who in the heaven can be compared unto the LORD? *who* among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the LORD?

7 God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.

8 O LORD God of hosts, who is a strong LORD like unto thee, or to thy faithfulness round about thee?

9 Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them.

10 Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain; thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm.

11 The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine: as for the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them.

Ver. 4.] That not only he, but his children after him, shall be settled in the throne; which, though it totter sometimes, or be thrown down, shall be raised again, and continued throughout all succeeding generations.

Ver. 5.] For which stupendous kindness, if we should forget to praise thee, or in this our calamitous condition distrust thy power and fidelity to make it good, the heavenly inhabitants will not fail to do it: but, in their holy assemblies, confess them both with their solemn praises.

Ver. 6.] For there are none of the powers of the air they know (much less any upon earth) that can resist the Lord, and hinder the fulfilling of his will: the mightiest among themselves, they are sensible, are not to be compared with his majesty, to whom they are but ministers.

Ver. 7.] And when they assemble, in the greatest numbers, and make the most glorious court, stand in great fear and dread of him: attending, with awful reverence, what commands he will be pleased to lay upon them.

Ver. 8.] With whom I will join, O Lord, the commander of all these heavenly hosts, and celebrate thy name on earth, as they do in heaven, saying: Where is he among them all that can equal thee, O most powerful Lord: whose faithfulness is as ready to fulfil thy promises, as the angels are to execute thy commands?

Ver. 9.] The sea itself, which submits to nobody else, is under thy government: who, when it is a calm, maketh it swell, as if it would overflow the earth; and reducest it, when it is in its greatest rage, to a perfect stillness again.

Ver. 10.] There the Egyptians, who had been wounded before with many other grievous plagues, were utterly overthrown: and with the like irresistible power the Canaanites were scattered, at the entrance of thy people into the promised land.

Ver. 11.] For thou art the owner of all things both in heaven and earth, and hast the justest right to dispose of them to whom thou plearest; because the world, and all the inhabitants of it, are thy creatures.

Ver. 12.] Whether we cast our eyes to the southern or northern parts of the earth, to the west towards Tabor, or eastwards towards Hermon, they all ac-

12 The north and the south thou hast created them: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name.

13 Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand.

14 Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.

15 Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O LORD, in the light of thy countenance.

16 In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted.

17 For thou art the glory of their strength: and in thy favour our horn shall be exalted.

18 For the LORD is our defence; and the Holy One of Israel is our king.

19 Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people.

20 I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him:

knowledge thee their creator: and rejoice in thy bountiful providence, which enriches them with all things needful for them.

Ver. 13.] And thy power, extending itself throughout the whole, always effects in every place whatsoever thou designest; and that with an irresistible force; whether it be to punish evil-doers, or to preserve and exalt them that do well.

Ver. 14.] But none shall be able to say thou dost them any wrong: because thou dost not rule the world merely by thy absolute power; but hast placed thy principal glory in justice and equity, mercy and fidelity; from which thou never swervest.

Ver. 15.] Happy then are the people who live under thy righteous and merciful government; and hear the trumpet sound, which signifies the royal presence of thy majesty among them, and calls them to attend upon thee (Numb. x. 10): they shall spend their days most cheerfully, O Lord; being secure of thy favour, which will let them want nothing that is good for them.

Ver. 16.] They shall not barely rejoice, but triumph, and that continually, in thy love to them, and thy power to defend them; and, walking in thy holy laws, shall, by thy goodness, be highly exalted, and made superior to all their enemies.

Ver. 17.] For they owe not their conquests to their own valour, or forces, though never so great; but it is thou who givest illustrious victories to the smallest armies: and therefore by thy favour we hope, that our empire, which is now broken, shall be raised again to its former splendour.

Ver. 18.] For the Lord is still our protector, though our prince be taken, and made unable to defend us: he whom Israel adores, and acknowledges infinitely to transcend all other beings, is our king and governor.

Ver. 19.] Who then didst reveal thy mind, in a vision, to the holy prophet Samuel (1 Sam. xvi. 1), when the Philistines defied Israel, and grew terrible to them (xvii. 10, 11, 24), saying; I have provided myself a valiant champion (1 Sam. xvi. 18), to be your deliverer (2 Sam. iii. 18), I have designed a person of singular worth, from among the common people (1 Sam. xvi. 11), to be promoted to the kingdom.

Ver. 20.] I have observed David (1 Sam. xvi. 1), and find him a man that will faithfully serve me;

21 With whom my hand shall be established : mine arm also shall strengthen him.

22 The enemy shall not exact upon him ; nor the son of wickedness afflict him.

23 And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him.

24 But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him : and in my name shall his horn be exalted.

25 I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers.

26 He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation.

27 Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth.

28 My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him.

29 His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.

30 If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments ;

31 If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments ;

32 Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.

33 Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.

34 My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.

35 Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David.

36 His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me.

37 It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah.

38 But thou hast cast off and abhorred, thou hast been wroth with thine anointed.

39 Thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant : thou hast profaned his crown by casting it to the ground.

40 Thou hast broken down all his hedges ; thou hast brought his strong holds to ruin.

go, and anoint him with the holy oil ; for I intend him for the governor of my people.

Ver. 21.] With whom I will always be powerfully present, for his assistance (1 Sam. xvii. 45, &c.), and never desert him, as I did Saul (xviii. 12. 24. 28) : but my mighty power shall extraordinarily strengthen him in all his enterprises (1 Sam. xxx. 6 ; 2 Sam. viii. 6. 14).

Ver. 22.] The subtlest of his enemies shall not be able to circumvent him ; nor the most malicious, how powerful soever, oppress him.

Ver. 23.] But after all their vain attempts, I will not only protect him from their crafty violence, but subdue all his adversaries under him, and destroy those that hate him (2 Sam. vii. 9).

Ver. 24.] He shall ever find me, not only faithful in my promise to him, but kind above his expectation ; and, by my powerful assistance, and his confidence in it, his authority shall be highly exalted (1 Chron. xiv. 17 ; 2 Sam. vii. 9. viii. 13).

Ver. 25.] On one hand he shall conquer the Philistines, and those that live upon the coast of the sea (2 Sam. viii. 1) : and on the other hand the Syrians, as far as Tigris and Euphrates (2 Sam. viii. 9, &c. x. 16. 19).

Ver. 26.] For he shall entirely depend on me in all his distresses, and fly to me for succour, as a child to his parent ; saying, with more than usual love and confidence, Thou art my Father, as well as my omnipotent God, from whom alone I expect protection and deliverance.

Ver. 27.] Which I will never fail to afford him, till I raise him to the prime dignity, among all those whom I call my sons ; and set him so high above all other kings in the world, that he shall be a most eminent type of my son, Christ, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords.

Ver. 28.] Nothing shall alter these kind intentions towards him ; but I will always have a love for him, and faithfully perform my covenant with him.

Ver. 29.] Which is, that his family shall never be extinct ; but, notwithstanding the changes which all things are subject unto here below, have the royal power continued in it, as long as the heavens endure (2 Sam. vii. 16. 28, 29 ; Luke i. 32, 33).

Ver. 30.] If his successors, indeed, shall depart from the law which I have given you by my ser-

vant Moses, and not judge my people righteously ;

Ver. 31.] If they profanely neglect or corrupt my religion, and observe not the rest of the rules of life which I have enjoined them :

Ver. 32.] Then will I execute the threatenings which are in my law (Lev. xxvi.), upon them ; and punish their transgressions with sore diseases, and their idolatries with several plagues (2 Sam. vii. 14).

Ver. 33.] But I will not so chastise them, as never more to do good to his family (2 Sam. vii. 25) ; but I will still have a kindness for it, and faithfully keep my promise with it (1 Kings xi. 34—36. xv. 4 ; 2 Kings viii. 19, &c.).

Ver. 34.] I will not violate the covenant I have made with David (2 Chron. xxi. 7), nor retract the promise which I have solemnly passed to his family.

Ver. 35.] For I have unalterably sworn by my own incommunicable excellences, that I will as soon cease to be what I am, as deceive him.

Ver. 36.] His family (as I said ver. 29), shall never be quite extinct ; but always remain in my favour, and hold the royal dignity as long as the sun shineth.

Ver. 37.] The moon may as well fall from her orb, as his authority fall to the ground, and rise no more : let that be a witness of my fidelity, when you look upon it (Jer. xxxiii. 20, 21) ; and conclude that after all the changes and eclipses his kingdom may suffer, it shall stand as fast as that and all the rest of the heavenly bodies.

Ver. 38.] But all these promises, alas ! so sacredly confirmed and oft repeated, have not secured it from a dismal subversion : for thou hast rejected, with the greatest contempt and indignation, our sovereign ; one of the posterity of David, and his lawful successor in the kingdom (2 Kings xxiv. 20. xxv. 6, 7 ; Lam. iv. 20).

Ver. 39.] Thou seemest not to regard the covenant made with that thy faithful servant (which thou promisedst not to break, ver. 34), and, instead of raising his family higher than all other kings (ver. 27), hast suffered it to lose all its authority ; which, together with the royal diadem, is vilely trodden under foot.

Ver. 40.] Thou hast broken down all the walls of Jerusalem (2 Kings xxv. 10), and made all his fortified places a mere desolation.

41 All that pass by the way spoil him : he is a reproach to his neighbours.

42 Thou hast set up the right hand of his adversaries ; thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice.

43 Thou hast also turned the edge of his sword, and hast not made him to stand in the battle.

44 Thou hast made his glory to cease, and cast his throne down to the ground.

45 The days of his youth hast thou shortened : thou hast covered him with shame. Selah.

46 How long, LORD ? wilt thou hide thyself for ever ? shall thy wrath burn like fire ?

47 Remember how short my time is : wherefore hast thou made all men in vain ?

Ver. 41.] So that he hath no defence against those who have a mind to make a prey of him (2 Kings xxiv. 2), and is now scorned and derided by those who formerly dreaded him.

Ver. 42.] Thou hast made his adversaries (whom thou promisedst to depress, ver. 23), far stronger than himself : they have executed all that they designed, and now triumph in his ruin.

Ver. 43.] His forces have done him no service ; but being shamefully routed, durst never rally again, to make any opposition to their enemies.

Ver. 44.] Thou hast put out that splendour which we thought should have been perpetual (ver. 37, 38) ; and hast utterly overturned his kingdom.

Ver. 45.] Thou hast made a speedy end of the reign of Jehoiachin, who in his youth is made a slave (2 Kings xxiv. 8, &c.) : and suffered Zedekiah to be most disgracefully condemned as a rebel, to lose his eyes, and remain a prisoner all the days of his life (2 Kings xxv. 6, 7).

Ver. 46.] O what a sad condition is this, in which thou seemest wholly to neglect us ! but, O Lord, wilt thou never appear for us again, and put a period to our miseries ? wilt thou let thy anger burn, till we be utterly consumed ?

Ver. 47.] Our natural weakness pleads for some mercy ; and emboldens us to beseech thee, that since we must not only die unavoidably, but a short time will bring us to our graves, thou wilt be pleased to let us spend that little time in more ease ; and not live, as

48 What man *is he that* liveth, and shall not see death ? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave ? Selah.

49 LORD, where *are* thy former lovingkindnesses, *which* thou swarest unto David in thy truth ?

50 Remember, LORD, the reproach of thy servants ; *how* I do bear in my bosom *the reproach of all the mighty people ;*

51 Wherewith thine enemies have reproached, O LORD ; wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of thine anointed.

52 Blessed *be* the LORD for evermore. Amen, and Amen.

if we were made for nothing else, but only to be miserable and to die.

Ver. 48.] For where is the man whose constitution is so firm, that he shall not yield to death ? For what ability have we, though our enemies should not thus destroy us, to defend ourselves from the power of the grave ?

Ver. 49.] Lord, what a difference is there between our times, and those when thou wast so exceeding good to David ! and swarest, most faithfully, to continue to him for ever thy loving-kindness, which we beseech thee now restore unto us.

Ver. 50.] Show, O Lord, that thou dost not forget the scoffs and jeers, whereby our enemies augment the sufferings of thy servants : there is nothing I lay to heart so much, as all the reproaches of many and mighty nations.

Ver. 51.] Who are thy enemies as well as ours : and have blasphemed thee, O Lord, and mocked at thee, as if our slavery were the effect of thy inability to protect us ; and as if there were an end of the family and kingdom of David, thine anointed, which thou saidst should last for ever.

Ver. 52.] But let them laugh on ; neither their scoffs, nor our calamity, shall hinder us from praising the Lord, and speaking good of him continually, in assured hope that he will at last deliver us. Let it be so, we beseech thee ; let it be so, as we desire and hope ; that we may ever praise thee for our restoration.

PART IV.

PSALM XC.

A Prayer of Moses the man of God.

1 LORD, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.

2 Before the mountains were brought forth, or

ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou *art* God.

PSALM XC.

ARGUMENT.—Here begins the fourth book of Psalms ; in this differing from the rest—that as those of the first book are most of them ascribed to David, and those of the second in great part to the sons of Korah, and those of the third to Asaph ; so there

are few of these whose author is certainly known : and therefore, I suppose, were all put together, in one and the same collection. The first of them, indeed, being made by Moses, the Hebrews have entertained a conceit (which St. Jerome and St. Hilary follow), that he was the author also of the next ten immediately ensuing. But, as there is no

3 Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.

4 For a thousand years in thy sight *are but* as yesterday when it is past, and *as* a watch in the night.

5 Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning *they are like* grass which groweth up.

6 In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.

7 For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled.

8 Thou hast set our iniquities before thee,

our secret *sins* in the light of thy countenance.

9 For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told.

10 The days of our years *are* threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength *they be* fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

11 Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, *so is* thy wrath.

12 So teach us to number our days, that we may apply *our* hearts unto wisdom.

13 Return, O LORD, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants.

reason for that (it will appear in due place), so I can see no cause why we should fancy David, or some of the children of Moses in his time, or a singer of that name (as Aben Ezra conjectures), to have composed this present Psalm; when not only the title expressly gives it to that Moses who was *the man of God*, (as their lawgiver is called, Deut. xxxiii. 1), or that famous prophet by whom God spake to them; but the Chaldee Paraphrase and the very matter of this Psalm, sufficiently show that it was a meditation of his, when the people offended so highly against God in the wilderness (especially by murmuring at the relation the spies brought them of the good land, Numb. xiv.), that he shortened their lives to seventy or eighty years at the most, and suffered them not to arrive at the age of their ancestors, or of Moses, Caleb, and Joshua, whose lives he prolonged to a hundred and twenty years.

Which grievous punishment Moses prays God they may lay to heart seriously, and so recover his favour (ver. 12, &c.), who is the eternal God, as he tells them (in the beginning of the Psalm), and had been in a particular manner, kind to their progenitors in former generations.

This is the substance of the Psalm: which the collector of this book thought fit to place in the very beginning of it: because of the great antiquity of this Psalm, and the dignity of its author.

Ver. 1.] O Lord, who sustainest and governest the whole world, thou hast been the constant protector of our nation for many ages; having afforded all things necessary for the defence and security of our forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, when they had no certain dwelling-place, but were strangers in the land whither we are going, and supported us 'in the land of Egypt'; where, in a time of dearth, thou madest an ample provision for us; as thou hast also done hitherto in this barren desert.

Ver. 2.] Where, though we have no towns nor houses, we ought to think ourselves safe; and to trust in thee, who art the same mighty God thou ever wast (not only before we and our forefathers were made, but before the mountains arose out of the waters, and thou commandedst the rest of the earth, and this beautiful world, to appear), and ever wilt be, whatever changes there be here, without any alteration.

Ver. 3.] We have highly offended thee indeed, and so did our first parents; who became thereby most wretched and miserable creatures, and were doomed by thee to return to the dust, out of which they were formed; as all their posterity must do, whensoever thou summonest them to obey that sentence thou hast passed upon them.

Ver. 4.] And should we have a reprieve for a longer time than our first father Adam, and some of his suc-

cessors had, who lived near to a thousand years, we should be wretched still: especially when we compared ourselves with thee; in whose account the longest life is as inconsiderable as one day, and that when it is spent and gone; nay, as three or four hours, which pass away in sleep.

Ver. 5.] But, alas! in these ages thou carriest men away suddenly; as a violent torrent doth those things it meets withal in its passage: they vanish like a dream when we awake; and are as grass, which in the morning is grown higher and stronger than it was:

Ver. 6.] But how flourishing and fresh soever it then appear, is cut down before night, and loses all its beauty: such is the frailty of man; who is now in vigorous health, and anon languishes, and falls to the earth.

Ver. 7.] This, I am sure, is our condition; who have so provoked thee to anger by our sins, that we perish in an instant (Numb. xvi. 35, 46), and are perpetually disturbed with dreadful apprehensions of thy heaviest displeasure (xvii. 12, 13).

Ver. 8.] After many threatenings, thou hast proceeded, as a righteous judge, to call us to a severe account for all our foul crimes, though never so secretly committed; and makest it appear, by our punishments, to all the world (Numb. xiv. 20, &c.) that we are a perverse generation, though we pretend to thy service.

Ver. 9.] For we constantly feel some effects or other of thine anger; whereby our lives decline exceeding fast, and many times before we can say what is this, are at an end.

Ver. 10.] We fall short of the days of our forefathers; being now all doomed to perish in the wilderness, and not to exceed, commonly, the age of seventy, or (if men be of a vigorous constitution) at most of eighty years: the best part of which also is spent in toilsome travels (Numb. xx. 14. xxi. 4. xxxi. 11; Deut. ii. 1. 3, &c.) and much sorrow and vexation; to see the strongest among us cut down like grass, in a moment, or at least making great haste unto their graves.

Ver. 11.] And yet, alas! who is there that seriously considers, and lays to heart, the dreadful effects of thy displeasure, which irresistibly falls upon us? (Numb. xxv. 1—3, &c.) or, with such a pious fear as it ought to excite, takes any care to prevent more terrible punishments than those we have felt already?

Ver. 12.] Lord, do thou touch us with a sense of thy judgments; that we may not presume thus foolishly to offend thee, as our fathers have done: but, making a just account of the shortness and uncertainty of our lives, may wisely apply ourselves to make the best use we can of them, in repenting of our sins.

Ver. 13.] And then be pleased to turn thy severity into kindness towards us: let it suffice, good Lord, that we have endured so many and long punishments;

14 O satisfy us early with thy mercy ; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

15 Make us glad according to the days *wherein* thou hast afflicted us, and the years *wherein* we have seen evil.

and now at last revoke or mitigate the sentence thou hast passed upon us, who, though very disobedient, are thy servants.

Ver. 14.] O let us see some appearance of thy love to us ; which may satisfy and cheer our languishing souls, like the morning light after a tedious night : and, instead of sighs and groans, fill us with shouts of joy all the remainder of our days.

Ver. 15.] Compensate our past troubles with future comforts : and make our happiness to equal, if not exceed, the misery we have suffered.

Ver. 16.] Declare to all the world that thou hast not quite forsaken us thy servants : but wilt still

16 Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children.

17 And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us : and establish thou the work of our hands upon us ; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

work wonders for us, and do more glorious and magnificent things for our children, though we have sinned against thee (Numb. xx, 17, 18, &c. xxxi. 2 ; Deut. ii. 25. iii. 21).

Ver. 17.] Let them inherit, by the special favour of the Lord our God, that lovely and pleasant land (Gen. xlix. 15 ; Deut. viii. 7, 8, &c.), which he hath promised to give us : and, for that end, direct and prosper our arms ; that what we shall attempt in vain, if we be left to ourselves, may successfully be achieved by thy assistance (Deut. viii. 17, 18, &c. xxxi. 6—8). O prosper thou our undertaking, and make our arms victorious.

PSALM XCI.

1 HE that dwelleth in the secret place of the most high shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

2 I will say of the Lord, *He* is my refuge and my fortress : my God ; in him will I trust.

3 Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.

4 He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust : his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

PSALM XCI.

ARGUMENT.—The author of this Psalm is not known, but the occasion seems to have been some great pestilence ; in which the psalmist commends an humble confidence in God, an ardent love to him, as the best security both in that and in all other danger. Maimonides thinks (as other of the rabbins also do) that the psalmist hath a peculiar respect to the incursions of evil spirits, ver. 5, 6, as in the following verses, 7, 8, to those mischiefs which may come from the hand of evil men. And as far as those spirits had any hand in the pestilence here spoken of, his opinion is true ; and his words in general are very significant, that the psalmist here “ treats elegantly of that great providence which protects and keeps us from all evils, both universal and particular,” &c. Thus he discourses in his *More Nevochim*, par. iii. cap. 51, where we have the reason of that name which is given to this Psalm by the Talmudists ; who call it, *A Song of evil spirits* (see Buxtorf. *Lex. Talmud.* in the word *psa*).

Now there is no pestilence so likely to have given occasion to this Psalm, as that in the latter end of David's reign ; who, having numbered the people, and not made those acknowledgments to God which the law in that case prescribed (Exod. xii.), had this sad choice given him by the prophet Gad—whether he would be punished for his negligence by famine, or by the sword of his enemies, or by pestilence. And submitting to the last (which God sent a destroying angel to inflict, 2 Sam. xxiv. 15, 16) was taught, it is not unlikely, by that prophet, called David's *seer*, to recommend himself to the divine protection, in the words of this Psalm. For that David himself was the author, as some conceive, is not so probable ; because there is no such confession of his sin, and deprecation of the divine displeasure, in this Psalm, as we read he made on this occasion, 2 Sam. xxiv ; 1 Chron. xxi. unless we

will imagine that he made this Psalm after that plague ; to direct and excite all others to make God their refuge, as he had done in such-like calamities. And this is far more probable, than that it should be made by Moses, as some of the Hebrews fancy ; for none of the plagues in his time were so great as that in David's : and the most of them fell on those whom God had condemned to die in the wilderness (as he in the foregoing Psalm commemorates), and therefore he could not promise long life to them upon any terms ; as the psalmist here doth to the man that confides in God (ver. 16).

The ancient interpreters by *schaal* (which commonly signifies a lion), do so unanimously understand some kind of serpent, and not without reason (as Bochartus hath demonstrated), that I have followed them in my paraphrase of ver. 13, and made no mention of those beasts of prey, but only of venomous creatures.

Ver. 1.] It is an undoubted truth, that he who always makes the divine providence his sanctuary, and commending himself to the protection of the most high, rests in that, and troubles himself no farther, need not fear any danger whatsoever : but think himself safe and secure in his custody ; who, as he is almighty, so will never fail those that piously confide in him.

Ver. 2.] And therefore I will now encourage my soul to flee unto the Lord for shelter, saying, I have no confidence in any thing but him alone : he is a better defence than the most impregnable fortress ; being the sovereign of the world, and so good to me, upon all occasions, that I will never distrust his kindness.

Ver. 3.] I doubt not but he will deliver thee from all unseen dangers ; particularly from this most destructive pestilence ; whose venom catches men as insensibly and suddenly as the snare doth the bird, when it is laid by the cunning fowler.

Ver. 4.] He will affectionately defend thee, as a hen

5 Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day;

6 Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.

7 A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.

8 Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.

9 Because thou hast made the LORD which is my refuge, even the most high, thy habitation;

10 There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

doth her young ones under her wings: and therefore trust to his benign providence, and depend upon his faithful word; opposing that to all the dangers which threaten thee, as a soldier doth his shield and buckler to the darts and thrusts of his enemies.

Ver. 5.] Then thou needest not to be afraid, either of murderers and robbers, whose sudden attempts in the night make them more dreadful: or of insurrections, and popular tumults, and the open assaults of any adversaries.

Ver. 6.] No, nor of those infectious diseases which arise from unknown causes: nor of those malignant fevers which rage in the hottest season of the year.

Ver. 7.] Whereby, though whole towns and countries be depopulated, a thousand falling on the left hand, and ten thousand on the right hand, of thee, thou shalt remain untouched in that mortality:

Ver. 8.] And only be a spectator of the divine vengeance, in punishing wicked offenders so visibly, that thou canst not but observe his righteous judgments (2 Sam. xxiv. 15, 16).

Ver. 9.] Because I have placed my confidence and hope in thee, O Lord, who art a sanctuary to which no violence can approach.

Ver. 10.] Therefore rest still assured, O my soul, that he will suffer no mischief to befall thee, nor let this plague seize upon thy family.

Ver. 11.] But give his angels, who are always ready to obey his commands a strict charge to take care

11 For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

12 They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

13 Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.

14 Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.

15 He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.

16 With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.

of thee, and to preserve thee whithersoever thou goest.

Ver. 12.] They shall as diligently attend thee, as a nurse doth her child: guiding, supporting, and defending thee, with such a solicitous affection, that the least harm shall not befall thee.

Ver. 13.] No, shouldst thou come among serpents, asps, and dragons, with all the rest of those venomous sorts of creatures, they shall not be able to do thee hurt; but thou shalt victoriously trample upon them and triumph over them (Luke x. 19; Mark xvi. 18).

Ver. 14.] For so hath the Lord declared his will and pleasure to be, when he gave commission to his angels concerning me, saying, Because he heartily loves me, and delights in me, therefore will I deliver him from all present danger, and raise him above the reach of all future: because he hath acknowledged me to be the only safe refuge, and relied on my power for his protection.

Ver. 15.] I will grant him all his petitions; especially when he is in any distress, I will be present with him to afford him suitable comfort: and not only preserve him from perishing, but, after a happy deliverance, make him great and illustrious.

Ver. 16.] And more than that, he shall have the satisfaction of enjoying his honour to a great old age: and when his strength fails him, I will not; but still give him evident proofs of my care of him, and kindness towards him.

PSALM XCII.

A Psalm or Song for the Sabbath-day.

1 It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most high:

2 To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night,

3 Upon an instrument of ten strings, and

PSALM XCII.

ARGUMENT.—If Adam had made this Psalm, presently after he was created, in the evening of the sabbath (which is a rabbinical fancy, mentioned in the Mid-rasch upon this place), sure it would have been set in this fourth book of Psalms before that of Moses: who may more probably be conceived to have composed it, to raise the hearts of the Israelites to the proper business of the sabbath-day: which was to praise God, when they meditated upon his wonderful works, not only of creation, but of providence in the government of the world. Several instances of which in rewarding the good, and punishing the wicked, they themselves had seen

since they came out of Egypt: and were to see more when they came into the land of Canaan; to keep their sabbath or rest there, after their long travels in the deserts: with respect to which, some think Moses might call this *A Psalm for the Sabbath-day*.

But there is no certainty of these things; or rather it is certain, that neither of these conjectures is true. For as Adam in Paradise had no enemies to rise up against him, nor was he troubled with any workers of iniquity (such as we read of, ver. 7. 11), and there were no psalteries, harps, and instruments of music, then made, which Moses himself tells us were found out by Jubal; so those instruments were not employed in the service of God till the days of Da-

upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound.

4 For thou, LORD, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands.

5 O LORD, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep.

6 A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this.

7 When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed for ever:

8 But thou, LORD, art most high for evermore.

9 For, lo, thine enemies, O LORD, for, lo,

thine enemies shall perish; all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered.

10 But my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn: I shall be anointed with fresh oil.

11 Mine eye also shall see my desire on mine enemies, and mine ears shall hear my desire of the wicked that rise up against me.

12 The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

13 Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God.

14 They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing;

15 To shew that the LORD is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

vid; who may therefore more reasonably be thought to have made this Psalm for the sabbath, than either of the other; after God had given him such "rest round about from all his enemies," 2 Sam. vii. 1, that he concluded he should be able to subdue those who should hereafter adventure to oppose him: such as those mentioned in the following chapter, viii. 10.

Ver. 1.] Now is the proper season to give thanks unto the Lord, for all the benefits we have received from him: and it is no less delightful, than it is profitable, to sing hymns, in the praise of the divine perfections; which infinitely transcends all that can be said, or thought of them.

Ver. 2.] This is the sweetest employment in the morning; and no entertainment equal to it at night: to commemorate and declare to all how bountiful thou art; and how faithful in performing thy promises to those who depend on thy almighty goodness.

Ver. 3.] Which ought to be celebrated with a full concert, not only of our cheerful voices, but of all the instruments of music.

Ver. 4.] For all are too little, O Lord, to express the joy I have in the acts of thy providence; by whom, as the world was made, so it is still governed: it ravishes my spirit, and makes me shout for joy, to think how excellently thou orderest and disposest all things.

Ver. 5.] Whose administration, though I cannot fully comprehend, yet I admire and applaud the astonishing greatness of thy works; and reverence the unsearchable depth of thy counsels and designs.

Ver. 6.] Of which a stupid man, who looks not beyond his senses, is so wholly ignorant, that seeing himself, and other such-like fools, prosper and thrive, while better men are in trouble and affliction, he presently concludes, thou dost not meddle in our affairs; but leavest all to chance: for he doth not understand so much as this secret:

Ver. 7.] That when the lowdest men grow rich, high, and powerful; and their interest is such, that by their means all the workers of iniquity, and few other men, are promoted; the reason is, because nothing in this world is of any great value, nor of any long continuance; but, after they have flourished awhile in empty glory, they shall be cut down like grass; and, which is more, never rise up again.

Ver. 8.] And that thou, who rulest all things, though far out of their sight, canst as well punish or reward men hereafter, as at present; being the eternal Lord.

Ver. 9.] Who showest thou dost not intend to let the wicked escape, though now they flourish; for thou hast begun already to give thy enemies, who have long prospered, a remarkable defeat: they have received such a notable blow, that I am confident they shall perish; and all their partakers, though never so numerous and strongly linked together, be dispersed and utterly destroyed.

Ver. 10.] But my power and authority thou shalt raise to a formidable height: and crown that dignity with such undisturbed joy and pleasure, as shall prove the pious are not always miserable;

Ver. 11.] Nor the wicked always prosperous: for to all other pleasures this shall be added, that I shall see those deprived of all power who have long watched to do me mischief: or certainly hear of the ruin of those malicious men, who set themselves with all their might to destroy me.

Ver. 12.] Which may be an encouragement to every good man to hope in God, and not question the justice of his providence, if at present he be afflicted: for as he shall overturn all his enemies at the last, so he will make the righteous flourish (not as the wicked do, like the grass, ver. 7, but) in a durable prosperity, like the fruitful palm and the stately cedar in Lebanon.

Ver. 13.] For they are under the care of the Lord our God, whose house they frequent: and there partake of his divine blessing, for the growth and increase of their happiness.

Ver. 14.] Which shall not decay, as the strength and freshness of those trees will do with age; but the older they grow, the more happy fruits shall their piety produce: and they shall abound in wealth and honour as much as they do in that.

Ver. 15.] To demonstrate to all the world that the Lord is a most impartial governor, whom I have found my firm and unmovable friend: and, assure yourselves, is so just and kind, that he will never let wickedness go unpunished, nor virtue be always unrewarded.

PSALM XCIII.

1 THE LORD reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; the LORD is clothed with strength, *wherewith* he hath girded himself: the world also is established, that it cannot be moved.

2 Thy throne is established of old: thou art from everlasting.

2 The floods have lifted up, O LORD, the

floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves.

4 The LORD on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, *yea, than* the mighty waves of the sea.

5 Thy testimonies are very sure: holiness becometh thine house, O LORD, for ever.

PSALM XCIII.

ARGUMENT.—There is no title in the Hebrew to tell us who was the author of this Psalm: nor was there any in Origen's Hexaplus, or in Eusebius, as Theodoret confesses: who found, in the Greek copy which he used, this Psalm called *An Ode of David, in praise of God*: to which hath been since added, *in the day before the sabbath, when the earth began to be inhabited*. Which Musculus thinks was not rashly done by the Greeks: but suspects they were moved to it; because they knew, perhaps, that the Jews used this Psalm upon that day. As indeed they did; for the words of the Talmud, in the title Kedishim, confirm his suspicions; which are these (as I find them set down by De Dieu, upon the foregoing Psalm): "The Canticles which the Levites sung in the sanctuary were as follow: on the first day of the week the twenty-fourth, on the second the forty-eighth, on the third the eighty-second, on the fourth the ninety-fourth, on the fifth the eighty-first, on the sixth the ninety-third, and on the seventh the ninety-second."

Nor is the matter of this Psalm more distant from the foregoing, than the sixth day is from the seventh; for it seems to me to have been composed when some of those potent enemies began to take heart again, and threaten to disturb David's peace and tranquillity: which, in the foregoing Psalm, he had said he was confident they should never be able to overthrow. Though, in the more sublime sense, it ought to be applied to the stability of Christ's kingdom: which several of the Jews acknowledged is

prophesied of, in this, and in all the Psalms that follow unto the hundredth.

Ver. 1.] Let the nations boast of the power and splendour of their kings, and trust to their military preparations; this is our glory and our confidence, that the Lord reigneth over us; whose royal ornaments are not gold and precious stones, but majesty itself; and is not armed with sword and spear, but with almighty strength, which is ready to fight for us: who have this comfort also, that he who made the world will support that excellent order wherein we are settled; so that it shall not be in the power of man to disturb what he has established.

Ver. 2.] This we know, because thy kingdom, O Lord, is fixed and immovable: and did not begin now, when we were made thy peculiar people; but was, as thou art, from everlasting.

Ver. 3.] We will not be afraid, therefore, though multitudes of combined enemies threaten to break in upon us like a flood: though they storm and rage and insolently vaunt, as if they were sure to overwhelm us:

Ver. 4.] Though they roar terribly, and be as numerous as the waters of the sea; swelling like its boisterous waves, in a furious tempest; the great Lord is above them all, and can instantly depress them as low as he pleases.

Ver. 5.] And thy fidelity in performing the promises wherein thou hast testified thy good will to us, is as unquestionable as thy power; no age shall find it fail: for it becomes not thee to start from thy word delivered to us by thy oracle; but it is thy glory to observe it sacredly for ever.

PSALM XCIV.

1 O LORD God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself.

2 Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth: render a reward to the proud.

PSALM XCIV.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm also wants an inscription in the Hebrew, to tell us who was the author of it, but the later Greeks entitle David to it; and call it, *A Psalm of his for the fourth day of the week*: which they had, (as I showed in the argument of the foregoing Psalm) from the Hebrew tradition in the Talmud: and he hath little acquaintance with the history of David, who doth not see that here is an exact description of the court of Saul, who abused their authority to all manner of oppression and violence (especially against David), without any fear of God, or thought that he would call them to any account for it; as he complains in several other Psalms; particularly lvii.—lix.

But it might as well be penned by any other holy man, who lived in times of general corruption; when (as Theodoret expresses it) their kings and

their princes (i. e. judges) loved not to be tied to the law: but pronounced unjust sentences, and committed murders; selling the blood of innocents for bribes: of whom the prophet Isaiah sadly complains, ver. 21 of the first chapter; where, ver. 10 he calls them "rulers of Sodom." Certain it is, the psalmist, whosoever he was, desires he may see justice done upon such atheistical oppressors; and desires good men not to be discouraged under their tyranny: but patiently expect a happy issue of all the vexation which they gave them.

Ver. 1.] O eternal Lord, the sovereign of the world, in whose power it is to punish the highest offenders; and to whom alone it belongs to take revenge on those who oppress thy people, when they should protect them; make thy justice conspicuous in a severe vengeance upon them.

3 LORD, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph ?

4 *How long* shall they utter *and* speak hard things ? *and* all the workers of iniquity boast themselves ?

5 They break in pieces thy people, O LORD, and afflict thine heritage.

6 They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless.

7 Yet they say, The LORD shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard *it*.

8 Understand, ye brutish among the people : and ye fools, when will ye be wise ?

9 He that planted the ear, shall he not hear ? he that formed the eye, shall he not see ?

10 He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he correct ? he that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know ?

11 The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity.

Ver. 2.] Call them to an account, O thou righteous judge of the whole earth ; and, by making them suffer according to the wrong they have done, let those proud men, who have acted as if they thought none could control them, know they have a superior.

Ver. 3.] We can scarce behold these wicked men without indignation ; it tempts us to impatience, O LORD, to see how they prosper and triumph in their injurious proceedings.

Ver. 4.] And to hear their insolent and provoking language ; for they care not what they say ; but as they intolerably abuse us, so they audaciously blaspheme thee : the whole company of them priding themselves in the mischief they do : and scornfully deriding those that tell thy judgments will overtake them.

Ver. 5.] They have crushed thy people so, that they dare scarce complain of their tyranny : which cruelly afflicts those who are dear unto thee, with all manner of rapines and extortions.

Ver. 6.] They have no compassion upon the widow or the stranger ; but rather spoil them ; nay, condemn them to die upon false accusations (that they may possess themselves of their estates), because they have no patron to defend them : and in the same manner they murder, for it is no better, the poor fatherless children, whom they ought to protect from violence.

Ver. 7.] And to harden themselves in their wickedness, they say ; What do you tell us of the Lord ? he knows not, nor minds not, what we do here. Though there are such evident demonstrations of the divine providence over Jacob and his posterity ; yet, for all that, they fancy he doth not regard nor will call them to any account for their doings.

Ver. 8.] What stupid wretches are these ! who think themselves the wisest, but are in truth the most brutish of all mankind ; whom I would advise, if they have not perfectly lost their reason, to consider this (and sure they are not such fools, but they may soon understand it) :

Ver. 9.] Shall not he hear our blasphemies, who gave you the faculty of hearing ? and shall not he see all you do, who gave you the power of seeing ? Is it possible he should give to others what he wants himself ?

Ver. 10.] He that taught all nations his will, shall not he correct them when they transgress it ? to what purpose did he make man to know the difference between good and evil, but that he should observe it ; and expect, if he did not, to suffer for it ?

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12 Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD, and teachest him out of thy law ;

13 That thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked.

14 For the LORD will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance.

15 But judgment shall return unto righteousness : and all the upright in heart shall follow it.

16 Who will rise up for me against the evil-doers ? or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity ?

17 Unless the LORD had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence.

18 When I said, My foot slippeth ; thy mercy, O LORD, held me up.

19 In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul.

20 Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by law ?

Ver. 11.] Let them devise what ways they please, and flatter themselves with hopes to escape his vengeance : the Lord knows them all : and will make them see, one day, that all such counsels and contrivances are but mere folly and vanity.

Ver. 12.] And far better had it been for them to have been punished sooner ; for not he that prospers in his wickedness is happy, but he whom thou chastenest, O Lord, when he doeth amiss ; and thereby teachest to study and obey thy law with greater care and diligence.

Ver. 13.] Which will quiet his mind under all his troubles, and at last procure the removal of them : when absolute destruction and ruin meantime are preparing for the ungodly.

Ver. 14.] For the Lord will never abandon the care of his people ; nor leave those whom he owns for his peculiar possession, to be utterly undone by the oppressions, which for a time they may endure.

Ver. 15.] But how much soever his judgments may seem to depart from the rules of righteousness, while the wicked flourish, and the godly are afflicted ; they shall at last return to such a perfect conformity with them, that all honest-hearted men shall be encouraged thereby still to follow the Lord ; and by no means to depart from their integrity, though all things look as if they were unequally carried.

Ver. 16.] Let them learn by my example not to despond ; for who is it but he alone, from whom I have expected, and still do expect, to receive protection and help against these malicious men ! who make no conscience of what they do, and design my utter ruin.

Ver. 17.] Whose power also is so great, that if the Lord had not seasonably interposed for my assistance and deliverance, I had not now been praying to him, but laid in a silent grave.

Ver. 18.] This was my constant support, if at any time my heart even failed me, and I was ready to conclude, I cannot subsist any longer ; then thy mercy, O Lord, sent me relief, and preserved me from the danger wherein I was afraid I should have unavoidably perished.

Ver. 19.] I have had innumerable perplexed thoughts, and anxious cares, which have extremely disquieted me : but as soon as ever I reflected on thy goodness, justice, and truth, they all vanished ; and I felt such consolation from thence, as revived my dejected soul.

Ver. 20.] And made me say, I will never imagine

21 They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood.

22 But the LORD is my defence; and my God is the rock of my refuge.

it possible, that thou shouldst favour the tyrannical proceedings of these unrighteous judges: who not only oppress thy people, but do it in a form of justice; and under the colour and pretext of law, make them miserable.

Ver. 21.] They assemble themselves together, and in full council combine to destroy the righteous: upon whom they pass a solemn sentence, though he be perfectly guiltless, to lose his life.

Ver. 22.] But this doth not discourage me (whose case this is); let them decree what they please, and

23 And he shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness; yea, the LORD our God shall cut them off.

be too hard for all laws, the Lord, who hates unrighteousness, will be my defence; he, who hath been long very gracious to me, I am confident, will secure me from their violence:

Ver. 23.] And, more than that, retort it upon themselves; for the mischief they intended against me shall fall upon their own head: he shall cut them off in their own wicked contrivances; though it be not in our power, yet the Lord our God, who hath undertaken the patronage of those that confide in him, shall cut them off.

PSALM XCV.

1 O COME, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.

2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.

3 For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

PSALM XCV.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm likewise is without any title in the Hebrew; but the Greeks call it *A Psalm of David*, because the apostle to the Hebrews cites a passage out of it under his name, iv. 7. Though that, it must be confessed, is no concluding argument of its being composed by him; because it is usual to call the whole five books by the name of the Psalms of David; when it is certain he did not make them all, but only the greater part.

Whoever was the author, it looks as if it were intended to be a προσφώνημα, or solemn invitation of the people (when they were all assembled together on the Sabbath or some public occasion: Grotius, in Heb. iii. 7—13, thinks on the *feast of tabernacles*, for which this Psalm was composed) to praise the Lord their God, and hear instructions out of his law: and is justly employed still by the church, in the entrance of our morning service, for the very same purpose. For it plainly relates to the days of Christ, as the Jews confess, and the apostle proves, Heb. iii. iv. where he demonstrates to them of that nation, that the *rest* here spoken of could not be merely that in the land of Canaan, which their forefathers fell short of, by their disobedience to God in the wilderness: but another, far better, into which they in *that day* were to be brought by the Messiah, a far greater captain of salvation than Joshua. And therefore it concerned them then, he shows, above all other times, to take care they did not harden their hearts against him, when he came to invite them to a participation of the greatest blessedness; but entertain his holy gospel with a cheerful and joyful obedience to it. Theodoret is of opinion, that it was particularly designed for the times of Josiah, when he made that notable reformation (which we read of 2 Chron. xxxiv. xxxv.) and called them from the worship of idols to the service of the true God. But it could never be more properly used by that nation, than when the Lord Christ came to call them to repentance.

4 In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also.

5 The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land.

6 O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.

7 For he is our God; and we are the people

Ver. 1.] O stir up yourselves, all ye that come hither to worship the Lord, and with united affections let us cheerfully sing his praises: let us lift up our voices, and triumphantly laud the author of all the good we enjoy; and in whom we may safely confide for ever.

Ver. 2.] Let us approach into his presence with thankful hearts, to acknowledge the benefits we have received from him: and devoutly proclaim, with triumphant hymns, what a joy it is to us that we may address ourselves unto him.

Ver. 3.] For the Lord is infinitely powerful, and hath a sovereign authority; not only over all the princes on the earth, but all the angels and principalities in heaven.

Ver. 4.] All those treasures are in his possession, which lie in the deepest and most secret parts of the earth, whither none of our monarchs can extend their power; and the loftiest hills, which none but the clouds can touch, are part of his dominion.

Ver. 5.] The sea also obeys him alone; who hath an unquestionable title to it, and to all the rest of his wide empire; for he made both it and the dry land, with all the things contained therein.

Ver. 6.] O be not backward then to comply with this renewed invitation; but let us all with the lowest protestations devoutly adore his majesty: let it not suffice us to do it once; but again let us, with humble reverence, bow both our bodies and souls, in token of our subjection to him: let us fall on our knees, and submissively acknowledge the duty we owe to the great Lord who gave us our being.

Ver. 7.] Which we, above all people, have reason to do, because he hath a peculiar relation to us and kindness for us; providing for all our wants most liberally, and continually defending us from all dangers: O that you would therefore, without delay, listen to him, and be obedient to the voice of your creator, conservator, and benefactor, who calls upon you most graciously (by his own Son, Heb. iii. 6, 7, iv. 7), saying;

of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice,

8 Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work.

Ver. 8.] Lay to heart what I have done for you, and be not so stupidly insensible as your fathers were; at that place whose name (Meribah and Massah) preserves the memory of their provoking strife with Moses, and temptation of God in the wilderness (Exod. xvii. 2—7).

Ver. 9.] When they doubted of my power, and demanded new proofs of my presence among them (Exod. xvii. 7), though they had seen my wonderful works in their late deliverance at the Red Sea; and in making the bitter waters sweet; and in sending them bread from heaven (Exod. xiv.—xvi.).

Ver. 10.] Nor did they then cease their discontented

10 Forty years long was I grieved with *this* generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways:

11 Unto whom I swore in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.

murmurings and distrust of me; but continued their stubborn infidelity, vexing, nay tiring, my patience for the space of forty years; long before the end of which I concluded that they were a people whose heart would never be steadfastly resolved to adhere unto me; for they did not mind what wonderful things I did for them, nor what I commanded them to do for me.

Ver. 11.] Which so highly displeased me, that I swore they should wander all their days, and die at last in the wilderness (Numb. xiv. 28, &c.), and never enter into that good land, where I intended to give them rest after all their travels (Deut. xii. 9).

PSALM XCVI.

1 O SING unto the LORD a new song: sing unto the LORD, all the earth.

2 Sing unto the LORD, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day.

3 Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people.

4 For the LORD is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods.

5 For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the LORD made the heavens.

6 Honour and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

7 Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength.

8 Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts.

PSALM XCVI.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm also wants a title in the Hebrew: but the Greeks are justified in the former part of their inscription (which calls it *An Ode of David's*), by 1 Chron. xvi. where we find, that, at the bringing up the ark from the house of Obbedom, to the place he had prepared for it on mount Zion, David delivered this Psalm (together with the hundred and fifth) into the hand of Asaph, to express the joy he had in God's special presence among them: which all their neighbours round about, he foretells, should be made sensible of, as well as themselves.

This Psalm, indeed, is not exactly the very same with that; but there is a difference in some expressions; ex. gr. it is called here a *new song*, but not there; which shows it was afterward altered by some divine person, who accommodated it to other uses. And very probably by Ezra, when they came out of Babylon: which occasioned the Greeks to add, in the latter part of the inscription of this Psalm, these words: "when the house was built after the captivity." Ezra, that is, made use of it to express their joy at the re-edification of the temple.

But it never had a complete fulfilling, answerable to the height of it, till the Messiah (who was indeed the temple of God) came to dwell among us, to give eternal salvation to us. Several of the Jewish writers acknowledge that it belongs to his times: and accordingly we not only may, but ought to have him in our minds, when we say, "Sing unto the LORD a new song (for his new grace, that is, in sending him to give salvation to all nations), and "the LORD reigneth" (ver. 10), and hath all things put under his feet (see Euseb. in his *Demonstrat. Evangelicæ*, lib. 1. cap. 4).

Ver. 1.] O sing praises unto the Lord, for his new

and extraordinary benefits which he hath bestowed upon us: let all the earth join together with us to sing his praises.

Ver. 2.] We can never praise him enough; and therefore cease not to bless his name, and to spread the fame of his almighty goodness towards us; but publish every day, with joyful hearts, the great deliverances he hath wrought for us.

Ver. 3.] Tell the nations round about how he hath glorified himself: let none of them be ignorant of the wonderful things he hath done among us.

Ver. 4.] For all our praises fall infinitely short of the greatness of the Lord; who is worthy of the highest praise of the whole world: and hath shown both to us (1 Chron. xiii. 10—12, 1 Sam. vi. 29), and to others (1 Sam. v. 3, 4, &c.), how dreadful he is above all that are called gods.

Ver. 5.] For all the gods of the nations are nothing worth, being able to do neither good nor harm; and the Lord not only made the earth, but the heavens too; which abundantly declare the greatness and splendour of his majesty.

Ver. 6.] Whose heavenly court infinitely outshines all the state and pomp wherein the greatest earthly monarchs live (Esther i. 4). For all the words we have are not able to express the brightness and magnificence, the power and comely order, of so much as his ministers: an image of which we have in his holy place; wherein he manifests himself among us.

Ver. 7.] Ascribe, therefore, unto the Lord, O ye people, from whatsoever family ye come; ascribe unto him that incomparable majesty and supreme dominion and authority, which you give to imaginary gods.

Ver. 8.] And renounce them all; and, acknowledging the Lord alone to be the omnipotent king of all the world, do him honour suitable to the excellency of his majesty; bring him an oblation in token

9 O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth.

10 Say among the heathen that the LORD reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously.

11 Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof.

of your subjection to him, and humbly worship him in his temple.

Ver. 9.] O come and cast down yourselves before the Lord in his sanctuary, where he hath fixed his glorious residence among us: adore his transcendent perfections; and let all the people approach into his presence with a pious trembling and dread to offend their sovereign.

Ver. 10.] Go, ye that are already become proselytes unto him, and publish everywhere, in all countries, that the Lord [Christ] is the sovereign of the world, who alone can make it happy: for he shall settle those in peace that submit unto his government: and they shall not be so disturbed as they were wont with wars and tumults: he shall administer equal justice unto all; and neither suffer the good to be unrewarded, nor the evil to escape unpunished.

Ver. 11.] Let the whole universe therefore be filled

12 Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice

13 Before the LORD: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.

with joy at this blessed news; which the angels themselves shall gladly receive (Luke i. 30, 32): much more ought all mankind, wheresoever they are dispersed, on the earth, or on the sea, and the islands thereof, exceedingly rejoice; and fill all places with the loud sound of their joyful praises.

Ver. 12.] Let the husbandmen, and the shepherds, and all that dwell in the fields, leap for joy: and the woodmen and foresters shout for joy, to see the happy day approaching; when all the idols that are worshipped there shall be thrown down together with their groves.

Ver. 13.] Let them welcome that day; and meet the Lord with forward affection, who is coming to them: for he comes to reform the earth, and will govern mankind by righteous and merciful laws; and faithfully keep his word with all those that truly observe them.

PSALM XCVII.

1 THE LORD reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.

2 Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.

PSALM XCVII.

ARGUMENT.—Some of the Hebrews conceive (as I observed upon Ps. xc.), that Moses was the author of this, as well as the rest of these Psalms which want an inscription. And, indeed, he excelled in this faculty of composing hymns, as we learn from Exod. xv. and Deut. xxxii., and might upon some other occasion, as well as the overthrow of Pharaoh in the Red sea, make a song of triumph, after some of those great victories which God gave them over their enemies. Which was a thing in use before his time, as it appears by the fragments of ancient songs recorded in his books: particularly that *Invictus* made by some poet among the Amorites, after Sihon had taken Heshbon from the Moabites, to whom it formerly belonged; wherein they triumph over their god Chemosh, as unable to deliver his worshippers (Numb. xxi. 27, &c.). And if we could be sure this Psalm was made by Moses, I should think it to have been composed after the Israelites had conquered Sihon and his land: over whom they triumphed, as he had done over the former possessors of that country. But the Psalm seems so plainly to have been composed in pursuance of what was said in the foregoing Psalm, that *the Lord reigneth*, and is king, not only over Israel, but all the earth, that one cannot but think they had the same author: who shows the truth of that by the illustrious victories which God, as their king, had given them over all those that opposed them. For the eighth verse makes it manifest that this Psalm hath respect to some conquests they had lately made over the heathen: which, I suppose, were no other than those which David won over divers nations; not long after (1 Chron. xviii. 1) he had brought the ark to Zion, and deli-

vered the foregoing hymn to be sung, to put the Israelites in hope, and their enemies in fear, of the great things which should ensue, upon this special presence of God among them.

Which moved the Greeks to call this *A Psalm of David*, after his land was restored unto him: that is, after he was made master of all those countries which God anciently designed to be the inheritance of Israel. For that it should relate to the restoring his kingdom to him after Absalom's rebellion, is not probable; because the mention of idolaters and of their gods, ver. 7. seems to determine it to other countries. In the subduing of which, God, it is likely, fought for them by some such tempest as we read of, 2 Sam. v. 20, 24, whereby their enemies' armies were shattered, and so terrified, that they not only fled, but left their images behind them (such was their haste), and gave the Israelites an easy victory over them.

But whatever was the carnal sense, it belongs, in the diviner meaning, to Christ's triumph over the grave, and all the powers of darkness, at his resurrection and ascension to his throne in heaven: as appears by those words which the apostle to the Hebrews alleges out of the seventh verse, and applies to Christ's royal power and authority over angels. Which the Hebrew doctors themselves, as Kimchi confesses, take to be there intended: and may be farther justified from that exposition which we meet withal in Midrasch Tenchuma, of the words of the prophet Isaiah, lii. 13, "Behold, my servant shall prosper: he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high." This is the king Messiah, says that gloss, who shall be exalted above Abraham, and extolled above Moses, and be very high above the angels of the ministry.

3 A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about.

4 His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled.

5 The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.

6 The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory.

7 Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him, all ye gods.

Ver. 1.] The Lord, it is manifest, is the sovereign of the world: under whose happy government, not only we, and they who are already become subject to him in other places, ought to rejoice; but the most distant countries have the greatest reason to be glad thereof.

Ver. 2.] His majesty is most dreadful; and hath appeared in great terror against those that oppose him: whom, as he will not wrong, so he will certainly punish; for he maintains his authority, and supports his government, by doing exact and equal justice.

Ver. 3.] Let none therefore resist him, for flames of fire proceed from his presence; which make the battle too hot for his enemies: who can turn no way but they feel them flashing in their faces.

Ver. 4.] It was his thunder and lightning, the brightness of which the world lately saw; and were so amazed, that shivering pains took hold upon them, as upon a woman in her travail.

Ver. 5.] The hearts of the stoutest kings and captains failed them; and melted like wax before the fire, at this terrible appearance of the Lord: at the appearance of him whose dominion extends over all the earth.

Ver. 6.] For he is the Lord of the heavens: which have declared, by this dreadful tempest (excited by his angelical ministers), his severity against his enemies; and made all the people sensible of the incomparable splendour of his majesty.

Ver. 7.] Which may well make them all ashamed (and they shall be confounded by him, if they will not renounce their errors) who worship graven images (though of gold and silver, 2 Sam. v. 21), and boast themselves in vain gods, who can do nothing for them: let all that are called gods, whether princes

8 Zion heard, and was glad; and the daughters of Judah rejoiced because of thy judgments. O Lord.

9 For thou, Lord, art high above all the earth: thou art exalted far above all gods.

10 Ye that love the Lord, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.

11 Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.

12 Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.

on earth, or angels in heaven, bow down to him, as the only saviour (Heb. i. 6), and acknowledge his supreme authority over them all.

Ver. 8.] Jerusalem, the mother-city, hath received the news of thy victories with a joyful heart: after whose example, all the other cities of Judah are exceeding glad, O Lord; because thou hast judged righteously, in destroying our idolatrous enemies, and defending thy faithful servants.

Ver. 9.] Whose hearts are filled with the greater joy, because thou, O Lord, hast manifested thyself hereby, to be the supreme and only potentate; who rulest over all the earth, and art infinitely superior to all that have the name of gods.

Ver. 10.] But do not content yourselves merely with this passion of joy: if you truly love the Lord, hate every thing which you know is displeasing to him: so shall you have the Lord of all things for your continual keeper; who preserves the lives of sincerely pious men, and watches over them with such a careful providence, that when they are in the power of the wicked, he will not suffer them to destroy them.

Ver. 11.] Be not discouraged, though the world should frown upon you; but rest assured that God designs you, in due time, more cheerful and happy days: which, if you continue faithful, and serve him with upright hearts, shall as certainly come as the corn at last springs up after it hath lain all winter in the ground.

Ver. 12.] Let all truly good men rely on this, and rejoice in their worst estate; that they serve such a gracious Lord: let them give thanks unto him for his benefits, and gratefully commemorate how kind and gracious he hath been unto them; that it may be kept in perpetual remembrance.

PSALM XCVIII.

A Psalm.

1 O SING unto the Lord a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.

2 The Lord hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen.

PSALM XCVIII.

ARGUMENT.—There is no title here but only this, *A Psalm*; to which the Greeks add, *of David*; who, it is very probable, was the author; or if he was not, it was made by some holy man, in imitation of what David saith in the ninety-sixth (of many of whose expressions this Psalm consists), upon occasion of some remarkable deliverance, which God had newly granted to Israel, as an earnest of future blessings; especially of the coming of that great blessing, the Lord Christ, to give complete salvation to his people.

Ver. 1.] O let the new and extraordinary benefits which the Lord hath bestowed upon us provoke you to sing praises unto him with fresh devotion: for he hath done stupendous things, and, by his almighty goodness alone, and incomparable strength, hath wrought salvation for those who were as unworthy to be helped by him, as they were unable to help themselves.

Ver. 2.] The Lord hath declared, by the wonders he hath done, how mighty he is to save and deliver: he made the gentile world apparently see that he is the just rewarder of all those who piously obey him; and will not let the wicked escape unpunished.

3 He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

4 Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise.

5 Sing unto the LORD with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm.

Ver. 3.] He hath not forgot his ancient covenant with our forefathers: but so faithfully performed what his mere mercy moved him to promise (Luke i. 54, 55, 72), that all mankind have seen what our gracious God hath done, and partake of his divine benefits.

Ver. 4.] Let them all therefore shout for joy; let them cry aloud, and with strong and cheerful voices sing hymns of thanks and praise unto the Lord.

Ver. 5.] Let nothing be wanting to express your joyful sense of the goodness of the Lord; but let the harp accompany your songs; let the sweet sound of the harp, I say, and the sound of your voices, be mixed together with your psalms.

Ver. 6.] And let the trumpet also and cornet proclaim with a louder sound the exceeding greatness of

6 With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the LORD, the King.

7 Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

8 Let the floods clap *their* hands: let the hills be joyful together

9 Before the LORD; for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity.

your joy; while you shout with triumphant acclamations to him, and acknowledge the Lord to be your King.

Ver. 7.] Let the noise of his praises be heard like thunder, throughout all the habitable world; both among those that live on the sea, and those that are upon the land.

Ver. 8.] Let high, as well as low, applaud their happiness, and join together with one consent, to express, by all the tokens of joy, the singular pleasure and satisfaction they feel in their hearts.

Ver. 9.] Let them meet the Lord with forward affections; who is coming to reform the earth: and will govern mankind by righteous and merciful laws; distributing to every man according to his work.

PSALM XCIX.

1 THE LORD reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth *between* the cherubims; let the earth be moved.

2 The LORD *is* great in Zion; and he *is* high above all the people.

3 Let them praise thy great and terrible name; for it *is* holy.

4 The king's strength also loveth judgment; thou dost establish equity, thou executest judgment and righteousness in Jacob.

PSALM XCIX.

ARGUMENT.—The Greeks entitle David to this Psalm: which seems to have been made upon the same occasion, and to the same end, with the three foregoing: only with these two differences; first, that from the consideration of the royal power of the Lord (who had manifested himself by some notable conquests over his enemies, to be the only monarch whose sovereignty extends over all the world), they should mix fear and trembling, together with that joy and exultation to which in the former Psalm he had excited them: and secondly, that he doth not so plainly, as in those Psalms, prophesy of the kingdom of the Lord Christ.

But there are many passages, as Theodoret observes, which may be applied to the appearing of our Saviour, and the infidelity of the Jews. St. Austin and St. Ambrose apply to him that passage, upon which the Roman church builds the lawfulness of worshipping images (ver. 5), where the Vulgar Latin reading, Adorate scabellum pedum ejus, "worship his footstool;" those two fathers think there is no way to reconcile this with that command, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve," but by expounding this of the *flesh* of Christ, which is the *footstool*, they say, which the psalmist exhorts all men to worship (so far were those holy men from allowing adoration to any thing that is not God, or hath not a personal union with him). And, indeed, Christ was represented by the ark; which was the divine footstool (here spoken of), but not to be adored, no more than the *hill* on which it stood: concerning which the psalmist speaks, in the last verse, just as he doth of the ark in this; and therefore we ought to un-

derstand both passages alike (the particle in the Hebrew being the very same before *footstool* and before *hill*), and translate them thus, worship *at*, or *before*, or *towards*, his footstool and holy hill: as elsewhere he speaks of worshipping towards his temple (cxxxviii. 2). And so Menochius very honestly here expounds this passage in these words: "Worship in his temple, turning your faces towards the ark, on which is the propitiatory, which is his footstool; since he sits on the wings of the cherubims."

Ver. 1.] Let the people fret and be tumultuous, if they please; it will do them no service: for the Lord is the supreme governor of the world, whether they will or no: and they had better, with a pious fear, submit themselves unto him; though the whole earth should be in an uproar, we are safe and secure; for the Lord is attended with innumerable heavenly ministers, who are a guard to his faithful worshippers.

Ver. 2.] The Lord, whose palace is in Zion, is transcendently great: there is no power on earth able to oppose him; who infinitely surpasses the united strength of all people.

Ver. 3.] Let them all therefore praise, and reverently acknowledge, thy mighty and dreadful majesty: for that alone is every way most excellent, and hath no equal; and therefore worthy of all veneration.

Ver. 4.] For, though none can resist him, yet he is not a king that uses his power to wrong or oppress his subjects; but to do them right, and give them relief, in which he delights: this is thy character, O Lord, who hast established most equal laws among us; and hitherto governed the seed of Jacob with exact justice and singular mercy.

5 Exalt ye the LORD our God, and worship at his footstool; for he is holy.

6 Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name; they called upon the LORD, and he answered them.

7 He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar:

Ver. 5.] Do you, therefore, above all other people, extol the Lord our God, both in your thoughts, affections and words; and, turning your faces towards the ark of his presence, prostrate yourselves before his majesty, in token of your absolute subjection to him: for he is incomparably above all other beings, and the proper object of your adoration.

Ver. 6.] Thus did Moses and Aaron, two of his principal and most famous ministers (Exod. xxxii. 11. Numb. xvi. 45, 46,) and thus did Samuel, one of his greatest prophets, that were wont to intercede for you (1 Sam. vii. 5, 9, xii. 19). These holy men fell down before him, to make their humble supplications to him; and he gave them what they desired.

Ver. 7.] He spake to them in a familiar manner, telling them his mind out of a pillar of cloud, wherein he appeared to them (Exod. xxxiii. 9, 10, Numb. xii. 5, xvi. 42, 1 Sam. iii. 10), and they, like faithful servants of his, conformed themselves to his precepts, by

they kept his testimonies, and the ordinance that he gave them.

8 Thou answerdest them, O LORD our God: thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions.

9 Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the LORD our God is holy.

which he testified his will to them; and worshipped him after that manner that he appointed them.

Ver. 8.] Whereby they obtained great favour with thee, O Lord our God: for when they prayed to thee thou fulfilledst their petitions: passing by, for their sakes, the sins of those who had highly offended thee; but taking a most severe vengeance on all those who contemned their authority, and were contriving how to depose them (Numb. xii. 2, 10, xvi. 3, 35, 1 Sam. viii. 7—9, &c.).

Ver. 9.] Imitate therefore the piety of those admirable men; and raise your thoughts, and affections, and voices, to extol and magnify the Lord our God, as much as you are able; for you can never do it enough: and in token of your absolute subjection to him, go and prostrate yourselves before him, at his house on the holy hill of Zion: for the Lord our God is incomparably above all other beings, and alone worthy of your adoration.

PSALM C.

A Psalm of praise.

1 MAKE a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands.

2 Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.

PSALM C.

ARGUMENT.—There is no other Psalm hath the like title with this; which is called *A Psalm of praise*: or rather of *thanksgiving*, and acknowledgment for divine blessings, as the word is translated below (ver. 4), and in most other places. For which reason, I suppose, it is, that the Hebrews imagine (as the Chaldee paraphrase, as well as others of their authors, tell us,) it was peculiarly appointed to be sung, when their sacrifices of thanksgiving were offered; mentioned Lev. vii. 12, 13. The companies also, or choirs of them, who gave thanks to God, are called by this name, Neh. xii. 31—38. Which makes it probable, that the Levites sung this song upon that occasion: which the Greeks think was made by David; who invites all the world to join with the Israelites, in the service of him, who was kind and gracious to them beyond expression. Accordingly we Christians now properly use it in acknowledgment of God's wonderful love to us in Christ: by whom we offer up continually spiritual sacrifices; for redeeming us by the sacrifice he made of himself; for making the world anew, and creating us again unto good works; according to his faithful promises, which we may depend upon for ever.

I do not know but the word *make* (ver. 3), may be used here as it is 1 Sam. xii. 6, for *advancing, raising, or preferring them* (as he is there said to have done Moses and Aaron); *making them to be what they then were*, a famous people, in a good land: which seems to agree best with the following

3 Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and

words, "and not we ourselves" (and therefore I have not omitted that sense). For to deny that we created ourselves, is altogether needless; but that it is not to be ascribed to our industry or wit, that we are raised to a happy condition, is a proper expression of humility.

Ver. 1.] Let all the people of the earth lift up their voices, in triumphant songs, to the honour of the Lord; who deserves all our praises.

Ver. 2.] Make the service of the Lord your delight, nay, greatest pleasure; and when you approach into his tabernacle, shout for joy that you are admitted into his blessed presence, to praise him with your cheerful hymns.

Ver. 3.] Consider that the Lord, whom you worship, is the creator and governor of the world; who gave us our being, and all the good things we enjoy: his we are, and by his power and goodness, not our own, we are become so great and mighty a nation! whom, out of his own mere good will alone, he hath made his peculiar people, of whom he takes a tender care.

Ver. 4.] When you enter therefore into the gates of his sanctuary, present him not merely with the sacrifices of beasts, but with the most acceptable sacrifice of hearty thanksgiving; and as you stand in his courts, attending on him, cease not to sing his praises: thank him, I say, for all his benefits, and praise his incomparable perfections.

Ver. 5.] For as his power is transcendent, so is his goodness; as appears by his never-failing bounty

into his courts with praise : be thankful unto him, and bless his name.

towards us, and his steadfast faithfulness to his word : for the mercy promised to our forefathers he hath

5 For the LORD is good, his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.

exactly fulfilled in our days ; and will continue to all succeeding generations.

PSALM CI.

A Psalm of David.

1 I WILL sing of mercy and judgment : unto thee, O LORD, will I sing.

2 I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt thou come unto me ? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.

3 I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes : I hate the work of them that turn aside ; it shall not cleave to me.

4 A froward heart shall depart from me : I will not know a wicked person.

5 Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off : him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer.

6 Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me : he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.

7 He that worketh deceit shall not dwell

PSALM CI.

ARGUMENT.—The title tells us who made this Psalm ; and the matter of it is so plain, that anybody may see it is a pious resolution of David to govern first himself, and then his court, and then his kingdom, with so much care, that the good might expect all favour from him, but no wicked man, of any sort, have the least countenance or encouragement.

The only difficulty is to know when he composed it ; whether before or after he was settled in his kingdom. The first words of it seem to countenance those who think he was possessed of it ; and newly entered upon the government ; which he thankfully acknowledges. But the words that follow (ver. 2), "O when wilt thou come unto me," seem to justify their opinion, who think he was now under Saul's persecution : yet, having confidence in God's promises (which he longed to see fulfilled), made this religious vow, of being a good king ; and proposed to himself an excellent form and manner of life, when God should be pleased to perform them. To reconcile both these, there is a middle way lies open to every one's view that reads this history. For upon the death of Saul, he was immediately promoted to the kingdom ; though not entirely ; but resolved then with himself how well he would govern ; when God should make him king over all Israel, as he had done over Judah. And so I shall order my paraphrase, supposing him to reign now in Hebron (2 Sam. ii. 1—4), and expecting to reign in Jerusalem (v. 3—5), which I presume he here calls the city of God (ver. 8), because there he intended to settle the ark, as well as to fix his court ; when he should be possessed of it.

That passage, indeed, hath induced some to think, that he composed this Psalm after he had made an attempt to bring the ark thither : but failing in it (2 Sam. vi. 9, 10), sighs here for its enjoyment. Which I shall not dispute, because I would not prolong this preface unnecessarily. It is sufficient in my judgment to say, that it doth not seem likely he would defer this resolution so long after he was installed in his kingdom. For it required time to prepare a place for the reception of the ark, suitable to the majesty it represented.

Ver. 1.] I will never forget, but celebrate with perpetual praises that mercy which hath raised me from

a low condition unto the throne ; and that just punishment which I see inflicted upon all my opposers : both which I ascribe, O Lord, to thee alone, and not to my virtue or valour ; and therefore to thee will I sing my grateful hymns.

Ver. 2.] Nor will I satisfy myself merely with songs of praise ; but study, with all diligence, integrity of life, and purity of manners : O when wilt thou perfect what thou hast begun for me, and settle me peaceably in my kingdom ? Then I shall be able to live more regularly than now in this state of war and confusion (2 Sam. iii. 1, 39), and so I resolve to do ; sincerely endeavouring to make myself an absolute pattern of piety and virtue to all my court.

Ver. 3.] No pretended reasons of state and politic ends shall make me so much as project any thing against the law, to which I will ever tie myself : for I abhor the practices of those who decline that rule, to pursue their own private desires ; no such corrupt principles shall be entertained in my mind.

Ver. 4.] I will turn him instantly out of my service, who shall dare to suggest to me any crooked counsels : I will have no familiarity with him, much less make him my favourite, who makes no conscience how he compasses his ends.

Ver. 5.] I will be so far from listening to their private whispers, who, by secret calumnies and detractions, endeavour to supplant their fellow-servants, that I will severely punish and banish them my court : nor will I endure those whose pride make them overlook all others, as if they were another sort of creatures ; or whose unsatiable covetousness and ambition make them study their own advancement more than the public good.

Ver. 6.] I will look out for trusty persons, men fearing God, and of clear integrity ; and in what part of the country soever I find them, make them of my privy-council : and no man shall bear any other office in my court but he that lives unblamably.

Ver. 7.] No subtle knave that is made up of shifts and tricks, or that devises cunning cheats to oppress my subjects shall remain in my service : though he have craftily got into it under a guise of simplicity, yet no false informer, flatterer, or any other sort of liar, shall continue in my favour.

Ver. 8.] As soon as ever I am settled in my throne, I will use my utmost diligence to reform the whole nation ; especially the place of thy peculiar residence, which ought to be an example to the rest of the king-

within my house : he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.

8 I will early destroy all the wicked of the

dom; taking care that all offenders be severely punished in the courts of justice: and, if there be no

land; that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the LORD.

other remedy, cutting off those evil members who have got an incurable habit of doing wickedly.

PSALM CII.

A Prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord.

1 HEAR my prayer, O LORD, and let my cry come unto thee.

2 Hide not thy face from me in the day when I am in trouble; incline thine ear unto me: in the day when I call answer me speedily.

3 For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth.

4 My heart is smitten, and withered like grass: so that I forget to eat my bread.

5 By reason of the voice of my groaning my bones cleave to my skin.

6 I am like a pelican of the wilderness: I am like an owl of the desert.

7 I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top.

8 Mine enemies reproach me all the day; and they that are mad against me are sworn against me.

9 For I have eaten ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping,

10 Because of thine indignation and thy wrath: for thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down.

11 My days are like a shadow that declineth; and I am withered like grass.

12 But thou, O LORD, shalt endure for ever; and thy remembrance unto all generations.

PSALM CII.

ARGUMENT.—A prayer composed by some pious person (towards the latter end of the captivity of Babylon, or rather presently after their return from thence to their own country, ver. 13, 14), who was extremely afflicted, and even overwhelmed, with grief and trouble, to see the temple still lie in its rubbish, and the rebuilding of it hindered by many enemies. This was the cause of those sad complaints and lamentations, wherein he takes the liberty to represent their condition unto the Lord, and thereby give some ease to his oppressed spirit: which began to lift up itself into some comfortable hopes, when he considered both the faithfulness of God to his promises, and the honour it would be to him, when the nations round about should see their wonderful restoration happily completed, and thereby be invited to embrace their religion. Which proved a lively emblem of the coming of the gentiles into the church of Christ: the eternity of whose kingdom is here prophesied of, in the conclusion of the Psalm. Which, as Theodoret well expresses it, may serve for any man's use, who wrestles with any great calamity, and implores the divine favour for his help and deliverance. It may be applied also to his sad condition, who groans under the burden of his sins, and cries for mercy: being the fifth among those seven which are called *penitential Psalms*.

Ver. 1.] Reject not my humble supplication, O LORD; but graciously admit the earnest request, which, with lamentable cries, I present unto thy majesty.

Ver. 2.] The distress wherein I am is exceeding great; which will move thee, I hope, to moderate thy anger, and not absolutely refuse my petition: but rather to grant me the more favourable audience, and to send me the speedier relief; when I implore it in the time of the sorest calamity.

Ver. 3.] For my days are spent as dismally as if I lived and breathed in smoke; and the anguish I suffer is so sharp, that it penetrates to my very bones,

and makes them as parched and dry as the fire doth the hearth.

Ver. 4.] My vital spirits are exhausted; and flag like the grass when it is struck with a pestilential blast: for, together with my appetite, I have lost even the thoughts of my necessary food.

Ver. 5.] Sadness hath seized on me to such a degree, that I do nothing but groan and sigh: which hath wasted me away to skin and bone.

Ver. 6.] I take no delight in the company of my friends; but seek for lonesome places, like a pelican in the wilderness; where I may bemoan myself like the bitter in the desert.

Ver. 7.] Grief and sorrow banish sleep from mine eyes; and make me like those solitary birds, which spend the night on the tops of houses, in doleful shrieks and cries.

Ver. 8.] This hath exposed me to the scorn of my enemies, who do nothing but upbraid me with my misery: and, not content therewith, are so furiously bent upon my ruin, that they have entered into a combination, and sworn they will destroy me.

Ver. 9.] Which hath still more increased my affliction, and made me lie down in the ashes: where, while I mourn and weep, they mingle themselves with my bread, as tears do with my drink.

Ver. 10.] Because thy anger still continues in great severity against us; for thou hadst lifted me up in glorious hopes (Ezra i. 5, ii. 68, iii. 10), thou hast dashed them all in pieces (Ezra iv. 4, 24), and thereby given me the sorer fall.

Ver. 11.] And whilst I wait for better times, my life declines apace; like a shadow, which, being come near to its utmost length, is ready to vanish: for I have very little strength remaining; but droop and languish like the dried grass; which is ripe for the mower's hand.

Ver. 12.] All my comfort is, that, though I die, thou abidest to all eternity; and canst hereafter remedy all these evils, which thou dost not think fit to redress at present: and wilt, I am confident; for all generations have transmitted down unto us the memorial of thy faithfulness, and the glorious things thou hast done for thy people.

13 Thou shalt arise, *and* have mercy upon Zion : for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come.

14 For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof.

15 So the heathen shall fear the name of the LORD, and all the kings of the earth thy glory.

16 When the LORD shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory.

17 He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.

18 This shall be written for the generation to come : and the people which shall be created shall praise the LORD.

19 For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary ; from heaven did the LORD behold the earth ;

20 To hear the groaning of the prisoner ; to loose those that are appointed to death.

21 To declare the name of the LORD in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem ;

22 When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the LORD.

23 He weakened my strength in the way ; he shortened my days.

24 I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days : thy years *are* throughout all generations.

25 Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth : and the heavens *are* the work of thy hands.

26 They shall perish, but thou shalt endure ; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment ; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed :

27 But thou *art* the same, and thy years shall have no end.

28 The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee.

Ver. 13.] It will not be long before thou dost take pity upon the desolations of Zion, and raise her out of her ruins : for the time prefixed for her punishment being expired (Jer. xxix. 10, 11), it is the season now, the appointed season, for thy mercy in her restoration.

Ver. 14.] For her scattered stones are far more dear to thy pious worshippers, than the goodliest palaces in Babylon : and therefore they cannot look upon her dust and rubbish, without the most sensible grief and commiseration.

Ver. 15.] Especially when they consider how thy glory suffers thereby : whereas the nations who now contemn thee, will stand in awe of thee ; O Lord, all their kings and princes will reverence thy glorious power, the fame of which now seems to lie buried in her ruins.

Ver. 16.] When they shall see Zion rebuilt (which the Lord alone can bring about), and his glorious majesty there worshipped with the ancient solemnities :

Ver. 17.] And the prayers of miserable captives, who were stripped of all, prevail with him not only for their liberty, but for their entire restitution to their former splendour.

Ver. 18.] This wonderful deliverance shall never be forgotten, but remain upon record to the following generation : who shall transmit the memory of it to their posterity, that they may also look upon themselves as a people created anew to praise the Lord.

Ver. 19.] Because, in much mercy, he hath been pleased to preserve a miserable nation from utter destruction : and though he be infinitely exalted above all our thoughts, yet the Lord hath graciously condescended to mind the afflicted condition of this distressed country.

Ver. 20.] And to be moved by our groans to deliver us out of a sad captivity : and to revive us when we had reason to look upon ourselves as dead and hopeless.

Ver. 21.] That we might go and recount in his temple the famous things which he hath done : and make the holy city sound with the praises of his

power, goodness, and truth ; which he hath declared in our restoration.

Ver. 22.] When all the people shall be gathered together, there to worship the divine majesty ; and other kingdoms join with us unanimously in his service.

Ver. 23.] I had hoped to have lived to see this blessed time, and thought I had been in the way to it (Ezra iii. 8, &c.) : but he hath stopped our vigorous beginnings (Ezra iv. 4), and thereby so sorely afflicted me, that I feel I am like to fall short of my expectations.

Ver. 24.] Though I prayed most earnestly to him, and said, O my God, who hast so graciously begun our deliverance, take me not away before it be completely finished ; but let me see thy promise fulfilled, which thou, who diest not (as we do), I am sure, wilt not fail to make good.

Ver. 25.] For it cannot be too hard for thee to raise Zion out of her ruins ; who hast, many ages ago, created this goodly fabric of heaven and earth by thy eternal word (Heb. i. 10).

Ver. 26.] And thou dost neither decay nor alter, in process of time, as thy creatures do ; some of which shall perish, but thou shalt eternally subsist ; all of them shall grow old, like our garments, with long wearing : even the heavens themselves, which now enwrap the earth, as our clothes do our bodies, shall be folded up (Heb. i. 12), and laid aside like a tattered garment, when thou shalt command that alteration.

Ver. 27.] But thou (and thy word) art still the very same ; and shall always continue so, without any the least variation.

Ver. 28.] Yet all that I conclude from hence is only this : that though I do not live to see our perfect restoration, yet, according to thy unalterable purpose, the temple and Jerusalem shall be rebuilt ; and the children of thy servants, who now are in great distress, be peaceably settled there ; yea, their posterity after them remain unmoved in their favour, and enjoy the tokens of thy divine presence among them.

PSALM CIII.

A Psalm of David.

1 BLESS the LORD, O my soul : and all that is within me, *bless* his holy name.

2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits :

3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities ; who healeth all thy diseases ;

4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction ; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies ;

5 Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things ; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

6 The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.

7 He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.

8 The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.

9 He will not always chide : neither will he keep *his anger* for ever.

10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins ; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.

12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

PSALM CIII.

ARGUMENT.—The title tells us this Psalm is one of David's : and the third, fourth, and fifth verses may satisfy us that he composed it after his recovery from a dangerous sickness, to such a vigorous health as the eagles have when they renew their plumes. To that he alludes, ver. 5, as Euthymius and St. Jerome understand it. The latter of which says upon Isa. xl. that he had often taught, the eagles do no other way return to youthfulness when they are old, but only mutatione penarum, " by change of their feathers." I have expressed this a little more largely than ordinary, in the paraphrase (as I have done in the rest of the Psalm), to fit it the better to their use now that have escaped the like danger : who should take occasion, when they thank God for such a blessing, to imitate David : in making a thankful commemoration of the rest of his mercies, both to him and to others ; both in the present and in past ages. And the more to excite devout souls to this, and that I might make their thankfulness the more affectionate (if they please to make use of this hymn for that purpose), I have oft repeated the beginning of the Psalm, which I think refers to the whole : and likewise put it into a little different form (of a soul actually praising God), without the least alteration of the sense.

Ver. 1.] Blessed, for ever blessed, be the Lord of life and health, and all other blessings ; blessed be his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness : with my whole heart do I bless him ; with my most ardent love, and the devoutest affections of my soul.

Ver. 2.] Which shall be every day thus employed, and praise his name with continual pleasure : I will never forget (how shouldst thou prove so ungrateful, O my soul ! as not) to acknowledge the inestimable benefits I have received from his bounty ; which are more than thought can number.

Ver. 3.] More particularly, I render thee, O Lord, my most hearty thanks, for thy late mercies vouchsafed to me : blessed be thy merciful kindness, that, after a short correction for my faults, thou hast graciously pardoned them ; and healed all the sores and grievous wounds which they had made.

Ver. 4.] Blessed be God, who hath saved me from death ; and not only spared my life, but surrounded it most graciously with I know not how many benefits ; which make it exceeding delightful to me. [I owe my friends, lovers, and acquaintance, my careful at-

tendants, my warm and quiet habitation, the plentiful estate thou hast given me, the liberal provision thou makest for me, with all the rest of thy mercies to the bowels of thy tender compassions towards me.]

Ver. 5.] Blessed be thy almighty goodness, that my mouth (which lately disgusted all things, or was restrained from what it desired, or was prescribed that which was disgusting to it) can now relish its food again ; and is satisfied with many good things ; I can never sufficiently bless thy goodness, who by this means dost restore my strength, and makest my youth and freshness return like the eagle's. [O that I may with fresh delight and joy be still praising thee ! and be lifted up to heaven (as they are when they have renewed their plumes), in more vigorous love, and affectionate desires and endeavours ; to employ all my renewed strength in thy faithful service.]

Ver. 6.] Nor am I alone obliged to my gracious Lord for his singular favour to me : but, blessed be his name, he relieves all those who suffer wrong ; and doth justice upon their oppressors, who are too mighty for them.

Ver. 7.] Moses and the rest of our forefathers are witnesses of this : whom the Lord delivered, in a stupendous manner, out of the house of bondage.

Ver. 8.] And by other methods of his providence towards them, and dealing with them, declared how bountiful his blessed nature is, and how ready to forgive : forbearing long when men deserve to be punished ; and soon releasing them from their pain, when they heartily repent of their folly.

Ver. 9.] He doth not love, blessed be his name, to be always chastising us for our faults : and when he doth chastise us, he neither loves to prolong our miseries, nor to inflict them proportionable to our deserts.

Ver. 10.] No, blessed be his holy name, there is mercy even in our punishments : our sufferings are never so great as our sins ; but we might justly suffer a great deal more than we do for our faults.

Ver. 11.] And were we never so obedient, there is not a greater disproportion between the vast circumference of the heavens and this little spot of earth, than there is between his mercies towards us and our small services.

Ver. 12.] To those mercies alone it is to be ascribed, that we are not bemoaning ourselves under innumerable miseries : but he hath quite taken away his wrath from us ; and, adored be his goodness, perfectly remitted the punishment due to our manifold offences.

13 Like as a father pitieth *his* children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.

14 For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we *are* dust.

15 *As for* man, his days *are* as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.

16 For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.

17 But the mercy of the LORD *is* from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children;

Ver. 13.] O what bowels of mercy are these! no father can be more indulgent and tender-hearted to his returning children, than the Lord, blessed be his name, is to those who so reform by his chastisements, as to fear hereafter to offend him.

Ver. 14.] He easily relents, and takes compassion on them: considering how frail he hath made them; and how soon of themselves they will moulder into the dust, out of which he took them.

Ver. 15.] For what is man, that the Almighty should contend with him? He looks fresh and fair; but, alas! is as feeble as the grass, and as a flower in the field; whose beauty is far greater than its strength.

Ver. 16.] Many accidents snatch him away, even in his prime: just as the biting wind, to which the field-flowers are exposed, blasts them on a sudden, and they spring up no more in the place that was adorned with them.

Ver. 17.] O how much doth this magnify the wonderful mercy of our God! who designs to be everlastingly kind (blessed be his goodness) to such short-lived creatures as we are: rewarding the faithful services of a few years with eternal life to ourselves; and with many blessings to our posterity in future generations.

Ver. 18.] There is no doubt of this; which hath been verified in those who have sincerely kept their

18 To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.

19 The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.

20 Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearken-
ing unto the voice of his word.

21 Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.

22 Bless the LORD, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the LORD, O my soul.

faith with him; and not only promised, but constantly performed, the obedience they owed him.

Ver. 19.] For none can under thee, O most mighty Lord, from being as kind as thou, please: who art the universal monarch; the blessed and only potentate; to whom, not only the greatest men on earth, but the highest powers in heaven, are subject.

Ver. 20.] Let the angels, therefore, who know his greatness, power, and gracious providence, better than I, bless his holy name: let those mighty ones, whose strength surpasses all the powers on earth, and yet never dispute his sacred commands, give praise unto him, with all their might; and with the same cheerfulness wherewith they obey his word.

Ver. 21.] Let the whole company of heaven, all the several hosts of those glorious creatures, who have been employed by his majesty so many ways for our good, and understand how much we are beholden to his love, speak good of his name, and bless his mercy, both to themselves and unto us.

Ver. 22.] Yea, let every creature, throughout the wide world, proclaim, as well as it is able, the loving-kindness of the Lord: let none of them be silent, but all with one consent bless his holy name: and thou, O my soul, be sure thou never forget to make one; O fall not to bear thy part in this joyful choir, that daily sing his praise.

PSALM CIV.

1 BLESS the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty.

2 Who coverest *thyself* with light as *with* a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain:

PSALM CIV.

The foregoing and the following Psalm being certainly composed by David, the Greeks, and from them several other ancient interpreters, have ascribed this also to the same author. For which they had this farther reason, that it begins (as Aben Ezra observes) just as the foregoing Psalm ends: and celebrates the mighty power and goodness of God in the fabric of the world; as the hundred and third doth his benefits to himself, and to the rest of the children of men.

As for the occasion of it, we may look upon it as a probable opinion, that when David thought of building a house for the divine service, and God sent Nathan to forbid him (2 Sam. vii. 5), he fell not long after into the contemplation of the majesty of God; who, having built this great world as his temple, needed none of his erecting; though he would be pleased to accept one for the burning sacrifice before him, as Solomon afterward speaks (2 Chron. ii. 6). To strengthen this conjecture of

mine, it may be observed, that he begins this Psalm with such an admiration of God's most excellent perfection, as we meet withal in David's prayer: immediately after God had certified him of his love towards him, though he would not let him build him a house (2 Sam. vii. 22): "Thou art great, O Lord, for there is none like unto thee." In the same manner he saith here, "O Lord my God, thou art very great:" as he proceeds to demonstrate from his wonderful works. And first he begins with the heavens, the clouds, and the angels; and then comes down to the earth, the sea, the mountains, valleys, fountains, and other inferior things: which depend so much upon the sun, the moon, and heavenly bodies, that all of them together declare the most admirable wisdom of him by whom they were composed; and should excite all mankind to his perpetual praises. Which that we may do the more affectionately, when we use this hymn, I have often repeated the beginning of it, as I did in the foregoing.

3 Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind:

4 Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire:

5 Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever.

6 Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment: the waters stood above the mountains.

7 At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away.

8 They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou hast founded for them.

9 Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth.

10 He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills.

Ver. 1.] Stir up thyself, O my soul, with all thy might, to meditate the praises of the Lord. For the highest of all our thoughts are infinitely below thy greatness, O Lord, my most gracious God: who hast shown in thy most admirable works, the surpassing excellence of thy majesty; which we can never worthily celebrate with all our praises.

Ver. 2.] The light, which dazzles our eyes with its splendour, is the royal robe, wherein thy invisible and incomprehensible brightness appears unto us: and the spacious heavens are the royal pavilion, which thy sovereign power hath extended, like a canopy, for thy majesty, in this great palace of the world.

Ver. 3.] The floor of whose chambers, which the Lord hath laid in the upper region of the air; O how highly is it advanced above the top of the stately piles that are raised by earthly monarchs! whose pompous chariots (whereof they boast) fall infinitely short of those glorious clouds, wherein he makes himself present to us; as their swiftest horses are slow-paced, in comparison with the quick motion, more speedy than the wind, wherewith he visits every part of his dominion.

Ver. 4.] Into which he sends his angels (and what king is there that hath such noble ministers?) sometimes in vehement winds, and sometimes in lightning, and thunder, whereby they execute his royal pleasure.

Ver. 5.] Who hath settled the massy globe of the earth even in the liquid air, upon such firm foundations, that none of those storms and tempests, which beat upon it from without, nor any commotions from within, can ever stir it out of the place he hath fixed for it.

Ver. 6.] It was all covered over at the first with waters (Gen. i. 2), which were so deep, that there was no appearance of the highest mountains.

Ver. 7.] Till thy omnipotent word charged them to retire (Gen. i. 9), at which they started back, and suddenly shrunk away; as an affrighted slave doth, when he hears the thunder of his master's threatenings, if his commands be not obeyed.

Ver. 8.] Immediately the dry land was seen; part of which (by thy wonderful contrivance, O Lord) rose up in lofty hills, and the rest sunk down in lowly valleys; where thou hast cut channels for the waters to run into the main ocean; the place thou hast appointed for them.

Ver. 9.] And there, though they restlessly toss and swell, yet they cannot get over the shores, wherein

11 They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst.

12 By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches.

13 He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.

14 He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth;

15 And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart.

16 The trees of the Lord are full of sap; the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted;

17 Where the birds make their nests: as for the stork, the fir trees are her house.

18 The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats; and the rocks for the conies.

thou hast enclosed them: nor shall they recover their former liberty, to overflow the earth again.

Ver. 10.] But still, such is the admirable providence of the Lord, they climb, through the hollow places of the earth, up the steepest parts of it; and there break out in springs: which fall down into the valleys, to make brooks and rivers, that run between the hills; which, on either side, send into them fresh supplies to enlarge their streams.

Ver. 11.] Which afford, not only to us, but to all the beasts of the earth, such abundant refreshment, when they are dry; that even the dull asses, who live in parched deserts, find them out to quench their thirst.

Ver. 12.] The birds of the air also delight to resort thither; where, having wet their throats, they sit and chant the various notes among the thick boughs of the trees, which grow upon the banks.

Ver. 13.] As for the hills, which constantly thus enrich the lower grounds, he waters them from the regions above; whence dews distil, and showers of rain come pouring down, by thy marvellous contrivance, O Lord, unto the satisfaction of them, and of all the rest of the earth.

Ver. 14.] O bless the Lord, my soul, who by this means provideth the beasts with grass and hay, and us with all variety of herbs, and roots, and fruit, and pulse, which he causes to sprout out of the earth, that we may never want what is necessary for our food, or for our physic.

Ver. 15.] But rather take our pleasure and delight in the rich wines, which he produces to cheer the drooping spirits of miserable men; together with oil to anoint their heads; and bread to recruit their strength, when it is spent with toil and labour.

Ver. 16.] Blessed be the Lord, who by this means also supplies, with abundant nourishment, the largest trees, which are not planted by the art, nor watered by the care of man, but by his almighty providence: who makes whole forests of them grow, as the cedars in Lebanon do, even upon the most barren and stony mountains.

Ver. 17.] In these trees the birds, both small and great, build themselves convenient habitations; and some of them (as the stork, for instance, who seats her nest on the top of lofty pines, and fir-trees) with admirable artifice.

Ver. 18.] And with no less safety the wild goats deposit their young, in the tops of those craggy mountains; whither they can climb as easily as the birds fly to the tops of trees: and other feeble creatures

19 He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down.

20 Thou makest darkness, and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth.

21 The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God.

22 The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens.

23 Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening.

24 O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.

25 So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.

26 There go the ships: *there is* that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein.

27 These wait all upon thee; and thou makest give *them* their meat in due season.

creep into the rocks, and there lie secure from the violence that stronger beasts would offer to them.

Ver. 19.] By his most wise contrivance the moon hath her full and her wane; and the sun doth not always shine, but observes a constant time for its going down.

Ver. 20.] And then darkness covering the face of the earth, and inviting us to rest, gives the wolves and other wild beasts of the forest (such is thy care, O Lord, of all creatures), who were afraid to venture abroad before, security and confidence, to come out of their lurking-places, and seek their food.

Ver. 21.] Which the ravening young lions then meet withal; falling upon their prey with a horrible noise; whereby they express the eagerness of their hunger; which is not so sharp and devouring, but by the divine providence, it finds full satisfaction before the morning.

Ver. 22.] When the sun again appearing, and rousing us out of our sleep, they all return with one consent, and lay themselves down in their several dens.

Ver. 23.] And so man, refreshed by the night's repose, goes forth, without any danger, about his business in the fields: and continues his labours till the night calls him to rest again.

Ver. 24.] O eternal Lord! how many and how great are thy works! and with what admirable wisdom hast thou contrived them all! If we look no farther than this earth, what astonishing variety of good things do we behold, wherewith thy bounty hath enriched it!

Ver. 25.] And this great and spacious sea also, which seems to embrace the earth in its arms, is no less full of thy wonderful works: for there swim fish without number; some of which astonish us as much with the art thou hast shown in their small bodies, as others do with their prodigious greatness of their bulk.

Ver. 26.] There the ships sail as swiftly as the fishes swim; fetching us the riches both of sea and land: and there that great leviathan (in forming whom thou hast shown thy mighty power) finds room enough to tumble up and down, and sport himself in his absolute dominion over all that the sea contains.

Ver. 27.] O how liberal is thy goodness, which provides convenient sustenance for such a vast world of creatures! Every one of which, though they know not their benefactors, are duly and seasonably supplied, with the food they seek, by the care thou takest of them.

28 That thou givest them they gather; thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good.

29 Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.

30 Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.

31 The glory of the LORD shall endure for ever: the LORD shall rejoice in his works.

32 He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: he toucheth the hills, and they smoke.

33 I will sing unto the LORD as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.

34 My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the LORD.

35 Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless thou the LORD, O my soul. Praise ye the LORD.

Ver. 28.] For they only gather what thou, without any care of theirs, dispensest to them: and thou art not sparing of thy blessings; but hast made a most plentiful provision, which thou scatterest everywhere for them.

Ver. 29.] If it fail at any time, by the suspense of thy heavenly influences, all things look most ruefully: they grow weak, nay, die; and are dissolved into the elements out of which they were made.

Ver. 30.] But then thou sendest forth again thy quickening power; whereby new ones are produced, in the room of those that are dead: just as the earth after a sharp winter hath made it bare, looks fresh and green again at the return of the spring.

Ver. 31.] Thus the world is still as full as ever it was: and all future ages shall praise, as well as we, the same power, and wisdom, and goodness, of the Lord: which appears so gloriously in all his works, that he himself is still pleased, and delighted in the continuance of them; as he was at first in their contrivance (Gen. i. 31).

Ver. 32.] Else they would all soon vanish, and come to nothing: for at his presence the very earth trembles; and the mountains, as our fathers saw at mount Sinai, are full of fire and smoke.

Ver. 33.] I will never cease therefore to sing the praises of the Lord; who, as he created, so supports and maintains the whole fabric of heaven and earth, and all the creatures contained in them: and I will never forget his particular kindness to me, among the rest; but acknowledge to my very last breath the innumerable benefits I have received from his bounty.

Ver. 34.] With such affection will I praise him, that all my thankful meditations and discourses shall be, I hope, no less pleasing to him, than they shall be to myself: who will take the highest satisfaction in thinking and speaking of the goodness of the Lord; from whom I shall still receive more abundant cause to rejoice in him.

Ver. 35.] But as for them, whose only pleasure it is to satisfy their brutish lusts, and abuse the many good things they enjoy (either denying, or never acknowledging, him who is the donor of them), they shall utterly perish, and be no longer the care of that providence to which they are so ungrateful; O my soul, never imitate their impiety, or negligence; but be excited thereby to the greater diligence; in praising thy great creator and benefactor. And let all those who have any sense of him, stir up themselves, and join with me in his praises.

PSALM CV.

1 O GIVE thanks unto the LORD: call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people.

2 Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works.

3 Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD.

4 Seek the LORD, and his strength: seek his face evermore.

5 Remember his marvellous works that he hath done; his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth;

6 O ye seed of Abraham his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen.

7 He is the LORD our God: his judgments are in all the earth.

8 He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations.

9 Which covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac;

10 And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant:

11 Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance:

12 When they were but a few men in number; yea, very few, and strangers in it.

PSALM CV.

ARGUMENT.—Though this Psalm hath no title, yet we are assured by what we read in 1 Chron. xvi. 8, &c. that the first part of it, at least (to the end of ver. 15), was made by David; and delivered by him to Asaph and his brethren, for the constant service of God in the tabernacle: when, after several victories over the Philistines (1 Chron. xiv.), he had settled the ark of God in Zion. And it is most probable that he afterward enlarged this Psalm (for who else would adventure to do it)? that it might be a more complete commemoration of all the mercies of God towards their nation, from the days of Abraham to their taking possession of the land of Canaan. Into which he shows their glorious Lord conducted them by so many miraculous providences, in several ages (according to his faithful promise made to Abraham, his faithful servant), that it deserved their most hearty acknowledgments: to which he excites them, by ten several expressions, in the first five verses of the Psalm.

To which the Greeks prefix a hallelujah (for they take the last word of the foregoing Psalm, and set it on the head of this), as a note how much they were obliged to praise the Lord, according to that exhortation; when they remembered in this Psalm the benefits that he had bestowed upon their forefathers: which were sufficient to excite and whet their minds to the imitation of their virtue.

And it may serve to admonish the new people of God (as Theodoret speaks), that is, as Christians, how much we ought to rejoice in God's goodness to us; and how dangerous it is to be ungrateful to him: which provoked him to deprive the Jews of that fatherly care which he had taken of their ancestors.

Ver. 1.] Stir up yourselves, all ye that are here assembled, to make your most grateful acknowledgments unto the great Lord, who is pleased to come and dwell among you: never approach his presence to make your petitions to him, but join his praises together with them; and proclaim to all the people round about, what great things he hath done for you and for your forefathers.

Ver. 2.] Sing his praise with a cheerful voice, and with all the instruments of music: and let the subject of your hymns, and of your ordinary discourse, be his many marvellous acts, of which let not one be forgotten.

Ver. 3.] For nothing can be so great an honour to you, as that you are servants of such a mighty Lord; who infinitely transcends all other beings: triumph,

therefore, and make your boast of this, as a greater happiness than all worldly goods; let it fill the hearts of all his faithful worshippers with the highest joy and gladness.

Ver. 4.] Let it encourage them to address themselves unto him upon all occasions; and prostrating themselves before the ark of his presence (2 Chron. vi. 41), commend themselves to his powerful protection; let them unweariedly seek his favour, and implore his gracious assistance.

Ver. 5.] Which you may, with the greater confidence, expect, if you call to mind, and thankfully commemorate, the marvellous things he hath done for your deliverance; and his terrible execution (Exod. iii. 20), according to his just sentence passed (Exod. vii. 4), upon your enemies.

Ver. 6.] The benefit of which you still enjoy, O ye who are the posterity of his servant Abraham (whose faith and obedience you ought to imitate); the children of Jacob, whom he chose (rejecting Esau) to inherit the promised blessing.

Ver. 7.] He is still the same mighty Lord, and our most gracious God; who continues to execute his judgments everywhere upon our enemies (2 Sam. v. 7, 10, 17, &c.), and therefore let us never cease to praise him, and cheerfully serve him, and faithfully depend upon him.

Ver. 8.] For he is never unmindful of his engagements to us; but punctually performs, in all ages, what he hath promised in his covenant.

Ver. 9.] Which he first solemnly made (Gen. xv. 17, 18), and then swore (xxii. 16), unto Abraham: and renewed with his son Isaac; to whom he promised to perform that oath, which he swore unto Abraham, (Gen. xxvi. 3).

Ver. 10.] And again confirmed it to Jacob, both when he went to Haran (Gen. xxviii. 13, &c.), and at his return, when he changed his name into Israel (xxxv. 10, &c.); and, at last, passed into a law, in that covenant which he made with their posterity (Exod. xxiii. 22, 23, 31, 32), never to be altered, if they keep their covenant with him.

Ver. 11.] The sum of which was this; I bestow upon thee, and will bring thee into that good land, the land of Canaan: which according to this faithful covenant, you now possess; as by lot it was distributed to your several tribes, for their inheritance (Josh. xiv. 1, 2).

Ver. 12.] This covenant he began to make with your forefathers (and showed his intention to perform it, by his singular care over them), when their family was very small (Gen. xii. 1, 5), and consequently so weak, that they might easily have been destroyed in

13 When they went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people;

14 He suffered no man to do them wrong: yea, he reproved kings for their sakes;

15 *Saying*, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.

16 Moreover he called for a famine upon the land: he brake the whole staff of bread.

17 He sent a man before them, *even* Joseph, *who* was sold for a servant:

18 Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron:

19 Until the time that his word came: the word of the Lord tried him.

20 The king sent and loosed him; *even* the ruler of the people, and let him go free.

21 He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance:

the land were they were strangers (xxiii. 4), and had no friends nor allies to support them:

Ver. 13.] Nor any settled habitation; but were forced to wander to and fro, from one part of Canaan into another (Gen. xii. 6, 8, 9), and then to sojourn in other kingdoms; sometimes in Egypt (ver. 10), sometimes in Gerar (xx. 1, xxvi. 1), and sometimes in the eastern country from whence they came (xxix. 1).

Ver. 14.] And wheresoever they sojourned, he took them into his protection, and suffered no man to do them any injury (Gen. xxxi. 24, 42), but gave severe checks even to the king of Egypt (xii. 16), and the king of Gerar (xx. 3, &c.), to prevent the mischief which they were designing to them.

Ver. 15.] For he told them, these were sacred persons, whom he designed to make greater men than themselves, and therefore charged them not to hurt them; but to honour them, not merely as princes (Gen. xxiii. 6), but as prophets (xx. 7), by whose prayers they should receive great blessings if they were kind to them.

Ver. 16.] And when in the days of Jacob, he punished the land of Canaan, as well as other countries, with such a dearth (Gen. xli. 54, &c.), that the earth brought forth no kind of grain for the support of human life:

Ver. 17.] He took a special care, in a most wonderful way, to provide both for him and for his family; for Joseph (whom his brethren first conspired to destroy, but afterward were diverted from their purpose, and only sold for a slave) was brought into Egypt, by the secret counsel of God (Gen. xiv. 5, 7, &c.), to be the instrument of their preservation.

Ver. 18.] He was oppressed, indeed, for a long time by a most grievous calumny: which was a sorer affliction to him than the chains and fetters that were, at first, laid upon him in prison.

Ver. 19.] Till mention at last was made of him to Pharaoh, by one of his officers: who related how exactly Joseph predicted what had befallen him and another of his fellow-servants; as if he were a man inspired (Gen. xl. 21, 22, xli. 12, 13).

Ver. 20.] Whereupon the king presently sent for him (Gen. xli. 14): that great prince, whose dominion extended over many provinces, and commanded him to be set at liberty.

Ver. 21.] And received such satisfaction from him about his dream, which none of his wise men could interpret, that he not only wholly discharged him from his imprisonment, but made him the chief officer in the court: and, under himself, the supreme governor of his whole kingdom (Gen. xli. 40, 41).

22 To bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom.

23 Israel also came into Egypt; and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham.

24 And he increased his people greatly; and made them stronger than their enemies.

25 He turned their heart to hate his people, to deal subtly with his servants.

26 He sent Moses his servant; and Aaron whom he had chosen.

27 They shewed his signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham.

28 He sent darkness, and made it dark; and they rebelled not against his word.

29 He turned their waters into blood, and slew their fish.

30 Their land brought forth frogs in abundance, in the chambers of their kings.

Ver. 22.] Yea, intrusted him with an absolute power to command all the rulers of his several provinces, what he pleased: and to punish their disobedience according to his discretion: the most ancient and wisest counsellors in the realm were ordered to repair to him, and to do nothing without his instructions (Gen. xli. 44).

Ver. 23.] By which great authority he procured not only the leave, but the invitation of Pharaoh (Gen. xlv. 16, 17, &c.), to his father, to come and bring all his family with him into Egypt; and accordingly he came and dwelt in the best part of all the country (xli. 26, 27).

Ver. 24.] Where, according to his promise, when he bade Jacob accept that invitation (Gen. xlv. 3, 4), the Lord multiplied them exceedingly (Exod. i. 7), and made them mightier than the Egyptians (ver. 9), who, of friends, were now become their enemies.

Ver. 25.] For the kinder God was to the Israelites, and the more he increased their numbers, the greater jealousy it begat in the hearts of the Egyptians: which turned at last into an absolute hatred of them; and provoked their malice to invent the cruellest ways, first to diminish (Exod. i. 10, 11, &c.), and then to destroy them (ver. 15, 16).

Ver. 26.] This moved the divine compassion, when he saw their oppression grew intolerable, to give commission to Moses, whom he had in an extraordinary manner preserved from perishing (Exod. iii. 13), and to Aaron, whom he chose to be his assistant (iv. 15), to go and demand their liberty of Pharaoh (iv. 23, v. 1).

Ver. 27.] And he disputing their commission (and refusing to let Israel go), they proved it, and persuaded him to obey it, by many miraculous works: which God commanded them to do, as tokens that he had sent them.

Ver. 28.] Among which the pitchy darkness, which overspread the whole land three days (except only where the Israelites dwelt), was a very remarkable punishment of Pharaoh's blindness: who would not see the hand of God in all those other plagues, which Moses and Aaron, not fearing his displeasure, but pursuing their orders, had inflicted on him.

Ver. 29.] As, first of all, the Lord commanded them to stretch their hand upon all the waters of Egypt; which he turned into blood: and made them so putrid that the fish which was in the river died (Exod. vii. 20, 21).

Ver. 30.] And, at the next stroke, produced such a vast number of frogs out of the stinking waters and mud, that not only the whole earth was covered with

31 He spake, and there came divers sorts of flies, *and lice* in all their coasts.

32 He gave them hail for rain, *and flaming fire* in their land.

33 He smote their vines also and their fig trees; and brake the trees of their coasts.

34 He spake, and the locusts came, and caterpillars, and that without number.

35 And did eat up all the herbs in their land, and devoured the fruit of their ground.

36 He smote also all the firstborn in their land, the chief of all their strength.

37 He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and *there was* not one feeble person among their tribes.

38 Egypt was glad when they departed: for the fear of them fell upon them.

39 He spread a cloud for a covering; and fire to give light in the night.

40 *The people* asked, and he brought quails, and satisfied them with the bread of heaven.

41 He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out; they ran in the dry places *like* a river.

42 For he remembered his holy promise, *and Abraham* his servant.

43 And he brought forth his people with joy, *and his chosen* with gladness:

44 And gave them the lands of the heathen: and they inherited the labour of the people;

45 That they might observe his statutes, and keep his laws. Praise ye the Lord.

them, but no house, no room in their houses, no, not the cabinets of their king and his princes, were free from their annoyance (Exod. viii. 3—6).

Ver. 31.] And then followed an infinite swarm of the most pestilent sort of flies (see Ps. lxxviii. 45), after a troublesome and filthy plague of lice, which had infested all the country (Exod. viii. 17, 24).

Ver. 32.] Which was succeeded (after a murrain upon their cattle, and a fiery ulcer on their own bodies) by a dreadful storm of hail (when fruitful showers of rain were most desirable), together with such lightning, as was never seen: for it ran upon the ground, and burnt up all that was not destroyed by the hail (Exod. ix. 23, 24, &c.).

Ver. 33.] Which not only struck down the grapes and the figs; but shattered the vines and fig-trees themselves: together with many other fruit-trees in the land.

Ver. 34.] And whatsoever escaped this tempestuous storm (for some things were not then grown up, Exod. ix. 31), was, not long after, devoured by an innumerable army of various sorts of locusts (Exod. x. 4, 12, &c.).

Ver. 35.] Which, by his command, came and covered the whole face of the country, eating up the very leaves of the trees, as well as all the grass and herbs upon the ground (Exod. x. 15).

Ver. 36.] And, at last he finished these plagues in the slaughter of all their first-born, both of man and beast: the angel of the Lord killing, in one and the same night (Exod. xii. 29), the principal prop of every family: and the best of all their flocks and their herds.

Ver. 37.] Which terrible destruction so affrighted them, that they not only let Israel go, but were forward to thrust them out of Egypt, and that loaded with silver and gold (Exod. xii. 31—35), and, which is very wonderful among so many thousand persons (ver. 37), there was not one, at that time, so feeble, as to be unable to travel.

Ver. 38.] And great was the joy at their departure; not only among the Israelites, but among the Egyptians: who thought themselves not safe till the Israelites had their liberty; but were in dread of another plague, which they thought might kill them, as the former had done their children (Exod. xii. 33).

Ver. 39.] Nor did the divine providence desert our fathers after it had brought them out of Egypt; but, lest they should suffer any prejudice by the exceeding great heats, or mistake their way in a desolate wilderness, he defended them in the day from the scorching rays of the sun by a cloud; which itself gave them light to comfort, and (if need were) to guide them in the night (Exod. xiii. 21, 22).

Ver. 40.] He provided also a delicate food for that vast multitude; even when they were so ungrateful as to murmur against him (Exod. xvi. 12, &c.), sending them, in the evening, such flights of quails, and in the morning such showers of corn out of the clouds, as abundantly satisfied every one of them.

Ver. 41.] And when they murmured again for want of drink (Exod. xvii. 2—6), he was so kind as to stop their complaints, by making water to spring out of a rock: from whence it gushed so constantly, and in such abundance, that it made a stream; which followed them in all the parched grounds through which they marched.

Ver. 42.] For the Lord was resolved punctually to perform his promise, passed in former ages (Gen. xv. 18, Exod. ii. 24), which made him reward the fidelity of his servant Abraham; even upon his incredulous posterity; at that very time which he had prefixed for it (Gen. xv. 13; Exod. xii. 41).

Ver. 43.] When, with much mirth and joy, he brought his people out of the Egyptian bondage; and made them shont to see the difference he made between them and the Egyptians; who were drowned in the Red sea; while they were conducted safe through it on dry land (Exod. xv. 1, 13, 19).

Ver. 44.] And in conclusion, he cast out seven nations, to make room for them in the land of Canaan: where their posterity took possession of cities and towns, fields and vineyards; which the labour of others had built and planted for them (Deut. vi. 10, 11; Josh. xxiv. 13).

Ver. 45.] That they might have the more leisure to purge the country of all its ancient superstition and filthiness: and set themselves heartily to worship God, after that manner that he had prescribed; in a strict observance of all the rest of his holy laws.—For which, and all other his benefits, excite yourselves to praise the Lord.

PSALM CVI.

Hallelujah, i. e. Praise the Lord.

1 PRAISE ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

2 Who can utter the mighty acts of the LORD? who can shew forth all his praise?

3 Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times.

4 Remember me, O LORD, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation;

5 That I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance.

6 We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly.

PSALM CVI.

ARGUMENT.—There is little doubt to be made, but this is the title of the Psalm, as it is of many other (cxl. &c.), whereby the author excites them to acknowledge God's bounty to their ungrateful forefathers. For as, in the foregoing Psalm (they are the words of Theodoret), the divine benefits are commemorated: so in this the psalmist both commemorates them, and also upbraids the ingratitude of those that received them. Which magnified the mercies of God the more; in being so very kind to those wicked people, that when he punished them, he did not utterly destroy them.

The opinion of that father is, that the Psalm was composed in the person of the more pious sort of people, who bewail the common calamities, and implore the divine indulgence. And most interpreters that I have met withal, imagine it to have been made in the time of the captivity of Babylon: but the proof of it is very weak. For the last verse but one, upon which they ground that conjecture, may have another construction, and mean no more but this; that God would be pleased, when the nation, or any part of it, should be carried captive, to take pity upon them, and restore them again to their country. Or rather, in my opinion, it refers to those, who, in the days of Saul, or before, were taken prisoners by the Philistines, and other nations; whom David prays God to gather to their own land again, that they might worship him in that place, which he had prepared for the ark of his presence. For it seems plain enough that this was one of the Psalms which he delivered then to Asaph: the first verse and the last two being set down in 1 Chron. xvi. 36, 37, as the beginning and ending of another Psalm (which can be none but this), which he then gave in with the other two there mentioned (xvii. and cv.), to praise the Lord withal.

Ver. 1.] O make your thankful acknowledgments to the great Lord of all the world, who was exceeding gracious to your forefathers, and will continue his kindness, you may hope, unto all succeeding ages.

Ver. 2.] Praise him with all your might: for when you have done your best, you must acknowledge that it is impossible to express your obligations to his omnipotent goodness. For who is able to tell how miraculous that power was, which wrought such wonders for us in Egypt, and in the wilderness, and in the land of Canaan? where shall we find a man that can set forth as they deserve, all the praiseworthy acts of the Lord?

Ver. 3.] Which are so great and many, that they

7 Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked him at the sea, even at the Red sea.

8 Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known.

9 He rebuked the Red sea also, and it was dried up: so he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness.

10 And he saved them from the hand of him that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.

11 And the waters covered their enemies: there was not one of them left.

are most happy men, who by faithful obedience to all his precepts (not only when they have newly received his benefits, but throughout the whole course of their lives), preserve themselves in the favour of so gracious a Lord and master (which our forefathers foolishly lost, by revolting presently from their merciful deliverer).

Ver. 4.] Make me, good Lord, one of this happy number; and let me partake of the favour thou still designest for thy people; and find thee ready at hand in all dangers, to preserve and deliver me (1 Chron. xviii. 6, 13, 14).

Ver. 5.] That I may live to see thy chosen people Israel settled in a peaceable enjoyment of all thy blessings (1 Chron. xxii. 18), and have my share in their joy and felicity (xxix. 9), nay, triumph together with them, in the highest praises of thy bounty towards thy own nation, and peculiar inheritance (ver. 10. &c.)

Ver. 6.] Our sins, indeed, may hinder these blessings from us; for we are no better than our forefathers, but have offended after their example, by which we ought to have been amended: we are guilty of many iniquities against one another, and much impiety against thee.

Ver. 7.] We are the wicked offspring of those who were so stupid as not to be affected with the prodigious works thou didst in Egypt; or presently to forget that long series of miraculous preservations and deliverances by which they were brought from thence, but in the very next strait into which they fell (at the borders of the sea, that remarkable place, the Red sea), distrusted his power, and wished he had left them in that cruel servitude, of which before they so heavily complained (Exod. xiv).

Ver. 8.] And yet (such was his stupendous goodness) he would not let them perish in their ingratitude; but, to preserve the name he had gotten of their mighty saviour, gave them a new deliverance: that the world might not imagine he wanted power to complete what he had begun to do for them.

Ver. 9.] On this consideration, he checked the course of that sea by so strong a wind, that he made a path in the midst of it: and led them through those depths on as hard and dry ground as they trod upon in their march through the parched deserts (Exod. xiv. 21, 22).

Ver. 10.] By which means he saved them from Pharaoh's army; which pressed hard upon their backs as the sea was before their face (Exod. xiv. 9, 10). He rescued them from the power of those implacable enemies, whose hatred carried them to pursue them eagerly even into the sea (ver. 23).

Ver. 11.] Where they were drowned every man of

12 Then believed they his words ; they sang his praise.

13 They soon forgot his works ; they waited not for his counsel :

14 But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert.

15 And he gave them their request ; but sent leanness into their soul.

16 They envied Moses also in the camp, and Aaron the saint of the Lord.

17 The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the company of Abiram.

18 And a fire was kindled in their company ; the flame burned up the wicked.

19 They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image.

20 Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass.

21 They forgot God their saviour, which had done great things in Egypt ;

22 Wondrous works in the land of Ham, and terrible things by the Red sea.

23 Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them.

24 Yea, they despised the pleasant land, they believed not his word :

25 But murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord.

26 Therefore he lifted up his hand against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness :

27 To overthrow their seed also among the nations, and scatter them in the lands.

28 They joined themselves also unto Baalpeor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead.

them ; the sea which had stood fixed as a wall to save the Israelites, returning back with a mighty violence to overwhelm their adversaries.

Ver. 12.] Which was so evident a token of his power and goodness, that they were persuaded by it, at that present, to believe God's promises (Exod. xiv. 31), and to sing a song of praise to him for this miraculous deliverance (Exod. xv. 1, &c.).

Ver. 13.] But within three days they grew impatient again (Exod. xv. 22, 24), and, forgetting the great and many pledges they had received of his divine power, quarrelled with his servants ; and would not expect till he showed what way he intended to relieve them.

Ver. 14.] But not long after this murmured again (Exod. xvi.) ; and though, instead of punishing them for it, he satisfied them with bread from heaven, and gave them several other demonstrations of his divine presence among them in the wilderness (Exod. xvi. xx. xxiv. &c.) ; yet to please their wanton appetite, they mutinied another time, and cried out vehemently for flesh to eat (Numb. xi. 4, 5, &c.), and desired new proofs of his power to supply them.

Ver. 15.] Which he was pleased to grant in such abundance, that they surfeited of the quails which he sent them : and, instead of being nourished, fell into a grievous disease, whereby great numbers of them were wasted and consumed (Numb. xi. 31, 32, &c.).

Ver. 16.] And they that escaped were not cured of their rebellious humour, but seditiously disputed the authority of Moses : and accused both him and Aaron, whom the Lord had consecrated for the service of his altar, as ambitious men that took too much upon them (Numb. xvi. 3).

Ver. 17.] Which moved the divine justice to punish their presumption with a most terrible vengeance : for the earth opened and buried alive both Dathan and Abiram, and the faction that adhered to them (Numb. xvi. 32, 33).

Ver. 18.] And the other company raised by Korah were smitten with lightning from heaven ; which burnt up those impious men, who were so bold as to invade the office of the priests of the Lord (Numb. xvi. 35).

Ver. 19.] Whose anger they began very early to incense ; for even at that very place where the Lord had newly appeared to them, in astonishing thunder, and lightning, and clouds (Exod. xx. 18), and had spoken to them with an audible voice, and at the second word he spake had charged them not to make any graven image (Exod. xx. 4), and had called Moses up into the mount to receive the rest of his laws (which he had begun in a most dreadful manner to

deliver to them), they stupidly made a golden calf, and prostrated themselves before the work of their own hands.

Ver. 20.] Slighting that glorious presence of the majesty of God (Exod. xxiv. 16, 17), which appearing in the clouds, had done many wonders for them : and choosing rather to commend themselves to the protection of an image, in which they saw no glory : the image of a dull ox, a creature without reason, a servant of man, that is supported itself by so weak a thing as hay (Exod. xxxii. 14).

Ver. 21.] The root of which sottish apostasy was, that they did not keep in mind what deliverances God had granted them under the conduct of Moses ; whom now they despised (Exod. xxxii. 1), but forgot his great works in the land of Egypt where they never saw any similitude of him.

Ver. 22.] Miraculous works, which filled the whole country with wonder and astonishment ; and concluded at last in the fearful overthrow of Pharaoh and all his host in the Red sea, through which they passed safely.

Ver. 23.] Which provoked the divine displeasure so highly, that he resolved to destroy them (Exod. xxxii. 9, 10), and had done it, if Moses, for whom he had a great respect, had not, by his earnest intercession, made up this breach ; and reconciled him so far to them, that he did not proceed then to take such vengeance on them (ver. 11, 12, 14, 15).

Ver. 24.] But when after this they despised (Numb. xiii. 32), that goodly country, to the borders of which he had brought them (Deut. i. 19, 20), which the spies themselves confessed was rich and desirable (Numb. xiii. 27, xiv. 32) and would not believe that God intended, or was able, to perform his promise to them (Numb. xiii. 37).

Ver. 25.] But murmured against Moses and Aaron in their tents, as if they had deluded them (Numb. xiv. 1, 2, &c.), refusing to march, when the Lord commanded them to go up and take possession of it (Deut. i. 21, 26, 32).

Ver. 26.] Then he solemnly swore, that not one of that wicked generation, who had so often rebelled against him, should ever come there, but all perish in the wilderness (Numb. xiv. 21, 22, 35 ; Deut. i. 34).

Ver. 27.] And some of them he overthrown by the heathen, whom the Lord would have delivered up into their hand (Numb. xiv. 45), and others dispersed in several parts of that country which they despised (xxi. 1).

Ver. 28.] Nor did they grow much better by these dreadful threatenings and executions ; but not only

29 Thus they provoked *him* to anger with their inventions : and the plague brake in upon them.

30 Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment : and so the plague was stayed.

31 And that was counted unto him for righteousness unto all generations for evermore.

32 They angered *him* also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes :

33 Because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips.

34 They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the Lord commanded them :

35 But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.

36 And they served their idols : which were a snare unto them.

37 Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils,

38 And shed innocent blood, *even* the blood

of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan : and the land was polluted with blood.

39 Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions.

40 Therefore was the wrath of the Lord kindled against his people, inasmuch that he abhorred his own inheritance.

41 And he gave them into the hand of the heathen ; and they that hated them ruled over them.

42 Their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hand.

43 Many times did he deliver them ; but they provoked *him* with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity.

44 Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry :

45 And he remembered for them his covenant,

most shamefully committed whoredom with the daughters of Moab, but embraced their religion : devoting themselves to the vile service of Baal, whose temple stood upon mount Peor ; and partaking with them in the sacrifices which they offered to dead men (Numb. xx. 1—3).

Ver. 29.] Which abominable wickedness incurred the divine displeasure to such a degree, that he commanded the offenders to be killed and hanged up in the face of the sun : and also sent a grievous plague among the people (Numb. xxv. 4, 5, 9).

Ver. 30.] Which raged in the camp, till Phinehas, in a holy zeal, went as boldly to punish, as others did to commit their crimes : and thrust through the body one of the princes of the people, whom the judges feared to meddle withal ; and then the plague ceased (Numb. xxv. 5—8).

Ver. 31.] Which reasonable piece of justice the Lord not only approved as a praiseworthy act, but rewarded also with the promise of the priesthood : which he entailed upon his posterity, throughout all generations (Numb. xxv. 12, 13).

Ver. 32.] And, before this, they had been so unbelieving and rebellious, as having had long experience of God's power and goodness in providing for them, to murmur for want of water ; at that place, which took its name from their quarrel with Moses (Numb. xx. 3, 13), who sadly suffered upon their account (Numb. xx. 12).

Ver. 33.] For, being exasperated by their frequent mutinies, he let fall some passionate words ; which expressed such distrust and impatience, as did not become so great a minister of God (Numb. xx. 12), who thereupon resolved he should not have the honour to accomplish his promise, of bringing them to their rest (Numb. xxvii. 24 ; Deut. i. 37).

Ver. 34.] In which, being settled, they did not destroy those seven nations (Judg. i. 21, 27, 29, &c.), whose abominations were so foul, that the Lord gave them a strict charge not to suffer them to live there any longer (Exod. xxiii. 30, 33 ; Deut. vii. 2).

Ver. 35.] But, quite contrary, they not only let them live, but, against God's express commandment (Josh. xxiii. 7, 12), entered into familiarity, and made a covenant and league with them (Judg. ii. 1, 2), and so at last learned to do as they did, and imitated their evil manners.

Ver. 36.] For they forsook the Lord, who had brought them thither, and worshipped the gods of those people whom they had conquered (Judg. ii. 11,

12, iii. 5, 6), which proved their utter ruin and destruction (Deut. vii. 16, 26 ; Judg. ii. 3).

Ver. 37.] For they were so besotted with their idolatry, as to imitate their most barbarous rites : sacrificing to infernal spirits, not only their beasts, but (as the custom of that country was, Deut. xii. 30, 31), their sons and their daughters.

Ver. 38.] Whom they did not merely consecrate to the service of devils ; but offered their blood, the blood of innocent babes, even of their own sons and daughters (as I said), upon the altars of the idols of Canaan : profaning thereby the holy land with the most impious and unnatural murders.

Ver. 39.] Besides other abominable works wherewith they defiled themselves ; such as whoredom and all manner of beastly lusts : which were the filthy vices of those nations whom God cast out before them (Lev. xviii. 24, 25, 27, 28, &c.).

Ver. 40.] And so contrary to nature, as well as his law, that the Lord was exceeding angry with them (Judg. ii. 14, 20), and the more, because he had made them his people : whom he now abominated as impure and unclean, though once they had been very dear unto him.

Ver. 41.] And thereupon delivered them up to the power of those impious nations, with whom they contracted friendship, when they should have destroyed them (Judg. iii. 3, 5, iv. 2, xiii. 1), who retaining still their ancient hatred, exercised a rigorous tyranny over them (iv. 3).

Ver. 42.] And so did many other of their neighbouring enemies, the Mesopotamians and Moabites (Judg. iii. 8, 12), the Midianites and Amalekites (vi. 2, 3, &c.), and suchlike (x. 7, 8), who not only grievously afflicted them, but deservedly made those their subjects, nay, slaves, who would not serve their gracious God.

Ver. 43.] Who still continued so kind to them, that upon the first sign of their repentance, he constantly raised up the spirit of some great man or other to rescue them from every one of these oppressors : though they as constantly provoked him again, by relapsing to their former idolatry, which in the issue brought them exceeding low (Judg. x. 8, 9).

Ver. 44.] And yet, such was his tender compassion towards them, he did not absolutely refuse to help even these base revolters (Judg. x. 14—16), when, in their distress, they made a lamentable moan, and promised amendment.

Ver. 45.] For he was not unmindful of the cove-

and repented according to the multitude of his mercies.

46 He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives.

47 Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us

nant he had made with their forefathers (Lev. xxvi. 42, 44, Deut. xxx. 1—3), but let them reap the benefit of it, in ceasing to punish them; and, when they deserved to be utterly destroyed, bestowing many and exceeding great blessings on them.

Ver. 46.] For he inclined the hearts, even of those who had subdued, and implacably hated them, unto some compassion towards them: so that they did not endeavour their total extirpation (Judg. xiii. 1, xiv. 2, xv. 9, &c.).

Ver. 47.] And therefore we humbly hope still in the same great mercies; and beseech thee, O most mighty Lord, who hast been wont to do our nation good, to deliver us, how unworthy soever, from

from among the heathen, to give thanks unto thy holy name, and to triumph in thy praise.

48 Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the LORD.

all our present enemies; and to restore such of us as are fallen into their hands unto their own country, that they may join with us in giving thanks to thy incomparable goodness, and setting forth thy praises with the greatest joy and triumph saying,

Ver. 48.] Let the great Lord of all the world, who hath been so gracious unto Israel, as to choose them for his own peculiar people, be most heartily blessed and praised: let all generations bless him, as long as the world shall last, and unto all eternity: and let all his people concur in these desires, and wish it may be so; let them all praise the Lord, and desire he may be ever praised.

PART V.

PSALM CVII.

1 O GIVE thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;

3 And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south.

PSALM CVII.

ARGUMENT.—The fifth book of Psalms (which consists most of praises and thanksgivings) begins here with an exhortation to those whom God (according to the prayer foregoing, *evi. 47.*), had delivered from pagan servitude, to acknowledge that singular benefit with their hearty thanksgivings; and thence to take occasion to magnify his merciful providence over all other men, not only of that, but of all nations, where they addressed themselves unto him in their distresses. For instance, travellers in the desert, who have lost their way, prisoners, sick people, mariners, husbandmen, even whole countries, the psalmist shows, are made strangely prosperous, if they have a regard to God; and on the other side, fall into great misery, if they neglect him. It had been endless to enumerate all other cases; but by these any man may understand, if he please (as he observes in the conclusion), how good the Lord is, and ready to help those who fly unto him for succour, whatever their condition be.

The author of the Psalm is unknown; but if I have guessed aright, at the connection of this with the foregoing Psalm, it is most probable it was composed by David: who having, in the hundred and fifth, put them in mind (as Theodoret observes) of the promises made to the patriarchs, and of the blessings bestowed on their posterity; and, in the hundred and sixth, of their horrid ingratitude for such benefits, and the punishments, for that cause,

4 They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in.

5 Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.

6 Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses.

inflicted upon them: declares in this Psalm the inexplicable kindness of God, in their freedom from slavery; and in his careful providence, as I said, over all mankind: which might give them the greater encouragement to hope in him, if they served him faithfully, who had taken them for his peculiar people.

Ver. 1.] O make your grateful acknowledgments to the great Lord of the world; of whose goodness you and your forefathers have had such a long experience, that you may conclude his loving-kindness will extend itself to all succeeding ages.

Ver. 2.] Let them especially call upon one another to give thanks unto his goodness, whom the Lord hath graciously redeemed from a sad captivity: into which they were reduced by their prevailing enemies:

Ver. 3.] And hath brought them back to their own country again; from all the lands, on every side, into which they were dispersed.

Ver. 4.] And they also, who travelling through vast wildernesses and sandy deserts, lost their way, and could find no track to lead them to a city inhabited:

Ver. 5.] But in this perplexity, wandered up and down so long, that all their provision spent, and they were ready to die with hunger and thirst.

Ver. 6.] Yet then, recommending themselves to the Lord, and earnestly imploring his help in this miserable strait, he mercifully delivered them out of it, and freed them from all their anxieties:

7 And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.

8 Oh that *men* would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!

9 For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.

10 Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, *being* bound in affliction and iron;

11 Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High:

12 Therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and *there was none* to help.

13 Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses.

14 He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder.

15 Oh that *men* would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!

16 For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder.

17 Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted.

18 Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death.

19 Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses.

20 He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered *them* from their destructions.

21 Oh that *men* would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!

22 And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.

23 They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters;

24 These see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep.

25 For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof.

26 They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble.

27 They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end.

Ver. 7.] Directing them, when they were in a maze, into the right path again; which brought them to a place inhabited, where they found relief for their necessities.

Ver. 8.] Oh that such men would never forget to make their thankful acknowledgments to the Lord for this singular kindness; but everywhere proclaim his wonderful works!

Ver. 9.] Who thus seasonably preserved them from starving, by providing, in this languishing condition, drink to quench their thirst, and plenty of good things to satisfy their hungry appetite.

Ver. 10.] They also who have no other dwelling but a dark prison, nay, a horrible dungeon; where, to add to their affliction, they are loaded with iron manacles or fetters;

Ver. 11.] As a just punishment for the crimes they had rebelliously committed against the express commands of God, and the plain dictates and frequent cheeks of their own consciences; which were the voice of the Most High, giving them wholesome counsel, though they contemned and despised it:

Ver. 12.] And thereby provoked him to throw them into that miserable condition, to humble their proud hearts by the hardship of a tedious and painful imprisonment; in which they lay so dejected and helpless, that they saw no human means whereby they should be delivered.

Ver. 13.] Yet, they then making their addresses to the Lord, and earnestly beseeching him to take pity upon their wretched estate, he was pleased mercifully to hear their prayers, and free them from those miserable straits:

Ver. 14.] Bringing them out of their sad confinement in that dismal dungeon, and setting their hands and feet at liberty, from the chains wherewith they were bound.

Ver. 15.] Oh that such men would never forget to make their thankful acknowledgments to the Lord for his singular kindness: but everywhere proclaim his wonderful works!

Ver. 16.] Who, when their case was desperate, removed the greatest obstacles; and made even brazen gates, and iron bars, give way to their escape.

Ver. 17.] In like manner we see others, who forgetting God and sottishly giving themselves up to all kind of debauchery, in an irregular way of living, falling into grievous diseases:

Ver. 18.] Which not only quite take away their appetite, but make them nauseate all manner of food, which they formerly abused; and thereby lay them so low, that they are at the very brink of the grave:

Ver. 19.] Yet even these men, when they make their addresses unto the Lord, and, in the weak estate into which they have brought themselves, pray earnestly to him, are wont to find relief from him, when no medicines whatsoever will avail them.

Ver. 20.] He orders their recovery, when all the prescriptions of physicians prove ineffectual: nay, when they are left for dead, raises them up to life and health again.

Ver. 21.] Oh that these men would be so grateful to the Lord, as never to forget his singular kindness to them; but everywhere proclaim such wonderful works as these!

Ver. 22.] And not content themselves with the sacrifice of beasts (which in their sickness they were apt to vow unto him), but offer those far more acceptable sacrifices of a grateful heart: acknowledging his goodness, and telling everybody they meet withal, in such a manner as may express how much they are affected with it, what great things the Lord hath done for them.

Ver. 23.] Who shows no less kindness to those that have occasion to do much upon the sea; to fish, or to traffic upon the main ocean.

Ver. 24.] Where they behold remarkable acts of divine providence, in the wonderful alterations which he makes in that vast collection of waters.

Ver. 25.] For when they are smooth and still, a sudden tempest arises by his command: which puts them into such a rage, that they are turned into swell ing waves and billows.

Ver. 26.] On which the ships are sometimes mount ed up as high as if they would touch the clouds; and then sink down as low as if they would be buried in the bottom of the sea; to the great astonishment of the passengers, who are ready to die with fear.

28 Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses.

29 He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.

30 Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.

31 Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!

32 Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders.

33 He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the watersprings into dry ground;

34 A fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.

35 He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into watersprings.

Ver. 27.] For they are so tossed and whirled about, that, as they are not able to stand upon the decks, so the most skilful mariners do not know which way to steer or what course to take, to save themselves from perishing.

Ver. 28.] And yet, when in the midst of this great strait, they make their addresses to the Lord, with earnest prayers for his protection, he is graciously pleased to hear their cry, and to free them from that anguish of mind which sorely oppresses them.

Ver. 29.] For he silences the blustering wind, and makes so great a calm, that the swelling waves lie quiet and still.

Ver. 30.] Which happy change turns their fear into joy; when they see not only the storm appeased, but gentle gales arising to carry them directly to the port for which they are bound.

Ver. 31.] Oh that they who are thus unexpectedly preserved, would never forget to make their thankful acknowledgments to the Lord for this singular kindness, but everywhere proclaim what wonders he hath done for them.

Ver. 32.] Let them magnify his power and goodness in the greatest assemblies of the people, especially in his temple: let them praise him in the supreme court of the kingdom; that the judges and governors may be excited to make him their trust and confidence.

Ver. 33.] Who turns well-watered countries into a mere wilderness, and makes moist and fertile soils become dry and barren ground:

Ver. 34.] Where none of those fruits will grow, which before it plentifully yielded; because of the ill disposition of the inhabitants, who produce nothing but all manner of vice and wickedness.

Ver. 35.] And, on the other side, he turns a barren desert (for none of these things come by chance) into rich and fruitful pastures; and sends such plenty of water into dry sandy grounds.

Ver. 36.] That there they, who lived wretchedly before, find a comfortable habitation: and are invited to build towns and cities in those formerly desolate places.

36 And there he maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation;

37 And sow the fields, and plant vineyards, which may yield fruits of increase.

38 He blesseth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly; and suffereth not their cattle to decrease.

39 Again, they are diminished and brought low through oppression, affliction, and sorrow.

40 He poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness, where there is no way.

41 Yet setteth he the poor on high from affliction, and maketh him families like a flock.

42 The righteous shall see it, and rejoice: and all iniquity shall stop her mouth.

43 Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the LORD.

Ver. 37.] Where they sow all manner of grain, and plant vineyards; which recompense their pains with a plentiful harvest, and a joyful vintage.

Ver. 38.] His blessing also makes the inhabitants fruitful, as well as their ground: they grow exceeding populous together with their flocks and their herds, which by the increase of the people are not diminished.

Ver. 39.] But when they prove ungrateful to him, he quite alters the course of his providence; and on a sudden sends some grievous pestilence, which lessens their numbers; or lays them low by tyrannical oppressors (into whose hands he delivers them) by death and other calamities, which make them pine away in grief and sorrow.

Ver. 40.] Their princes and the most eminent persons in their country are not able to preserve themselves from contempt and scorn; to which they are so openly exposed, that they who had troops of followers and attendants are utterly deserted, and forced to walk in solitary places to hide their shame, without any means that they can see to recover their thrones, out of which they are disgracefully thrown.

Ver. 41.] Which he bestows upon some poor despicable person, whom from a low condition, he raises to the highest dignity; and gives him a very numerous issue to maintain and continue the honour he hath conferred on him.

Ver. 42.] Which is a great encouragement to the righteous; who herein behold with joy the wise and just providence of almighty God: but gives the wicked (who under those bad princes were insolent, and full of proud boasts) such a rebuke, that they hang down their heads, and are confoundedly put to silence.

Ver. 43.] And therefore whosoever will be truly wise ought to mark and ponder such passages as these in the divine government; that they may make others, who are less considerate, understand how very kind and gracious the Lord is, to those who study to please him, and to obtain his favour by dutiful obedience, and humble submission to him.

PSALM CVIII.

A Song or Psalm of David.

1 O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory.

2 Awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early.

3 I will praise thee, O LORD, among the people: and I will sing praises unto thee among the nations.

4 For thy mercy is great above the heavens: and thy truth reacheth unto the clouds.

5 Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: and thy glory above all the earth;

6 That thy beloved may be delivered: save with thy right hand, and answer me.

7 God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice, I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth.

8 Gilead is mine; Manasseh is mine; Ephraim also is the strength of mine head; Judah is my lawgiver;

9 Moab is my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe; over Philistia will I triumph.

10 Who will bring me into the strong city? who will lead me into Edom?

11 Wilt not thou, O God, who hast cast us off? and wilt not thou, O God, go forth with our hosts?

12 Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man.

13 Through God we shall do valiantly: for he it is that shall tread down our enemies.

PSALM CVIII.

ARGUMENT.—The title tells us this *Song-psalm* (see the reason of this name upon Ps. lxxvii.), was made by David: and was placed here, as I conjecture, because now he was in a hopeful way to perfect some victories which he had begun to win; where-by some of those captives in strange lands (mentioned ver. 2, 3, of the foregoing Psalm) were rescued and set at liberty. What those nations were, over whom he was about to triumph, see in the title of Ps. lx. For the latter part of this Psalm, from ver. 6 to the end, is the very same (with some light variations) with the last eight verses of that; as the former part of it is very little different from the last five verses of Ps. lvii. Which the psalmist, I suppose, here placed instead of those wherewith the sixtieth begins (though he retains all the latter end of it), because now, as I said, he had made some progress in those wars, which he was about entering upon when he made that sixtieth Psalm. And therefore here he begins with thanks to God for his mercy, as there he laments the ill condition wherein he found the affairs of the kingdom when he came to the crown.

Ver. 1.] My heart is ready, O most gracious God, it is firmly resolved to give thee most solemn thanks: my tongue also, wherewith I ought to glorify thee, shall sing of thy goodness; and, with all the expressions of joy, set forth thy praise.

Ver. 2.] Nor shall any of the instruments of music be silent, but accompany my hymns: which I will sing unto thee so early, that I will prevent the rising of the sun.

Ver. 3.] Nor will I merely make thee my private acknowledgments, but publish thy praise in the greatest assemblies of thy people, among whom this song shall be sung: yea, other nations shall read therein, how thankful I am for what thou hast begun to do for us.

Ver. 4.] For it is fit my thankfulness should be as boundless as thy mercy: which infinitely transcends all my expressions; and hath nothing equal to it, but thy faithfulness and truth.

Ver. 5.] Be thou more and more exalted in these, O God; and raise to thyself thereby the highest praises; spread the fame of them everywhere, that thou mayest be glorified throughout the world.

Ver. 6.] Especially now, I beseech thee to grant my humble petitions, that by thy mighty power, ac-

companying my arms, I may be an instrument of delivering thy beloved people from their oppressors.

Ver. 7.] Why should I doubt of it, and not rather rejoice in assured hope of a perfect victory? since God, who is most holy, and cannot lie, hath said he will deliver them by my hand (2 Sam. iii. 18); and hath already put me in possession (as he also promised, ver. 2) of all the country about Samaria: which I will distribute under such officers as I think fit to set over them.

Ver. 8.] Gilead, also, and Manasseh, who were lately under another king (2 Sam. ii. 9), have submitted themselves to me; and so hath the tribe of Ephraim, which is a main support of my authority; these, and all the rest of the tribes of Israel, are united to the royal tribe of Judah; which (according to the prophecy of our forefather, Gen. xlix. 10), supplies me with wise and able men to administer the laws, and order the affairs of my kingdom.

Ver. 9.] Which shall now extend itself beyond the bounds of this country; for I will tread the Moabites under my feet, and reduce them to the vilest servitude (2 Sam. viii. 2): I will trample also upon the Edomites, and make them my slaves (ver. 14): the Philistines also, whom I have begun to smite (2 Sam. v. 17, 22, &c.), shall add to my triumphs, and be forced to submit unto me, as their conquering lord (viii. 1).

Ver. 10.] These are difficult things, indeed; and I may well ask, when I consider how potent these nations are, by what power or force I shall be able to enter that strongly-fenced city, in the frontiers of their country? who is it that will conduct me into Idumea, and make me master of it?

Ver. 11.] But I can soon answer myself: for why should I despair of thy presence with us, O God of all power and might; who formerly indeed didst reject us, and forsake the conduct of our armies (1 Sam. xxxi. 1, 7); but now, I hope, wilt graciously aid us, and make us victorious.

Ver. 12.] Do not frustrate these hopes; but afford us thy help against the Syrians also (2 Sam. viii. 5), now that they distress us, for no human force is able to deliver us, nor have we any confidence in it, but in thee alone.

Ver. 13.] By whose assistance we will behave ourselves courageously, and do valiant acts: for God will utterly rout our enemies; and tread them down like the mire in the streets.

PSALM CIX.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

1 HOLD not thy peace, O God of my praise ;
2 For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth
of the deceitful are opened against me : they
have spoken against me with a lying tongue.

3 They compassed me about also with words
of hatred ; and fought against me without a
cause.

4 For my love they are my adversaries : but I
give myself unto prayer.

5 And they have rewarded me evil for good,
and hatred for my love.

6 Set thou a wicked man over him : and let
Satan stand at his right hand.

7 When he shall be judged, let him be con-
demned : and let his prayer become sin.

8 Let his days be few ; and let another take
his office.

9 Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a
widow.

10 Let his children be continually vagabonds,
and beg : let them seek *their bread* also out of
their desolate places.

11 Let the extortioner catch all that he hath ;
and let the strangers spoil his labour.

12 Let there be none to extend mercy unto
him : neither let there be any to favour his fa-
therless.

13 Let his posterity be cut off ; and in the
generation following let their name be blotted
out.

PSALM CIX.

ARGUMENT.—Most interpreters consent to the opinion of Aben Ezra and D. Kimchi that David (to whom the title ascribes this Psalm) hath respect here, in the first place, to the grievous persecution which he suffered by Saul, and some of his court : who would let him enjoy no rest, but having driven him from his own house, pursued him so close, wheresoever he heard he was, that he could have no certain dwelling : but became like a locust (as he speaks ver. 23), which, having no nest (as Bochartus observes, par. ii. lib. iv. De Animal. Sac. cap. 2), leaps or flies from hedge to hedge ; as he did from place to place. To provoke Saul to this rage against him, as they all loaded him with many calumnies (which made David curse them to Saul's face, 1 Sam. xxvi. 19), so one especially among the rest, who is generally thought to be Doeg the Edomite, was notoriously guilty of this wickedness : whom, by a prophetic spirit, he here most solemnly curses, in a direful manner ; and pronounces the heaviest judgment upon him and his family : his inhuman villany being so great, that it made him an exact picture of the traitor Judas, to whom the apostle St. Peter (Acts i. 20) applies the eighth verse of this Psalm. The rest of which is spent in prayer to God against such false accusers : and in vows of the praises he would give him, when he was delivered from the mischief which thereby they designed to him. Accordingly, when he was settled in his throne, he sent this Psalm, among others, unto the master of music in the tabernacle ; to perpetuate the memory of God's mercy to him.

Concerning such imprecations as we here meet withal, see the argument of Ps. xxxv, which is of the same nature with this.

Ver. 1.] O God, the supreme judge of the world, who, as thou hast given me hitherto continual cause to praise thee, so I hope wilt still vindicate my honour ; I appeal unto thy majesty : beseeching thee to declare thyself on my side ; and make it appear that I am innocent.

Ver. 2.] For men of no conscience have taken the liberty to invent the most mischievous lies of me ; whereby, though they always speak me fair to my face, they have wickedly traduced me to Saul behind my back.

Ver. 3.] And spread those false reports so diligently, that I find they have made me odious every where :

and thereupon, without any provocation from me, have levied war against me, to take away my life (1 Sam. xxiii. 8. 25).

Ver. 4.] Who have been so far from doing them any harm ; that I have deserved well of them (1 Sam. xix. 4, 5) ; and even now, when they requite my kindness with endeavours to destroy me, do nothing but recommend myself by prayer to thy protection ; refusing to make use of the opportunity I had to revenge myself upon them (1 Sam. xxiv. 9, 10, &c.).

Ver. 5.] And yet this will not mollify them, but still they are so extremely ungrateful as to repay my kindness with new attempts to do me mischief (1 Sam. xxvi. 2) ; and the more affection I express, with the greater hatred am I prosecuted.

Ver. 6.] So implacable is his malice, who is the principal author of the calumnies wherewith I am loaded (1 Sam. xxii. 9. 11), against whom, therefore, I implore thy justice, O most righteous judge of the world : let the worst man that can be found be appointed to hear his cause when he is accused, and his most malicious adversary plead against him.

Ver. 7.] When sentence is given let him be condemned to be as guilty as really he is ; and if he petition for a pardon, let it not only be rejected, but prove an aggravation of his crimes.

Ver. 8.] Let him (and the false traitor, who in future times will use the Messiah as now they do me) be cut off before his time : and his office (1 Sam. xxi. 7. xxii. 9), wherein he behaves himself with such insufferable insolence and falsehood, be transferred to a better man.

Ver. 9.] Let not his fatherless children succeed him in any thing that he hath ; nor his widow have any thing left to maintain her.

Ver. 10.] Let them not have so much as a house wherein to put their heads ; but be perpetual vagabonds, supporting a miserable life by begging an alms ; and seeking where to lodge, because their own dwellings are laid waste and desolate.

Ver. 11.] Let his creditor (pretending a judgment) seize on all his estate : and a stranger, by that means, reap the fruit of all his care and labour.

Ver. 12.] Let no man show the least kindness to his memory ; or upon that account bestow an alms upon his fatherless children.

Ver. 13.] Let them rather be odious for his sake, and the sooner destroyed : so that they be the last of the name ; and, in the next generation, not one of that family be found.

14 Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the LORD; and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out.

15 Let them be before the LORD continually, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth.

16 Because that he remembered not to shew mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart.

17 As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him: as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him.

18 As he clothed himself with cursing like as with his garment, so let it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones.

19 Let it be unto him as the garment which covereth him, and for a girdle wherewith he is girded continually.

20 Let this be the reward of mine adversaries from the LORD, and of them that speak evil against my soul.

Ver. 14.] But, according to the just sentence of thy law (Exod. xx. 5), let the punishments (which were due long ago, but thy patience moved thee to forbear) fall all upon him; let him suffer for the sins of his progenitors on both sides; in whose wicked steps he would not cease to tread.

Ver. 15.] Let it be seen that their wickedness is not forgotten, though committed many years ago; but prosecute it with a continued vengeance, till nobody remember that there were such people in the world.

Ver. 16.] This will be but a deserved recompense for all his cruelties: for as he let all benefits slip out of his mind, and was ungrateful to those who had obliged him, so he had no sense of that common compassion which is due to the calamitous; but when he saw me in a necessitous condition, destitute of friends, and dejected in spirit, made no other use of it but to persecute me to death.

Ver. 17.] What can be more just than that the mischief, in which he delighted, and both wished and designed to others, should fall upon himself? and that he should never meet with the blessing of those righteous courses which he always hated and avoided?

Ver. 18.] His very business was to slander others, every where; taking a pride in the mischievous effects of his cursed lies: and therefore let him feel the miserable fruit of his wickedness, spreading itself, like the water he drinks, into every vein of him; and sticking as close to him as oil unto the bones.

Ver. 19.] Let him be involved in perpetual misfortunes and miseries, and never be able to shake them off: let him be hampered with straits and difficulties, without any possibility of getting out.

Ver. 20.] This shall most certainly be the reward, which the righteous Lord will give to my malicious adversaries for all the pains they have taken, by slanderous reports and calumnies, to take away my life:

Ver. 21.] Which I commend to thy protection, O Lord, the governor of all things; beseeching thee to take my part, and appear for me; though not for my honour, yet for thy own; whose kindness is so exceeding bountiful unto all, that for that reason I am encouraged to hope thou wilt deliver me; to whom thou hast engaged thyself by many promises of mercy.

Ver. 22.] Which I never needed more than now: for I am so poor, and forsaken of all my friends

21 But do thou for me, O God the Lord, for thy name's sake: because thy mercy is good, deliver thou me.

22 For I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me.

23 I am gone like the shadow when it inclineth: I am tossed up and down as the locust.

24 My knees are weak through fasting; and my flesh faileth of fatness.

25 I became also a reproach unto them: when they looked upon me they shook their heads.

26 Help me, O LORD my God: O save me according to thy mercy:

27 That they may know that this is thy hand; that thou, LORD, hast done it.

28 Let them curse, but bless thou: when they arise, let them be ashamed; but let thy servant rejoice.

29 Let mine adversaries be clothed with shame, and let them cover themselves with their own confusion, as with a mantle.

(1 Sam. xxv. 8, &c.), that I am ready to faint away with grief and sorrow, like one that is wounded at the very heart.

Ver. 23.] The evening shadow doth not vanish sooner than I, from the place of my present abode (1 Sam. xxii. 1, 3, 5; xxiii. 13, 14): which I am forced to quit on a sudden; and to wander like the locust, which flies, or is driven, with the wind, uncertainly from place to place.

Ver. 24.] And for want of food in those desert places, I am sometimes scarce able to remove: for my body, which heretofore was plump and fat (1 Sam. xvi. 13), is now grown lank and thin, like one of those miserable lean creatures.

Ver. 25.] Which, instead of moving their pity, hath exposed me to such contempt and scorn, that when I am seen by any of them, they deride and scoff at me as an undone wretch, that vainly hopes to escape their hands.

Ver. 26.] But my hope is, that thou, O Lord, who hast hitherto been my most gracious God, will seasonably interpose for my relief: and deliver me, out of that tender mercy, which is wont to extend itself to those who have nothing else to depend upon.

Ver. 27.] Whereby they themselves may be convinced, and forced to acknowledge, that, not by chance, no more than by small forces, but by thy almighty power alone, and thy care of me, O Lord, I am delivered.

Ver. 28.] Thy blessing and protection I implore; which if thou wilt vouchsafe me, let them go on to curse and slander me as long as they please; it shall not hurt me: nay, let them assault me with armed force, they shall only be confounded at their vain attempt; and give thy servant the greater cause to rejoice at their disappointment.

Ver. 29.] Which shall so increase the confusion of my malicious adversaries, that they shall not be able to bear the disgrace: but wish they could hide themselves from the sight of their shame, which their own wickedness hath brought upon them.

Ver. 30.] In hope of which defeat, I vow beforehand to the Lord the best expressions of my gratitude that I am able to make: not only in private, but in the greatest assemblies; where I will not cease to praise his almighty love.

Ver. 31.] And bid them trust in God, who hath pleaded my cause, and rescued me from death; and

30 I will greatly praise the LORD with my mouth; yea, I will praise him among the multitude.

will ever be the advocate of him that hath no helper, but depends on his goodness, to deliver him from

31 For he shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save *him* from those that condemn his soul.

the hands of those judges, who prosecute the unjust sentence they have passed upon him to lose his life.

PSALM CX.

A Psalm of David.

1 THE LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

2 THE LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.

3 Thy people *shall be* willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the

womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.

4 THE LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

5 THE LORD at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath.

6 He shall judge among the heathen, he shall

PSALM CX.

ARGUMENT.—There is the same reason to think this Psalm was composed by David (not by some other concerning David), that there is to conclude all the rest to be so, which have the same title. And then, as it is very plain he speaks of some person much greater than himself, whom he calls his Lord, so it can be no other but the Lord Christ, of whom he here prophesies. Not, as he is wont to do elsewhere, with respect to himself, in the first place, as his type and figure; but in plain words, which can belong to none but Christ alone: for no other king but he can be said in any sense to sit at God's right hand; nor was there any priest of the order of Melchizedek that could be a shadow of him.

David, indeed, seems once to have exercised the office of a priest, when he blessed the people, at the bringing of the ark to Zion (2 Sam. vi. 18), and so to have been then both king and priest in one person, as Melchizedek was; but not a priest for ever, on whom the office was perpetually established, and that by an oath; as it was on the priest here mentioned.

And therefore it is in vain to endeavour to accommodate any part of this Psalm to David; who conquered many of the neighbouring countries, smote their kings, made them bring him tributes, and at last smote the "head of the country of Rabbah" (as some render the last words of the sixth verse of this Psalm), that is, the king of the children of Ammon: but still we are to seek how the rest can be applied to him, who never had any pretence to such an authority as is here described, nor can in any sense call himself *my Lord*: but as our Lord Christ hath demonstrated, spake concerning him (Matt. xxii. 43, &c.), and his exaltation, after his resurrection from the dead (as St. Peter and St. Paul also show, Acts ii. 34, 35; 1 Cor. xv. 25; Heb. iv. 1, 13; v. 6,) when he set up another priesthood, and abolished that of Moses; which change is here predicted.

And though the Jews have taken a great deal of pains to wrest this Psalm to another sense, yet they are so divided in their opinions about it (speaking inconsistent things, like drunken men, as St. Chrysostom's words are, or rather, says he, like men in the dark, running against one another), that from thence alone we may be satisfied they are in the wrong, and have their eyes blinded, else they would not have embraced such interpretations as those,

which may be seen in them that have written upon this Psalm, which some of the Jews themselves (such as R. Moses Hadarsan, Saadiah Gaon, and divers others whom I might mention), have been forced to acknowledge belongs to Christ; and is a very plain prediction of his divinity, his royal dignity, his priesthood, and his victories and triumphs, which the psalmist sets forth as follows.

Ver. 1.] This is the decree of the eternal Lord, that the great person whom we expect, and whom I honour as my lord and master, shall be advanced (after his sufferings) to the highest dignity (1 Kings i. 19) in the heavens; and reign with him as the king of all the world, till he hath perfectly subdued (Josh. x. 24) the most powerful opposers of his kingdom; and overcome death itself, by whom all mankind are conquered (1 Cor. xv. 25, 26).

Ver. 2.] The eternal Lord, who hath thus decreed to honour thee, O most mighty prince, will make Zion, first of all, to feel how powerful the sceptre is (Acts i. 8; ii. 34, 37), and thence extend thy empire over all the earth; where I wish thou mayest, and foretell thou wilt, prevail over all infidelity, idolatry, superstition, and impiety; which will set themselves against thy authority.

Ver. 3.] For in the day when thy forces (2 Tim. ii. 3), completely armed with a divine power (Acts iv. 33), shall march forth to subdue the world unto thy obedience: they that are fit for thy kingdom (Luke ix. 62; Acts xiii. 48) shall cheerfully submit themselves, and present thee with freewill-offerings, in token of their absolute subjection unto thee (Acts ii. 45; iv. 34). And great shall be the number of chosen men (1 John ii. 13), who, glad to see the night of ignorance gone, shall, at thy first appearance, by the celestial blessing, fall unto thee as thick as the morning dew.

Ver. 4.] And happy are they who live under thy government; for the Lord hath unchangeably resolved that thou shalt be a priest as well as king; with full power to bless all thy subjects, not only in that, but in all future ages, even to all eternity: for thou shalt not be a priest like those after Aaron's order, who die to make room for others; but, like that great king and priest Melchizedek, shalt neither have any predecessor nor successor in thine office, but continue a royal priest for evermore (Heb. vii.).

Ver. 5.] Who, as he will be most compassionate to all those who heartily acknowledge him for their Lord, and submit unto his government; so will break

fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries.

in pieces the greatest powers on earth that provoke his displeasure by obstinate opposal of his authority at thy right hand.

Ver. 6.] From whence he shall demonstrate himself to all the heathen world, to be their lawgiver and their judge; taking a severe vengeance on those that persecute his subjects, and destroying, at last, even that mighty empire which shall then rule over many countries.

PSALM CXI.

Hallelujah, i. e. Praise the Lord.

I PRAISE ye the LORD. I will praise the LORD with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation.

2 The works of the LORD are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.

3 His work is honourable and glorious: and his righteousness endureth for ever.

4 He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the LORD is gracious and full of compassion.

PSALM CXI.

ARGUMENT.—It is certain this is the title of the Psalm, which consists of as many short metres, as there are letters in the Hebrew alphabet; and therefore cannot begin with *Hallelujah*, whose first letter is the *fifth*, not the first letter in that alphabet. In which order it proceeds for the better help of the memory: being composed thus artificially, that every one, as well as the singers (to whom the *Hallelujah*, perhaps, is particularly directed), might have in their minds a brief form of thanking God (especially upon festival days) for the wonderful things he had done for that nation.

It was a meditation which the author had in time of peace and quiet; for in distress, or immediately after a great deliverance, men's spirits are not at liberty to use such art and curiosity in their compositions, as there is in this Psalm; being full at those seasons of such passions as make them neglect it, even when they are inclined to use it (see Psalm xxv.). For which reason, I think, Theodoret's opinion hath no ground; that the psalmist hath respect to the great victory obtained by Jehoshaphat over the Ammonites and other nations, who invaded his kingdom; for which they gave thanks to God presently after (2 Chron. xx.). It is more likely that David, who composed those larger forms of commemoration, Psalm cv. and cvi. made this (as I said) for a compendious remembrance of what is there more largely delivered. And that he might not exceed the number of the ten commandments (as some give the reason of it) in the verses of this Psalm, the metres of the last two are so short, that they have each of them *three* letters of the alphabet in them, whereas all the former have but *two*.

Ver. 1.] I will make my thankful acknowledgments to the Lord, not only with my lips, or with some slight affections of my mind, but with all my heart and soul: and that not only in the private society of those good men whom I am more intimately

7 He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head.

Ver. 7.] But before all this, he shall first humble himself to the meanest condition; not living in the state of a king here in this world, but of a wayfaring man (Luke ix. 56), who is content with such provision as he meets withal. For which cause, after the enduring many hardships, even death itself, he shall be highly exalted to his royal and priestly dignity in the heavens; from whence he shall never fall.

5 He hath given meat unto them that fear him: he will ever be mindful of his covenant.

6 He hath shewed his people the power of his works, that he may give them the heritage of the heathen.

7 The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure.

8 They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness.

9 He sent redemption unto his people: he hath

acquainted withal, but in the public congregation of all his people.

Ver. 2.] Who ought to join together to praise the Lord for his mighty and wonderful works, which it will not cost them much labour to understand; for they are easily found out by all those who take any pleasure in such inquiries.

Ver. 3.] And there is not one of them but is full of majesty and splendour; and fruit of his infinite bounty, and faithfulness to his promise, which he still expresses towards us, and will do so for ever.

Ver. 4.] And such is his goodness, lest we should forget his benefits, he hath instituted solemn times for the commemoration of the wonders he hath done for us (Exod. xii. 14; xiii. 3, 9, &c.), which are everlasting testimonies, that we serve a most gracious and compassionate Lord.

Ver. 5.] Who gave our forefathers (whom by his wonderful works he possessed with the fear of him, Exod. xiv. 31) the spoil of the Egyptians (Exod. xii. 35, 36), and afterward fed them with manna in the wilderness (Exod. xvi.), according to his covenant, which he had made long before (Gen. xv. 14), and will never forget in future ages.

Ver. 6.] He hath evidently demonstrated to his people the greatness of his power in destroying Sihon the Amorite (Deut. ii. 24, 25), and Og the king of Bashan (Deut. iii. 21, 24), with the rest of the Amorites and other nations, in the land of Canaan (Josh. x. 6, 11, 12, &c.): which he took from the ancient inhabitants, that he might give it us for our possession.

Ver. 7.] In which he did them no wrong; but was exactly just in fulfilling his promise to us, and in executing his judgments upon those wicked wretches (Deut. ix. 5; Gen. xv. 16). For all his orders of either kind are in pursuance of most righteous decrees.

Ver. 8.] Which he doth not alter and change at pleasure, but hath settled as eternal rules; because there is no partiality or inquiry in them; but they were enacted with a sincere respect to all men's good and happiness.

Ver. 9.] And it was in conformity to these that he

commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name.

10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of

at first sent Moses and Aaron to bring our fathers out of Egypt (Exod. vi. 6), and then exercised his supreme authority over them, in giving them a law, which he tied them by a covenant perpetually to observe (Exod. xix. 4, 5; xxiv. 8); appearing in such majesty to them (Exod. xx. 18; xxiv. 10, 11), as might possess them with an awful regard to him; and make them for ever dread, by any profaneness, to offend him, who infinitely exceeds all other beings.

PSALM CXIL

1 PRAISE YE the LORD. Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD, that delighteth greatly in his commandments.

2 His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation of the upright shall be blessed.

3 Wealth and riches shall be in his house: and his righteousness endureth forever.

4 Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.

5 A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion.

PSALM CXII.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm is composed after the very same manner with the former; and seems to be intended for a short commentary upon the last verse of it: showing how well and wisely they consult their own good and happiness, who observe God's commandments; especially those about charity, or doing good to others. Of which that they might be always mindful, the Psalm is contrived, for the help of their memories, into as many short verses as there are letters in the Hebrew alphabet. Hallelujah therefore is no part of them, but the title prefixed to the Psalm (see argument upon Psalm cxi.), to excite them to praise the Lord; who had made it their present interest to be religious.

Ver. 1.] Happy is that man whose chiefest care it is to praise the Lord, by observing his commandments: which will yield, in the issue, the highest pleasure and satisfaction to himself.

Ver. 2.] And procure a blessing also upon all belonging to him: first, upon his children, and those that shall descend from them in future times; who shall fare the better, and be more powerful and prosperous, for the sincere virtue of their pious forefathers:

Ver. 3.] And next on his estate; which shall not only be rich and plentiful, but so firmly settled and entailed on his posterity, that they shall reap the perpetual fruit of his justice and charity.

Ver. 4.] Or if any affliction come, it will be so far from making him unhappy, that, besides the divine comforts imparted to him for his support, it will make the virtue of upright men the more illustrious: while one exercises meekness and sweetness to those that provoke him, another forgives offences, and pities the instruments of his trouble; and a third exercises the greater justice of mercy, and will not be tempted to

wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.

Ver. 10.] And, indeed, it is the first and principal point of wisdom to fear the Lord, and carefully observe his commandments; the practice of which gives men a better understanding of what is good for them, than any politic maxims can infuse into them. Therefore let the Lord be for ever praised, who hath given us these good and wholesome laws; and thereby shown us the way to eternal honour and praise.

6 Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.

7 He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD.

8 His heart is established, he shall not be afraid, until he see his desire upon his enemies.

9 He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth for ever; his horn shall be exalted with honour.

10 The wicked shall see it, and be grieved; he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away: the desire of the wicked shall perish.

do any dishonest or cruel thing for his own deliverance.

Ver. 5.] But, above all other men, he leads the most comfortable life, who is so kind, that he supplies the needs of others; giving to one, and lending to another, as occasion serves: and yet ordering all his affairs so judiciously, that he doth not impair, but rather maintain, the good estate of his own family.

Ver. 6.] Sure it will not be in the power of the most mighty and malicious enemies (though they may disturb him) quite to overthrow him: and when they are forgotten, or mentioned with contempt, the worthy actions of this sort of righteous men shall be celebrated with never-ceasing praises.

Ver. 7.] He is not affrighted and discomposed at the false reports that are raised of him; nor at the rumour of dangers which threaten him: being prepared for such things as these, by a settled trust and hope in God; that he will take care of him, who hath been as kind as he could to others in their distresses.

Ver. 8.] This confidence is the prop and support of his soul; which will not let him be dismayed: but makes him expect the time, when he shall be able securely to look upon all his enemies.

Ver. 9.] He doth not merely heap up riches for himself; but dispenses them to others, especially to the poor and needy, with a liberal hand: nor is he weary of well-doing, but ever producing some new fruit of his charity, which shall gain him the greatest honour, and raise him to an illustrious degree of power and authority.

Ver. 10.] At the sight of which the wicked (who shall not be able to obstruct it) shall be extremely vexed; or rather furiously enraged: he shall pine away with grief, envy, and impatience, to see himself and his companions disappointed in all that they wished; either of good to themselves, or evil to the righteous.

PSALM CXIII.

1 PRAISE ye the LORD. Praise, O ye servants of the LORD, praise the name of the LORD.

2 Blessed be the name of the LORD from this time forth and for evermore.

3 From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the LORD's name is to be praised.

4 The LORD is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens.

5 Who is like unto the LORD our God, who dwelleth on high.

6 Who humbleth *himself* to behold *the things that are* in heaven, and in the earth!

7 He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifeth the needy out of the dunghill;

8 That he may set *him* with princes, even with the princes of his people.

9 He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the LORD.

PSALM CXIII.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm, with the next five that follow, the Hebrews call by the name of *Hallel*, or *Hymn*: which they recited at their table (as in the new moons and other feasts, so) in the paschal night, after they had eaten the lamb; concluding it with *Hallelujah*: which is the title of this Psalm (as of the two foregoing), to excite all God's people, especially those that constantly attended in the tabernacle, to the praises of God's good providence; which extends itself as far as this earth where we live: several instances of which the psalmist here mentions.

Ver. 1.] O ye ministers of the Lord, and whosoever ye are that love his service, praise his eternal majesty: be not remiss in this heavenly employment: but, with your best affections, praise the power, wisdom, and goodness, of his eternal providence.

Ver. 2.] Praise him now in this present age; and wish that those incomparable perfections of his may be celebrated with the praises of those that live in future times, as long as the world shall last.

Ver. 3.] And not only here in this little spot of earth but wheresoever the sun shines, and lets men see how splendid and glorious his majesty is.

Ver. 4.] For all the nations of the earth are his; and but a little parcel of his supreme dominion; which

extends far beyond the sun, and moon, and stars; whose light is but a dim resemblance of the brightness of his glory.

Ver. 5.] And it is not think that any of them (though worshipped by other nations as gods) is comparable to that great Lord, and our most gracious God, whom we adore: for the very place where his glorious majesty resides is far higher than they.

Ver. 6.] And it is a great condescension in him, that he will have any respect to the most illustrious of those celestial bodies: though he be so gracious also as to extend his kind and careful providence, even to us who dwell upon this earth.

Ver. 7.] Where, among other manifest tokens of his stupendous goodness, he is pleased to take special notice of those whom the world despises: and to raise them out of a mean, nay, sordid condition, to such a pitch of honour and dignity.

Ver. 8.] That at last they are advanced to sit upon a throne; and made the governors of his own people (1 Sam. ii. 8; 2 Sam. vii. 8, 9, compared with 1 Sam. xxiv. 14).

Ver. 9.] And, which is still more strange, he opens the barren womb (which according to the course of nature would have brought forth nothing), and makes a numerous family spring from thence, to the great joy of her that bears them (1 Sam. i. 20; ii. 21). Praise the Lord in these, and such-like wonderful works of his.

PSALM CXIV.

1 WHEN Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language;

2 Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion.

3 The sea saw *it*, and fled: Jordan was driven back.

4 The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs.

5 What *ailed* thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back?

6 Ye mountains, that ye skipped like rams; and ye little hills, like lambs?

PSALM CXIV.

ARGUMENT.—As the foregoing Psalm puts them in mind of several works of the divine providence, about particular persons: so this makes a brief narration of some miraculous work; wherein the Lord declared his power, when he brought the whole Jewish nation out of the Egyptian bondage.

Ver. 1.] When our forefathers, with their whole family, were brought out of Egypt; and not one of them left behind among that barbarous people who had long oppressed them;

Ver. 2.] There was a most glorious appearance of God among them, by that bright cloud, the token of his presence: which then had no other peculiar place

for its sanctuary; but stood over the whole camp of Israel (Exod. xiii. 21; Numb. xiv. 14), whom he then took for his peculiar kingdom (Exod. xix. 6).

Ver. 3.] At which appearance the Red sea forsook its channel, and left a dry path for them to march through (Exod. xiv. 21, 24): and so did Jordan also afterward; to make way for their easy entrance into Canaan (Josh. iii. 15, 16).

Ver. 4.] All the mountains, great and small, which adjoined unto Sinai, trembled and leaped, like so many affrighted rams, or little lambs, before the same most dreadful majesty (Exod. xix. 18).

Ver. 5.] To what else shall we ascribe that sudden ebb of the sea? and that, no less strange, retreat of Jordan, when it overflowed all its banks?

7 Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the God of Jacob;

Ver. 6.] What made the mountains and hills leap up like affrighted rams or lambs; as if they would run away from the place where they were so firmly fixed?

Ver. 7.] But only the glorious presence of the divine majesty, who was then bringing his people to the rest he had promised to give them. And let the whole earth be afraid and tremble before that great Lord

8 Which turned the rock into a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters.

who hath honoured us so far as peculiarly to be our God:

Ver. 8.] And was so kind as to supply the necessities of our forefathers, even when they murmured against him, by a new miracle: bringing out of hard rocks, as hard as flint, such plenty of water, as if they had been dissolved into lakes or rivers (Exod. xvii. 8; Numb. xx. 11).

PSALM CXV.

1 NOT unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.

2 Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now their God?

3 But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.

4 Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands.

5 They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not:

6 They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not:

7 They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat.

8 They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.

9 O Israel, trust thou in the LORD: he is their help and their shield.

10 O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD: he is their help and their shield.

PSALM CXV.

ARGUMENT.—There is great reason to think, that this

Psalm was made in some time of sore distress; when their pagan enemies began to boast and brag, as if their gods were too hard for the God of Israel. But by whom it was made, or on what particular occasion, there are so many conjectures, that it will be no presumption to interpose mine, which is this; that when Jehoshaphat saw that vast army (which we read of 2 Chron. xx. 2), composed of several nations coming against him; and, after his prayer to God for deliverance, was encouraged by a prophet to hope for it (ver. 14, 15), and had by the Levites given him thanks for this hope; he, or that prophet, composed this hymn to quicken and confirm their faith in God: unto which you read he exhorted them (ver. 20). And it is likely that this was the hymn which, by common consent, the singers were appointed to use, when they went out to encounter those enemies: saying not only those words, which we read there (ver. 21), "Praise the Lord, for his mercy endureth for ever;" but these, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake," &c.

Ver. 1.] Prosper our arms, O Lord, and give us the victory over these enemies that invade us: not that we may grow more famous (no, we have no thoughts of the glory that will accrue to ourselves thereby): but that thy divine majesty may be honoured, and thy goodness and faithfulness to thy promises be made the more illustrious.

Ver. 2.] What a sad thing will it be to hear the nations that surround us insult, not so much over us, as over thee; saying, What is become of their God in whom they trusted? if he be so powerful as they boast, why doth he not deliver them?

Ver. 3.] Let them know that thou art infinitely superior to them and all their gods; being the possessor of the heavens, as well as the earth (2 Chron. xx. 6), whom no power of theirs can hurt, or so much as restrain; but art able to do whatsoever thou pleasest for their confusion, and for our deliverance.

Ver. 4.] Their idols cannot hinder it in the least; who are of no more value than the silver and gold of which they are made; and are so far from being the makers of things, that they themselves are the work of those that adore them.

Ver. 5.] They are mere lifeless images; that have mouths, but cannot give a word of advice, or of encouragement and comfort, to their supplicants: and eyes also, but cannot see the devotion wherewith they look up unto them, or prostrate themselves before them.

Ver. 6.] Let their worshippers cry to them never so loudly, they cannot hear a word: all the frankincense and sweet odours which they burn to them are merely lost; for they cannot smell them.

Ver. 7.] Though they have thunderbolts in their hands they feel them not; nor are able to do either good or harm: they cannot stir a foot from the place where they stand, unless they be carried; nor make so much noise as a fly; being utterly void of breath, as well as of sense and reason.

Ver. 8.] To what then, but to those idols, shall we compare the makers of them, and such as confide in them? who are mere images of men: having eyes, but do not see that the brutes are more excellent than such gods: and that the least help is not to be expected from them.

Ver. 9.] O ye Israelites, who by the divine favour are better instructed, repose that confidence in the eternal Lord, which they do in those vanities: and he will not only protect and defend you against all the assaults of your enemies: but help you to overcome them (2 Chron. xx. 9).

Ver. 10.] O ye priests and Levites, do you above all others rely upon that eternal Lord; whose praise you sing, and to whom you offer continual sacrifice; for he will never fail, not only to protect, but to assist, all such as piously confide in him.

Ver. 11.] And let all that fear the Lord, and devoutly worship him (of whatsoever nation they be), place the like confidence in his almighty goodness: for he will never forsake those that depend on him alone (though they be not of the seed of Abraham),

11 Ye that fear the LORD, trust in the LORD: he is their help and their shield.

12 The LORD hath been mindful of us: he will bless us; he will bless the house of Israel; he will bless the house of Aaron.

13 He will bless them that fear the LORD, both small and great.

14 The LORD shall increase you more and more, you and your children.

but defend them also in all dangers, and aid them against all their enemies.

Ver. 12.] We have had abundant experience of his care over us in all ages; and therefore, though now for the present our enemies afflict us, yet let us believe that the Lord will do us good, and bless us with a glorious deliverance: all the house of Israel shall see how kind he is; especially they that minister unto him in his holy temple.

Ver. 13.] And he will not forget those pious proselytes that are come to worship him there, as the only God; but, without any respect of persons, give them his blessing also; which shall not be denied, either to old or young, to rich or poor.

Ver. 14.] Nor will he grant you only a single blessing, by sending a present deliverance; but heap his benefits, and multiply his mercies, upon you; and upon all those that shall succeed you.

Ver. 15.] Ye are a happy people, who live under the care, and love, and benediction, of that mighty

15 Ye are blessed of the LORD which made heaven and earth.

16 The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD's: but the earth hath he given to the children of men.

17 The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence.

18 But we will bless the LORD, from this time forth and for evermore. Praise the LORD.

Lord, whose power nothing can confine; for he is not made (like the gentile gods), but himself created both the heaven and the earth.

Ver. 16.] In which he cannot be comprehended neither; for his empire extends farther than you can see; to the heavens, which are above these visible heavens, from whence his providence reaches down, even to us the children of men; whom he hath placed upon this earth, to admire and praise his infinite majesty.

Ver. 17.] And therefore will not suffer us to be rooted out, as our enemies design (2 Chron. xx. 11), for then the earth would have none in it to sing his praises, which the dead, who dwell in the silent grave, cannot celebrate.

Ver. 18.] But will continue us still alive, that we may praise the Lord, and speak good of his name, as we do at this time (2 Chron. xx. 21, 22), and leave those to succeed us, who shall continue his praises in all future generations to the world's end. Hallelujah, Praise the Lord.

PSALM CXVI.

1 I LOVE the LORD, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications.

2 Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.

3 The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.

4 Then called I upon the name of the LORD, O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.

5 Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful.

6 The LORD preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me.

PSALM CXVI.

ARGUMENT.—I do not understand the reason why Theodoret applies this Psalm to the times of Antiochus Epiphanes, when it agrees so exactly to the condition of David in his flight from his son Absalom (which seems to be mentioned ver. 11), when Ahithophel and others proved very false to him; and he had little or nothing to depend upon, but only the goodness of the Almighty; who was pleased to plead his cause, and deliver him. For which he resolved to be very thankful, and to call all his friends to rejoice with him, as I have expressed it, ver. 13, where the first words sufficiently declare the sense; but I have added more to explain the phrase, which is borrowed from the custom of those days: about which the reader may consult Mr. Mede, p. 483, last edit. In this resolution he was so serious that he repeats it in the conclusion; and saith he will pay his vows in the midst of Jerusalem: from whence the history tells us he was forced to fly, in great haste, to save his life (2 Sam. xv. 14).

This seems to be the occasion of the Psalm, which may very well befit any other persons that receive any great deliverance from God; and accordingly I will order the paraphrase, and fit it for the expressing of their devout affections.

Ver. 1.] O how I love the Lord! he knows that I love him exceedingly: and there is the greatest reason for it; because he hath so graciously heard my prayer, when in distress I cried unto him.

Ver. 2.] I cannot chose but mention again this love of his, in granting so readily my desires: which encourages, and engages me, on all such occasions, to address myself, with thankful acknowledgments, unto him; and to the last breath of my life, to expect deliverance from him.

Ver. 3.] Great was my misery; exceeding great: death itself and the grave were ready to seize on me; and I saw no way to escape: nay, I myself, in the anguish of my soul, inconsiderately cast myself into danger.

Ver. 4.] Yet I did not despond in these straits; but made the mighty, wise, and good providence of God my refuge; to whom I cried, saying, O Lord, who wast before all things, and commandest them as thou pleasest; rescue me, I most humbly beseech thee, from those dangers which threaten my destruction.

Ver. 5.] And it was not in vain that I cried unto him; for the Lord hath shown me how ready he is to do good, and how faithful in his promises: and withal how gentle in his punishments, and inclinable to pardon our faults; which demonstrates that no people serve such a gracious master as our merciful God.

Ver. 6.] I had perished, I am sure, if I had relied

7 Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.

8 For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.

9 I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living.

10 I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted:

11 I said in my haste, All men are liars.

12 What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me?

13 I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD.

14 I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people.

15 Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.

16 O LORD, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds.

17 I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD.

18 I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people.

19 In the courts of the LORD's house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD.

only on my own wisdom, or the skill and policy of others: but the Lord was my hope, who preserves the most simple and incautious souls, when they commit themselves to him, and wholly depend on his providence. I ought to say so; who was reduced to a most forlorn estate, and then, by his assistance in a wonderful manner delivered.

Ver. 7.] What hast thou then to do, O my soul, who hast been so tempestuously tossed, but to settle thyself again in peace and tranquillity; loving and praising the Lord, who hath very many ways expressed his bounty most liberally to thee.

Ver. 8.] For when the dangers of death surrounded me, thou, O my God, didst deliver me: whenever any sadness seized on me, thou hast been my comforter: and when I have been in danger of hurts, maims, or bruises (or falling into the hands of my enemies), thou still hast been my protector.

Ver. 9.] I ought therefore, and I am resolved, to employ all that health and cheerfulness, that soundness of body and mind, that peace and safety, which thou hast thus graciously bestowed on me, in doing thee (to whom as my sovereign Lord I owe) all faithful service; as long as I stay in this world.

Ver. 10.] I had nothing, I will thankfully remember, to depend upon, but only thy kind providence: in this I placed my trust; in this I gloried to others, when I was in my greatest straits: for the truth is, I was extremely miserable.

Ver. 11.] Pressed on all sides with dangers; from which, when I fled as fast as I was able (2 Sam. xv. 14; xvii. 16, 22), I concluded it was vain to rely on the friendship and help of men: for they in whom I trusted proved so false and treacherous (xv. 31), that I had reason to think the rest would deceive and fail my expectation, when I was in the greatest need of them.

Ver. 12.] O the greatness of thy love! who even then didst interpose and deliver me, by the assistance of some faithful friends, who still stuck to me! (2 Sam. xvii. 13, &c.) What shall I render unto the Lord, who heard my prayer? (xv. 31.) How shall I show myself grateful to him for this, and for all other his benefits, which he hath heaped upon me?

Ver. 13.] All that I can do cannot make him more

happy: but, as my duty binds me, I will praise the Lord, and speak good of his name, and give him thanks, in the best and most solemn manner I am able: I will call all my friends together to rejoice with me, and taking the cup, which we call the *cup of deliverance* (because, when blessed and set apart, we are wont to commemorate the blessings we have received), I will magnify the power, goodness, and faithfulness of God my Saviour before all the company; and will drink myself, and then give it to them, that they may praise his name together with me.

Ver. 14.] And whatsoever I have promised thee, O Lord, in the time of my distress, I will faithfully engage myself to perform before them all: they shall see I am not forgetful of thee, who wast so mindful of me in my trouble.

Ver. 15.] As, indeed, thou art of all good men, whose lives thou preservest as a precious jewel: and wilt not give them up to the pleasure of their enemies; nor suffer them to be lost, but by thy special providence.

Ver. 16.] Accept, good Lord, of these my resolutions; for I am sensible that I am thy servant; every way thy servant, and entirely obliged to be faithful to thee; both by my birth and by my education; and by this marvellous deliverance, whereby thou hast rescued me from the power of death, which had, in a manner, taken hold on me.

Ver. 17.] I can never sure prove ungrateful to thee, unto whom I am tied by so many bonds; but will always be making thee my most thankful solemn acknowledgments for the benefits I have received: and together with those praises, and thanksgivings, wait upon thy goodness, for the like mercies in time to come.

Ver. 18.] I resolve again, religiously to make good these, and all other my vows, wherein I stand engaged to the Lord: and that not only in private; but here at this solemnity, in the face of all his people:

Ver. 19.] When they are gathered together at his house, in the midst of the holy city of our God; where they meet to worship him, and to do him honour. There let them all join with me, to bless and praise the great creator and preserver of all things.

PSALM CXVII.

1 O PRAISE the LORD, all ye nations: praise him, all ye people.

2 For his merciful kindness is great toward

PSALM CXVII.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm (like the hundred and tenth) seems to be altogether prophetic, of the joy that all the world should conceive at the coming of the Messiah: to give salvation, first to the Jews, and then to all other nations; according to his faithful promise. St. Paul applies the first words of it to this business (Rom. xv. 11), and some of the Hebrews justify his application; confessing that this Psalm belongs to that matter. The brevity of it makes it the more remarkable;

us; and the truth of the LORD *endureth* for ever. Praise ye the LORD.

and easier to be remembered both by Jews and gentiles.

Ver. 1.] Let not the praises, which are due to the great Lord of all, be confined to our nation; but let all people upon the face of the earth praise him: let all mankind sing thankful hymns unto him.

Ver. 2.] For they are all concerned in his transcendent kindness, which hath done mighty things for us; and the Lord, who changes not, will never fail to perform his faithful promises to the world's end. Therefore let us all join our praises to our common benefactor.

PSALM CXVIII.

1 O GIVE thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: because his mercy *endureth* for ever.

2 Let Israel now say, that his mercy *endureth* for ever.

3 Let the house of Aaron now say, that his mercy *endureth* for ever.

4 Let them now that fear the LORD say, that his mercy *endureth* for ever.

5 I called upon the LORD in distress: the LORD answered me, and set me in a large place.

6 The LORD is on my side; I will not fear; what can man do unto me?

PSALM CXVIII.

ARGUMENT.—There is nothing more probable than that David composed this Psalm, after God had settled him upon the throne of Israel as well as Judah; and also subdued the Philistines (who hoped to have crushed him before he grew too powerful, 2 Sam. v. 17), together with other enemies round about him, who, though they are not mentioned, yet, in all likelihood, joined with them, as we may gather from ver. 10, 11 of this Psalm, compared with 2 Sam. vii. 1. For that it was written after he had brought the ark to Jerusalem (mentioned there, ch. vi.), and placed it in the house he had prepared for it, seems very plain from ver. 19 of this Psalm; where he begins to praise God in such words, as had not their complete fulfilling till the Lord's Christ (whom the Jews rejected, and said, He shall not reign over us) was made king of the world. For to him R. Solomon himself acknowledges those words, "The stone which the builders refused," &c. are to be applied.

And as the latter part of the Psalm is a prophecy of Christ, in David's type, so the former part may be accommodated to all Christians: who, being persecuted (as Theodoret speaks), and tormented, and disgracefully treated, by many princes and their people, by kings and governors, got a glorious victory over them all, after they had endured a thousand deaths.

It seems also to have been pronounced, at first, in some solemn assembly of all the people, met together to praise the Lord for his benefits. And it is the common opinion of most interpreters, that they all had a part in this Psalm. The greatest part of which was spoken by David; who begins with a declaration how much he was indebted to God, desiring all to assist him in his praises: and then coming in a solemn procession, I suppose to the gates of the tabernacle, calls upon the porters (ver. 19) to open them to him, that he might praise God

in his sanctuary, which he doth in the very entrance (ver. 20), and then in the courts of his house (ver. 21); after which all the people shout, and magnify the divine goodness; in making him, who was banished from his country, their king (ver. 22, &c.): and then the priests come forth, and bless both the king and people, in the name of the Lord (ver. 26), and exhort them to be thankful (ver. 27): and then David seems to take the words out of their mouths, and to declare that he will never be unmindful of God's benefits; desiring all the people also to remember them (ver. 28, 29). According to which account of the Psalm I have ordered the paraphrase.

Ver. 1.] O make your thankful acknowledgements to the great Lord of all the world: who, as he is the author of all good, and hath been exceeding bountiful unto us, so will continue his kindness to all succeeding generations.

Ver. 2.] Let the children of Israel, who have had such long experience of his love, and now see his promises fulfilled; let them confess, and thankfully acknowledge, that his kindness continues to all generations.

Ver. 3.] Let the priests and the Levites, whose business it is to attend upon his service, confess now, and thankfully acknowledge, that his kindness extends unto all ages.

Ver. 4.] And let all the devout worshippers of the Lord, of whatsoever nation they be, join together with us (for there is one Lord of all, who dispenses various benefits to every one of us), and confess now most thankfully, that there is no end of his kindness.

Ver. 5.] You may see an example of it in me, who was in grievous straits and dangers (1 Sam. xxiii. 26; xxvii. 1); but then imploring the divine protection, the Lord not only delivered me, but placed me in a secure estate, free from all such molestation (2 Sam. v. 3; vii. 1).

Ver. 6.] For the Lord, it is evident, takes my part;

7 The LORD taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see *my desire* upon them that hate me.

8 *It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.*

9 *It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes.*

10 All nations compassed me about: but in the name of the LORD will I destroy them.

11 They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about: but in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.

12 They compassed me about like bees; they are quenched as the fire of thorns: for in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.

13 Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall: but the LORD helped me.

14 The LORD is my strength and song, and is become my salvation.

15 The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in

the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.

16 The right hand of the LORD is exalted: the right hand of the LORD doeth valiantly.

17 I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD.

18 The LORD hath chastened me sore; but he hath not given me over unto death.

19 Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the LORD:

20 This gate of the LORD, into which the righteous shall enter.

21 I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.

22 The stone *which* the builders refused is become the head *stone* of the corner.

23 This is the LORD's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.

24 This is the day *which* the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

and therefore, though I have many enemies, I am not afraid of them: for, when he is for me, what disturbance can men, be they never so powerful, give me?

Ver. 7.] It is sufficient that the Lord, who hath done great things for me by weak instruments, is still aiding me: therefore I dare look the most malicious enemies in the face, and doubt not to see them turn their backs upon me (2 Sam. viii.).

Ver. 8.] This is my hope; and long experience hath taught me, that it is much safer to rely upon him, than upon the most numerous armies:

Ver. 9.] Far more safe to depend upon his help and protection (who, as he can do what he pleases, and is constant to his word, so never dies,) than to confide in the aid of the greatest princes; whose mind may change, or their forces fail, or they themselves, on a sudden, leave the world.

Ver. 10.] All the neighbouring nations round about (1 Sam. v. 17, &c.; vii. 1), combined with the Philistines to environ me; but, by the almighty power of the Lord, I was confident that I should hew them in pieces.

Ver. 11.] Again they made a new invasion, and beset me with stronger forces (2 Sam. v. 22, &c.), but still, by the almighty power of the Lord, I doubted not that I should cut them off, and utterly defeat them.

Ver. 12.] Though they were exceeding numerous, swarming about me like angry bees, and flaming with such rage and fury, as if they would presently consume me; yet it was but like the blaze of fire among thorns: for, by the almighty power of the Lord, I was confident I should destroy them.

Ver. 13.] They pressed me exceeding hard, and, as one man, conspired with all their might to throw me down from the throne, to which I was advanced; but though they shook it, and it was ready to fall, yet, by the help of the Lord, it was supported.

Ver. 14.] To him alone I ascribe my present happiness, saying, with our forefathers in their triumphant song (Exod. xv. 2), The Lord hath armed me with invincible strength; he, and he alone, is to be praised, who hath given me a most glorious deliverance.

Ver. 15.] Which comforts the hearts of all righteous men; whose houses sound with such joyful shouts of praise for my deliverance as these: The mighty power of the Lord hath done most stupendous things.

Ver. 16.] He hath made his mighty power to appear to be superior to all other; for not by man, but by that power we have again and again obtained illustrious victories over our enemies (2 Sam. xix. 9).

Ver. 17.] From whence I conclude, that I shall not fall into the hands of those that would take away my life; but still prolong it to declare what wonderful works the Lord hath done for me.

Ver. 18.] Who have let mine enemies have power to afflict me very sorely, but not to proceed so far as to destroy me.

Ver. 19.] No, instead of that, he hath brought me to his own house again, from which I was banished (1 Sam. xxvi. 19), where I will return thanks unto him: and therefore, O ye that minister in the tabernacle, open the gates at which the righteous enter into the courts of the Lord, that I may go in and make him my acknowledgments, for bringing me from a most forlorn condition to a throne.

Ver. 20.] This is the gate (which I behold and approach with joy) that leads to the courts of the Lord, at which the righteous shall enter together with me, and hear me say;

Ver. 21.] I will never cease to praise and acknowledge thy goodness. O Lord, who hast graciously heard my prayer, when I implored thy help, and delivered me out of all my distresses.

Ver. 22.] And let them bear a part with me in this my psalm of praise, saying; He whom the great men and rulers of the people rejected (1 Sam. xxvi. 19), as the builders of a house do a stone unfit to be employed in it, is now become our king; to whom we must all join ourselves, if we hope for safety: in whom we see a figure of that glorious king, who shall hereafter be in like manner refused (Luke xix. 14; xx. 17), and then by God exalted to be the Lord of all the world, and the foundation of all men's happiness (Acts iv. 11, 12).

Ver. 23.] This is the sole work of the Lord (not the effect of human counsels, who opposed and obstructed it), which surprises us with the greatest admiration, to see a despised person become on a sudden so renowned.

Ver. 24.] This is the happy day which the Lord himself hath made illustrious by his marvellous work; and which it becomes us to celebrate with joyful hearts, and with all outward expressions of gladness, for so great a benefit:

25 Save now, I beseech thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech thee, send now prosperity.

26 Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the LORD: we have blessed you out of the house of the LORD.

27 God is the LORD, which hath shewed us

light: bind the sacrifice with cords, *even* unto the horns of the altar.

28 Thou art my God, and I will praise thee: thou art my God, I will exalt thee.

29 O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

Ver. 25.] Most humbly beseeching thee, O Lord, to preserve our king; and to advance and perpetuate his kingdom (especially the kingdom of Christ, which shall be welcomed into the world with these words, Matt. xxi. 9, &c.) It begins most gloriously; be pleased now, O Lord, to give it answerable success and prosperity.

Ver. 26.] Which acclamations of the people, let the priests of the Lord meet with their approbation, saying: Blessed be the king which is set over us by the divine appointment; and blessed be all the people who live under his happy government: we, whose office it is to minister to the Lord, give you his blessing from the holy place, into which you are come to worship him.

Ver. 27.] Who is the omnipotent Lord, most faithful to his promise; who hath put an end to our troubles, and made peace among us: O be not ungrateful

to him, but solemnize this day with festival joys; bind your sacrifices with cords, and bring them to the corners of the altar, to be offered as testimonies of your love and thankfulness unto him.

Ver. 28.] And so for my part, I am resolved; who must own thee to be my most gracious God, and almighty deliverer; to whom therefore I will make continually my most thankful acknowledgments: to thy almighty goodness alone I owe this greatness to which I am promoted, and therefore I will never cease to speak the highest things I am able in thy praise.

Ver. 29.] And let all good men join together with me, and make their thankful acknowledgments to the great Lord of the world: who, as he is the author of all good, and hath been exceeding bountiful unto us; so will continue his kindness unto all succeeding generations.

PSALM CXIX.

ALEPH.

1 BLESSED are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD.

PSALM CXIX.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm is contrived so artificially, that one would think, at first sight, it was made after the foregoing; when God had subdued the rest of David's enemies (2 Sam. viii. 10), and given him leisure for such curious composesures. For it is divided into as many parts as there are letters in the Hebrew alphabet, each part containing eight verses, and every one of those verses beginning with that letter wherewith that part begins. The verses, for instance, of the first part, all begin with *alpha*, or A; and all of the second with *beth*, or B, &c. And thence this Psalm is called in the Masora, *The great alphabet*; which is an indication that David was now in a very sedate condition, under no extraordinary motions, when he penned this Psalm; but quietly considered things as they were represented to his remembrance.

But when we observe how frequently he mentions his affliction, as lying actually upon him, now when he wrote these meditations, it forces us to conclude that it was penned during Saul's persecution: in which there were, I suppose, some quiet intervals (see ver. 54); either between the time that Saul (having his life given him by David) resolved to persecute him no more (1 Sam. xxiv.), and his renewed attempts to destroy him, upon the information the Ziphites again gave him (1 Sam. xxvi.): or after David's fresh demonstration of his loyalty to him, before he went to Gath: or while he was in that city, where he had liberty to meditate on the excellence of God's laws, and the happiness of those that kept them, and the comfort they were to him in his affliction; which he found to be so sweet and so great, that he begs of God little else, but that he might be more and more in love with them; which were already so much his delight, that he mentions them under one name or

2 Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart.

other in every verse of this Psalm, none excepted but one (ver. 122), or two at the most (ver. 90); where, he celebrating God's *faithfulness*, which relates to the steadfastness of his *promise* (called in this Psalm his *word*), it may well be thought to be no exception to that observation.

I shall not be so curious as to examine the nice difference which is made by some, between *laws, statutes, testimonies, judgments, precepts, &c.*, because they seem here to be used promiscuously; or if there be any peculiar meaning in some verses, I shall endeavour to express it plainly in the paraphrase.

Theodoret hath a conjecture concerning David's design in this Psalm (both in his preface to it, and upon ver. 157), which I shall mention, that the reader may take his choice. David, it is well known, had great varieties in his condition, for he both fled from enemies, and chased them; lived sometimes very melancholy, and again most pleasantly; ran into God's ways, and stumbled, and rose again to run that good course. Now all these things, saith he (and it is not improbable), David afterward collected into this one Psalm; "connecting all the prayers which he had made to God at several times, and on several occasions, and putting them together in this admirable meditation, divided into twenty-two parts, which propound one and the same most profitable lesson to all men; and teach them how it is possible to live virtuously in the worst condition. Nor doth he neglect dogmatical instruction (as he speaks); but adds it to the other: so that this Psalm is sufficient to perfect those that study exquisite virtue, and to stir up the diligence of those that are lazy; to comfort those that are sad; to correct the negligent; and, in one word, to afford all manner of medicines for the cure of the various diseases of mankind." And, if it would not have made this

3 They also do no iniquity : they walk in his ways.

4 Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently.

5 O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes !

6 Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments.

7 I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments.

8 I will keep thy statutes : O forsake me not utterly.

BETH.

9 Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed *thereto* according to thy word.

10 With my whole heart have I sought thee : O let me not wander from thy commandments.

11 Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.

book too big, I should have taken the pains to show the design of every part in an argument before it.

ALEPH. PART I.

Ver. 1.] Happy, more happy than can be expressed, are those men, who do not take the liberty to live as they list ; but making the law of the Lord their rule, order their life in an exact conformity therewith.

Ver. 2.] The stricter they keep to that rule (wherein he hath testified his will unto us,) most heartily studying to please him, entirely devoting themselves to seek his favour in this way alone, the happier still they are.

Ver. 3.] Especially when they will not be tempted to do an evil action, though it were to gain the greatest good in this world ; but constantly adhere to him in the way which he hath prescribed them.

Ver. 4.] We are infinitely beholden to thee, therefore, O Lord, that thou hast obliged us to be so happy by requiring us to use our utmost diligence to observe thy precepts (which we ourselves know to be good for us) with all care and exactness.

Ver. 5.] O that I may ever be one of those happy men ! I have no greater wish than this ; that all the actions of my life may be ordered and governed according to thy will.

Ver. 6.] Then shall I never be disappointed of my hopes, nor blush at the crimes which are laid to my charge ; when my own conscience tells me, that there is not one of thy commandments but is ever before my eyes, as the rule of my actions :

Ver. 7.] And is so dear unto me, that nothing can give me such a joy as to have learnt effectually how just and how good they all are ; for which I will most sincerely thank thee, as the greatest benefit.

Ver. 8.] Deal with me according to the uprightness of my heart in this resolution ; that I will observe even those statutes for which I see no other reason but only thy will. O do not abandon me too far (1 Sam. xxvii. 1), but stick to me, as I purpose to do to thy statutes.

BETH. PART II.

Ver. 9.] But how shall a young man, such as I am (1 Sam. xxvii. 33 ; 2 Sam. v. 4), in an age that is prone to evil, be able to do as he resolves ? keeping himself so pure in all his ways, that they maintain an exact conformity unto thy word ?

Ver. 10.] First, I implore, with all my soul, thy

12 Blessed art thou, O Lord : teach me thy statutes.

13 With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth.

14 I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches.

15 I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways.

16 I will delight myself in thy statutes : I will not forget thy word.

GIMEL.

17 Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live and keep thy word.

18 Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.

19 I am a stranger in the earth : hide not thy commandments from me.

20 My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times.

21 Thou hast rebuked the proud that are

gracious assistance ; beseeching thee to afford me such a measure of it, that for want of those heavenly supplies I may not be drawn aside at any time from thy commandments.

Ver. 11.] Next, I have laid up thy word in my heart, as the most precious treasure ; hoping that will be a security to me, and preserve me from offending thee ; whose promises are no less comfortable, than thy threatenings are dreadful.

Ver. 12.] And I know also, that thou, O Lord, art kind, and dost not envy thy favours to any of us, but wilt for ever be praised for thy bounty towards us ; and therefore I expect that thou wilt hear my prayer, and enable me effectually to learn thy statutes.

Ver. 13.] On which I have so much set my heart, that I have not spared to declare to others the great regard I have to every thing which thou hast pronounced just, or condemned as unrighteous.

Ver. 14.] I can safely say, likewise, that I have taken more satisfaction, now that I am poor, in doing that which thou hast testified to be acceptable to thee, than I should in all the wealth of the world, were it heaped on me.

Ver. 15.] I will ruminate also often on thy precepts (which will be another means, I trust, to preserve me undefiled) : and never do any thing, but consider beforehand, how it agrees with the rules which thou hast prescribed me.

Ver. 16.] The study of thy statutes (see ver. 8), shall be my delight ; and I will not let slip any word of thine, but preserve it in faithful remembrance.

GIMEL. PART III.

Ver. 17.] Let these reasons move thee to deal graciously with me, who am devoted to thy service : render to me according to my integrity ; and let not my enemies take away my life, which I intend to employ in doing whatsoever thou hast commanded.

Ver. 18.] For which end, I beseech thee to illuminate the eyes of my mind, that I may clearly discern the admirable wisdom which discovers itself in thy law.

Ver. 19.] I am no better than a stranger in the land, wandering from place to place (1 Sam. xxiii. 13), and having no possessions : but do not let me want the knowledge of thy will ; and then I shall not think myself destitute of an inheritance.

Ver. 20.] For which my soul longs so vehemently, that I am not more broken with the hardships of my banishment, than with my continual labour and ear-

cursed, which do err from thy commandments.

22 Remove from me reproach and contempt; for I have kept thy testimonies.

23 Princes also did sit and speak against me: but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes.

24 Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors.

DALETH.

25 My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word.

26 I have declared my ways, and thou hearest me: teach me thy statutes.

27 Teach me to understand the way of thy precepts; so shall I talk of thy wondrous works.

28 My soul melteth for heaviness: strengthen thou me according unto thy word.

29 Remove from me the way of lying: and grant me thy law graciously.

30 I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid before me.

nest application of my mind, to have a full understanding of thy judgments.

Ver. 21.] According to which, thou hast already given a severe rebuke to those haughty men, who, without any respect to right or wrong, persecute and abuse thy servant (1 Sam. xxiv. 11, &c.; xxv. 10, 37), and the curse which thou hast pronounced (Deut. xxvii. 26), shall light on all such men as take the boldness to transgress those bounds which thou hast set them.

Ver. 22.] And thereby remove from me that disgrace and shame, unto which they expose me as a traitor to my king and country: for I am not guilty of any such wickedness; but carefully observe thy testimonies, ver. 14 (1 Chron. xii. 17).

Ver. 23.] Though the rulers and principal senators of the kingdom sat in consultation how to ruin me, declaring me guilty of the greatest crimes; the only care of thy servant hath been to study how to behave himself unblamably according to thy statutes.

Ver. 24.] Of which I have not been weary; but make the study of thy testimonies my recreation; and never took advice of any other counsellors.

DALETH. PART IV.

Ver. 25.] Consider, therefore, the forlorn condition wherein I lie, struggling for life, and utterly unable to help myself; and be pleased to revive and raise me out of it, according to thy promise (1 Sam. xvi. 12).

Ver. 26.] Thou knowest both my manner of life, and all the dangers to which I am exposed; for I have ever laid them before thee, and found thee ready on all occasions to assist and relieve me: and therefore I hope thou wilt now leave me; but more perfectly instruct me in my duty, as the surest way to safety.

Ver. 27.] Give me such a right understanding, that I may ever be preserved in the way of thy precepts: then shall I escape the snares of my enemies; and my ordinary discourse shall be, what wonderful deliverances thou hast given me.

Ver. 28.] Pity my sad condition; and now that my heart sinks under the weight of my affliction, support and strengthen me according to thy promise; that I may never take any undue course for ease and relief.

Ver. 29.] Far be all fraud and falsehood from me, whereby my enemies contrive to undo me: I desire not to learn any of their wicked arts; but only be-

31 I have stuck unto thy testimonies: O LORD, put me not to shame.

32 I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.

HE.

33 Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end.

34 Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.

35 Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight.

36 Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.

37 Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way.

38 Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who is devoted to thy fear.

39 Turn away my reproach which I fear: for thy judgments are good.

40 Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness.

seeh thee to give me grace to observe thy laws constantly.

Ver. 30.] That is the way I have resolved upon, to deal truly and sincerely; squaring all my actions according to thy judgments; which I have laid before me as the most equal rule of my life.

Ver. 31.] And hitherto I have kept my resolution, and never started from thy testimonies: preserve me, good Lord, that I may not hereafter disgrace myself, by doing any thing contrary to them; nor be disappointed of my hope, by falling into the hands of those that seek my ruin.

Ver. 32.] And when thou shalt have filled my heart with joy, by freeing me from those grievous sorrows, I will do thee better service; and be more forward cheerfully to execute all thy commandments.

HE. PART V.

Ver. 33.] Instruct me, therefore, good Lord, more and more in the right way of serving thee; and I will show myself most thankful for it, by keeping exactly to it all the days of my life.

Ver. 34.] Illuminate my mind to understand the excellence of thy law; and then I shall not only observe it, but set myself to do it with a watchful, impartial, and most affectionate diligence.

Ver. 35.] Be thou my leader and guide, that I may not stray from the path of thy commandments, wherein I find the greatest satisfaction.

Ver. 36.] Incline my heart always to seek its contentment in thy testimonies: and suffer it not to be drawn away by the desire of worldly goods, which, having no measure, is never satisfied.

Ver. 37.] Help me to overlook those empty honours and fading beauties which we are apt to behold with too much admiration, and with lively affections and vigorous endeavours, to persist in the pursuit of thy favour, in the way thou hast set before me.

Ver. 38.] And at last make good thy promise to thy servant (2 Sam. v. 2), who fears to do any thing to offend thee, though thereby he might win a crown.

Ver. 39.] Turn from me that disgrace, of which I cannot but be sometime afraid (1 Sam. xxvii. 1), and must certainly suffer, if I fall into my enemies' hands; for thou wilt proceed, I know, according to thy own judgments; which are all equitable, merciful, and gracious.

Ver. 40.] I appeal to thee, whether I have not a

VAU.

41 Let thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD, *even* thy salvation, according to thy word.

42 So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me: for I trust in thy word.

43 And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth; for I have hoped in thy judgments.

44 So shall I keep thy law continually for ever and ever.

45 And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts.

46 I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed.

47 And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved.

48 My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes.

ZAIN.

49 Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.

great zeal for thy precepts; unto which I desire above all things to be conformed: let me not perish therefore in these troubles; but in much mercy revive me, according to thy faithful promise.

VAU. PART VI.

Ver. 41.] To those infinite mercies of thine, which moved thee to make such gracious promises, I betake myself: and beseech thee to let me feel the happy effects of both in my deliverance.

Ver. 42.] So shall I be able to put to silence those that reproach me for my confidence in thee; which they call a vain presumption; but is an humble reliance on thy own gracious promises to me.

Ver. 43.] Which till thou art pleased to fulfil, do not so far abandon me, as to let me be disheartened in asserting their truth and faithfulness (which I am wont to oppose to all the threats of my enemies): for my whole dependence is on this, that thou wilt not fail me; but pronounce a righteous sentence for me.

Ver. 44.] And I for my part promise, when thou shalt be so gracious to me, not to suffer myself to grow more negligent in thy service; but to be more careful than ever in the observance of thy laws, to the very end of my days.

Ver. 45.] For then I shall have no such encumbrances on me, as I now have in these straits and difficulties; from which, when thou freest me, I will do my duty with the greater cheerfulness and joy; for it is not liberty, no, nor a kingdom, that I seek, so much as better advantages to fulfil thy precepts.

Ver. 46.] Which I will not be ashamed to justify before the greatest persons in the world, to be the most excellent rule of life, and the best testimony of thy love to us; and will do it with such reasons, that they shall never be able to disprove me.

Ver. 47.] Nor will I confute myself, by leading a voluptuous life; when I have liberty to do as I list: but as I have hitherto preferred thy commandments before all other things, so then will I take the highest pleasure in them;

Ver. 48.] Not only in their study; but show the truth of my love to them, by a diligent and zealous practice of them: which shall be the end of my meditation in them.

ZAIN. PART VII.

Ver. 49.] Be pleased therefore, in due time, to perform the promise, which thou hast long ago made to

50 This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me.

51 The proud have had me greatly in derision: yet have I not declined from thy law.

52 I remembered thy judgments of old, O LORD; and have comforted myself.

53 Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake thy law.

54 Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.

55 I have remembered thy name, O LORD, in the night, and have kept thy law.

56 This I had, because I kept thy precepts.

CHETH.

57 *Thou art* my portion, O LORD: I have said that I would keep thy words.

58 I intreated thy favour with *my* whole heart: be merciful unto me according to thy word.

59 I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.

thy servant (2 Sam. v. 2), and when I thought of no such thing, given me an assured hope of it (1 Sam. xvi. 11—13).

Ver. 50.] Which, as it hath been the occasion of many and great troubles to me, so hath comforted me under them all: and even when I despaired of safety, revived my spirit, and restored my courage to life again.

Ver. 51.] Though my insulting enemies mocked exceedingly in my hope, and, in the pride of their hearts, attempted by the most unjust means to destroy me; it never moved me to imitate them, by taking any unlawful method for my preservation.

Ver. 52.] But I called to mind, O Lord, how, in all foregoing ages, thou hast suffered good men to fall into great calamities; thereby to render them, at last, the more illustrious: and with this consideration also I comforted myself.

Ver. 53.] I have been seized, indeed, sometime with a horrible fear, when I thought what sort of men were my persecutors; who stuck at nothing which would serve their ends, having no regard to right or wrong.

Ver. 54.] Yet in all my wanderings up and down, (1 Sam. xxii. 1, 2, 5; xxiii. 13), I never tarried long in any place, but I passed the time delightfully, in composing some such song as this in praise of thy statutes.

Ver. 55.] When others were asleep, I was calling to mind how good, how powerful, and how faithful thou art; and resolving with myself still to observe thy laws.

Ver. 56.] Which make those so happy that obey them, that I ascribe this sweet composure of mind, and cheerfulness of spirit, under all my grievous afflictions, to my strict observance of them.

CHETH. PART VIII.

Ver. 57.] I have no possessions in this world (1 Sam. xxvi. 19), which I see others greedily sharing among them; but I do not think myself poor, as long as I have an interest in thy love, and in thy promises, O Lord: whose words I have resolved to keep as the greatest treasure.

Ver. 58.] For there is nothing comparable to thy favour; which I have besought with the heartiest affection, and the most importunate prayers: and do again beseech thee to deal mercifully with me, according to thy repeated promises unto me.

Ver. 59.] For upon serious deliberation what course

60 I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.

61 The hands of the wicked have robbed me : but I have not forgotten thy law.

62 At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments.

63 I am a companion of all *them* that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts.

64 The earth, O LORD, is full of thy mercy : teach me thy statutes.

TETH.

65 Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O LORD, according unto thy word.

66 Teach me good judgment and knowledge : for I have believed thy commandments.

67 Before I was afflicted I went astray : but now have I kept thy word.

68 Thou art good, and doest good ; teach me thy statutes.

69 The proud have forged a lie against me : but I will keep thy precepts with my whole heart.

of life it was best to take, I rejected all other, which with specious shows of worldly advantages would have seduced me, and determined to be guided wholly by thy testimonies.

Ver. 60.] And being thus resolved, I admitted no farther debate about it ; but instantly, without any delay, set myself to the strict observance of thy commandments.

Ver. 61.] Nor hath any thing been able to remove me from this resolution ; but though I have been beset with troops of wicked men, who stripped me of all I had (1 Sam. xxiii. 26), it did not make me forget my duty ; nor put me upon any unlawful means of being revenged of them (xxiv. 6, 7).

Ver. 62.] But have blessed thee both night and day, and arose at midnight to give thee thanks for those just and good laws, which thou hast taught me to observe.

Ver. 63.] Associating myself willingly with none but such as fear to offend thee, and do religiously observe thy precepts : who are all truly dear unto me.

Ver. 64.] And no other thing do I desire of thee, O Lord, whose kindness is so great that it dispenses its blessing plentifully throughout all the earth, but that thou wilt instruct me still to serve thee as I ought.

TETH. PART IX.

Ver. 65.] Many other benefits, I will thankfully acknowledge, O Lord, thou hast bestowed upon thy servant : with whom thou hast faithfully kept thy word.

Ver. 66.] And I am not ignorant of thy commandments, which, by thy grace, I have believed to be the only way to happiness : but still I need thy farther assistance, to give me a delightful taste and thorough sense of what I know ; which I beseech thee add to the rest of thy benefits I have received from thee.

Ver. 67.] And if it be necessary for this end to deprive me still of all other delights, I submit unto it : for I must confess I committed many errors before I was thus afflicted ; which, since, I have corrected, and grown more strictly observant of thy word.

Ver. 68.] Thou art in thy own nature kind and good ; and nothing else can proceed from thee, who designest our good even when thou afflictest us : take what methods thou pleasest with me ; only teach me effectually to do as thou wouldest have me.

70 Their heart is as fat as grease ; but I delight in thy law.

71 *It is good* for me that I have been afflicted ; that I might learn thy statutes.

72 The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.

JOD.

73 Thy hands have made me and fashioned me : give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments.

74 They that fear thee will be glad when they see me ; because I have hoped in thy word.

75 I know, O LORD, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.

76 Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant.

77 Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live ; for thy law is my delight.

78 Let the proud be ashamed ; for they dealt

Ver. 69.] They that disdain to be tied to the common and plain rules of honesty, have taken a great deal of pains to invent a lie against me (1 Sam. xxiv. 9) : but as I am hitherto conscious of no such guilt, so I will always confute them by an impartial and most hearty observance of thy precepts.

Ver. 70.] Which gives me infinitely greater satisfaction in a poor starved condition, than all the dull delights of sense, which they enjoy, in the fullest plenty of worldly prosperity.

Ver. 71.] This they stupidly imagine is the only happiness ; but I can truly say, it was more happy for me that I was afflicted : for thereby I learnt to apply myself more seriously to thy statutes.

Ver. 72.] Whereby thy will is declared unto us by a voice from heaven (Exod. xx. 1), which I prefer before all the gold and silver in the kingdom.

JOD. PART X.

Ver. 73.] Desert me not, then, who am thine own workmanship ; that neither hath nor hopeth for any thing but from thy almighty power : and desires above all things to comprehend fully what thy will is, that he may obey it.

Ver. 74.] It will be a very great comfort and encouragement to all good men, when they see me delivered out of all these troubles ; for thereby they will be confirmed in their belief of thy faithfulness to thy promises ; on which it will appear I have not vainly depended, though I stayed long for the performance.

Ver. 75.] And I am satisfied, O Lord, that while thou makest me wait for the performance, thou doest nothing contrary to thy justice, or to thy fidelity : but that all these cross dispensations of thy providence, in the heavy afflictions which have befallen me, are perfectly righteous : and will only make thy truth and faithfulness at last the more illustrious.

Ver. 76.] O hasten that happy time ; when I shall see thy loving-kindness turning this disconsolate into a more comfortable condition ; according to the promises which thou hast made unto thy servant (1 Sam. xvi. 12, 13).

Ver. 77.] Let me feel the speedy effects of thy compassionate mercy ; rescuing me from those that seek my life, and raising me out of this forlorn estate (1 Sam. xxiv. 14). For howsoever I am represented, my highest satisfaction is in obedience to thy law.

perversely with me without a cause: *but* I will meditate in thy precepts.

79 Let those that fear thee turn unto me, and those that have known thy testimonies.

80 Let my heart be sound in thy statutes; that I be not ashamed.

CAP. III.

81 My soul fainteth for thy salvation: *but* I hope in thy word.

82 Mine eyes fail for thy word, saying, When wilt thou comfort me?

83 For I am become like a bottle in the smoke; *yet* do I not forget thy statutes.

84 How many *are* the days of thy servant? when wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute me?

85 The proud have digged pits for me, which *are* not after thy law.

86 All thy commandments *are* faithful: they persecute me wrongfully; help thou me.

Ver. 78.] Confound all those proud contemners of it, who, making no conscience of what they say, have oppressed and overthrown me with lies and calumnies; as if I studied to disturb the kingdom, when my only study is to observe thy precepts.

Ver. 79.] Let all pious men, who have a due regard to thy testimonies, be convinced of this; and be no longer abused by these slanders; but turn to my side and become my friends.

Ver. 80.] And in order to it preserve me so blameless before thee, in such integrity of heart as well as life, that I may not be ashamed of the hope I have, that thou and all good men will take my part.

CAP. III. PART XI.

Ver. 81.] For which blessing I have now attended so many years, that I am ready some time to faint away with vehement desire to see thy long-expected promise fulfilled, of deliverance from all my enemies.

Ver. 82.] That joyful sight I have looked for, till I am in danger to be weary with expectation; saying, When will the time come of my deliverance from this disconsolate condition?

Ver. 83.] I hope it will not be long delayed; for I am worn away, and my skin (like an empty leathern bag, that hath hung a great while in the smoke) is shrivelled up with toil and grief; and yet I have never taken any unlawful course to rid myself of all this misery.

Ver. 84.] I leave that to thee, O Lord; beseeching thee to consider how my days spend apace in trouble and sorrow: which force me to sigh and say, How long must thy poor servant still lie in this calamitous condition? O when wilt thou do me right against my persecutors?

Ver. 85.] Who proudly contrive by all manner of frauds and treachery to take away my life, directly contrary to thy law; to which they are as injurious as unto me.

Ver. 86.] For all thy commandments teach us to be just and true; being as faithful as those men are false and perfidious: therefore make good thy promises to me; and deliver me from those who persecute me with lies and forgeries.

Ver. 87.] Which they have employed so successfully, that I escaped very hardly with my life, when I was in the land of Judah (1 Sam. xxiii. 26), and yet, for all this, I stuck to thy precepts; and would

87 They had almost consumed me upon earth; but I forsook not thy precepts.

88 Quicken me after thy loving kindness; so shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth.

LAMED.

89 For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.

90 Thy faithfulness *is* unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth.

91 They continue this day according to thine ordinances: for all *are* thy servants.

92 Unless thy law *had been* my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction.

93 I will never forget thy precepts: for with them thou hast quickened me.

94 *I am* thine, save me; for I have sought thy precepts.

95 The wicked have waited for me to destroy me: *but* I will consider thy testimonies.

96 I have seen an end of all perfection: *but* thy commandment *is* exceeding broad.

not take away the life of him that sought mine, when I could have easily done it (xxiv. 6, 7).

Ver. 88.] Deal as kindly with me, O Lord; and not only spare my life, but raise me out of this forlorn estate, wherein I lie, like a man that is dead (1 Sam. xxiv. 11): and I will endeavour the more carefully to observe the testimonies which thou hast solemnly (ver. 72) given us in charge.

LAMED. PART XII.

Ver. 89.] Thou art eternal, O Lord, and changest not; and thy promises are, like thyself, fixed and settled in the heavens; which are a lively emblem of their constancy, and unvariable truth.

Ver. 90.] One generation goes, and another comes; but thy fidelity is still the same to all: and alters no more than the earth; which thou hast firmly and immovably established, while all those creatures that live upon it pass away and perish.

Ver. 91.] All things remain to this day in the order at first appointed; and never vary from the laws which thou hast set them: for they are entirely subject to thy will and pleasure.

Ver. 92.] Which was a most comfortable meditation in my afflicted condition: when my heart would have failed me, and I should have been undone; if thy laws (which stand as fast as heaven and earth) had not given me constant consolation.

Ver. 93.] I will never, therefore, be guilty of neglecting thy precepts: which have revived me (by thy faithful promises thou hast annexed to the observance of them), when I looked upon myself as a dead man that could not escape the hands of those that sought to destroy me.

Ver. 94.] And be thou pleased still to deliver me from falling into their hands: for though they have driven me from thy inheritance (1 Sam. xxvi. 19), I still continue thine, and serve no other God; but have diligently inquired, in my greatest dangers, what would be most pleasing to thee as most advantageous to myself.

Ver. 95.] Those wicked men, who are combined to destroy me, have long watched for an opportunity which they confidently expect to meet withal: but it doth not discourage my study of thy testimonies, as the best defence against their bloody attempts.

Ver. 96.] For had I greater forces than my enemies, alas! I never yet saw anything so complete, but, as it

MEM.

97 O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.

98 Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me.

99 I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation.

100 I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.

101 I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word.

102 I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me.

103 How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

104 Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.

NUN.

105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

had its bounds and limits so it is exceeding frail; and when it is arrived at perfection, comes to a speedy end; whereas the wisdom which thou hast revealed to us hath infinite satisfaction in it, durable and lasting satisfaction; which never fails those that depend upon it.

MEM. PART XIII.

Ver. 97.] It is impossible to express the love I have to thy law; which entertains my meditations, or enables me to entertain others, with admirable variety, whole days together.

Ver. 98.] Mine enemies are very crafty, and use many artifices to destroy me: but, by observing thy commandments, I have defeated all their subtle devices, and confounded them, even by refusing (because thy commandments, which are ever before my eyes, restrain me), to be avenged on them (1 Sam. xxiv. 17, 18, &c.; xxvi. 21.)

Ver. 99.] I have outstripped all the doctors of the law, of whom I formerly learnt; and understand more perfectly than they, the best means of securing myself: because my mind is still employed in thy testimonies, as the rule of all my designs and undertakings.

Ver. 100.] Though I am but young, yet have I more understanding in things, than the judges and grave privy-councillors; because my maxim is, strictly to observe thy precepts.

Ver. 101.] whatsoever advantage it promised me, I have never proceeded in any evil course to obtain my end: but refused the seeming gain; that I might not offend against thy word.

Ver. 102.] My respect to thee hath hindered me from doing any injury unto others: because I know thou art the author of those laws which forbid it; and in the observance of them, I have learnt, consists my happiness.

Ver. 103.] And a happiness it is, I feel already, incomparably above all other: the pleasure I take in every word of thine is inexpressibly far to be preferred before all the delights of sense, though never so sweet and luscious.

Ver. 104.] And by thy precepts I am so fully instructed how to behave myself, that I need not to betake myself to any dishonest ways, which I utterly abhor.

NUN. PART XIV

Ver. 105.] Thy word is my only guide; whose di-

106 I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.

107 I am afflicted very much: quicken me, O Lord, according unto thy word.

108 Accept, I beseech thee, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O Lord, and teach me thy judgments.

109 My soul is continually in my hand: yet do I not forget thy law.

110 The wicked have laid a snare for me: yet I erred not from thy precepts.

111 Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart.

112 I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes always, even unto the end.

SAMECH.

113 I hate vain thoughts: but thy law do I love.

114 Thou art my hiding place and my shield; I hope in thy word.

rections I follow in all the dark and difficult passages of my life.

Ver. 106.] I have solemnly resolved, and bound myself by the most sacred ties, which I will never break, but do now confirm, that I will carefully observe thy decrees, which I find to be both just and good.

Ver. 107.] I have suffered very much upon that account, and am still sorely afflicted; but I comfort myself, O Lord, with thy promise, according to which I beseech thee to deliver me from those that seek to destroy me; and raise me out of this forlorn condition, wherein I can scarce be said to live.

Ver. 108.] I have no other sacrifices that I am able in this exile to offer to thee, but these of prayer, and thankful acknowledgments, and vows of sincere and cheerful obedience; with which I do most freely and heartily present thee, O Lord: beseeching thee to teach me still more effectually thy judgments; that I may never fail to be conformed to thy will.

Ver. 109.] To which I have hitherto so closely adhered, that though I go in continual danger of my life (Judg. xii. 3), it doth not move me in the least (whatsoever shifts I am forced to make) to save myself by forsaking thy law.

Ver. 110.] They that make no conscience of their actions, have contrived a subtle plot to ruin me; but I have never stepped out of the way of thy precepts, to avoid the snares they have laid for me.

Ver. 111.] I had rather always continue as poor as I am, than do any thing against thy testimonies; which I hold to be my chiefest good and surest possession: out of which none can expel me; and which always yield me that inward satisfaction and joy which none can take from me.

Ver. 112.] This infinitely outweighs all other considerations; and hath inclined my heart to resolve to do always as thou biddest me (whatsoever I may lose by it), to the very end of my days.

SAMECH. PART XV.

Ver. 113.] I hate all double dealing, and crafty devices, that are not warranted by thy law: to which I have resolved to stick with hearty affection.

Ver. 114.] In that way I will trust to thee for safety and protection: having a firm hope that thou wilt be as good unto me as thy word.

115 Depart from me, ye evildoers : for I will keep the commandments of my God.

116 Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live : and let me not be ashamed of my hope.

117 Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe : and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually.

118 Thou hast trodden down all them that err from thy statutes : for their deceit is falsehood.

119 Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth like dross : therefore I love thy testimonies.

120 My flesh trembleth for fear of thee ; and I am afraid of thy judgments.

AIN.

121 I have done judgment and justice : leave me not to mine oppressors.

122 Be surety for thy servant for good : let not the proud oppress me.

123 Mine eyes fail for thy salvation, and for the word of thy righteousness.

124 Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy, and teach me thy statutes.

Ver. 115.] Do not persuade me any longer, O ye evil-doers, to join with you ; but get you gone from me : for I will follow none of your counsels ; but strictly observe the commandments of my God, who hath hitherto most graciously delivered me.

Ver. 116.] And on whom I still depend, that thou wilt support me, O Lord, according to thy promise, against all the assaults of my enemies that seek my life : and not let me be ashamed of the hope and expectation I have, that thou wilt defend and deliver me.

Ver. 117.] Be thou my support in this weak condition, I humbly again beseech thee : and then they shall not be able to throw me down ; but in safety and security I shall make thy statutes my perpetual study.

Ver. 118.] They shall fall to the ground, and not I ; for thou art wont, I observe, to abase and lay as low as the mire in the streets all those who presume to go out of the plain way of thy statutes ; for all their crafty tricks and crooked arts, on which they rely, at last prove false unto them and deceive them.

Ver. 119.] Thou castest all such wicked men out of the land like dross, that is good for nothing, which makes me addict myself, with the greater love, unto thy testimonies.

Ver. 120.] Trembling all over with fear lest I should by any disobedience to thee incur thy severe displeasure ; and dreading above all things thy judgments : which are threatened in the law, and which I see executed upon the contemners of it.

AIN. PART XVI.

Ver. 121.] This pious fear laid such a restraint upon me, that I never did any wrong to them, nor so much as dealt hardly with them, that now injure me : therefore suffer me not to fall into the hands of those who oppress me with their calumnies.

Ver. 122.] Their pride is great, and, having power equal to their malice, they hope to prevail over me ; but do thou graciously undertake my protection, and be my security against the mischief they design me ; that instead of being my ruin, their calumnies may turn to my greater good and advantage.

Ver. 123.] I believe they will ; but I have looked so long for that happy time, when thou wilt deliver me (and yet am still in apparent danger to fall into the hands of my enemies), that I am almost tired with

125 I am thy servant ; give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies.

126 It is time for thee, Lord, to work : for they have made void thy law.

127 Therefore I love thy commandments above gold ; yea, above fine gold.

128 Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right ; and I hate every false way.

PE.

129 Thy testimonies are wonderful : therefore doth my soul keep them.

130 The entrance of thy words giveth light ; it giveth understanding unto the simple.

131 I opened my mouth, and panted : for I longed for thy commandments.

132 Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name.

133 Order my steps in thy word : and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.

expectance of thy promise ; though I know it is faithful and true, and shall certainly be performed.

Ver. 124.] Pity my infirmity, and in much mercy send speedy relief unto thy servant ; and in the mean time instruct me more perfectly in thy statutes ; that I may make the better use of that deliverance.

Ver. 125.] I am devoted to thy service, and designed by thee to a high employment : enlighten my understanding therefore, that I may fully know my duty.

Ver. 126.] For now is the time to do all I can for the Lord (who may be pleased then to take this opportunity to perform his promise), when wicked men not only transgress, but are so profane that they reject, and would wholly lay aside, thy law.

Ver. 127.] This inflames my zeal, and heightens my love to thy commandments, which I value far more than all the riches in the world ; which shall not tempt me to violate one of them, or suffer them, if I can help it, to be contemned by others.

Ver. 128.] For the more I consider them, the more I approve every one of them (as the exactest and best rule whereby I square all my actions), and abhor all those base and dishonest ways whereby others study to advance themselves to riches and honours.

PE. PART XVII.

Ver. 129.] I cannot sufficiently admire and extol the excellent wisdom also of thy laws, whereby thou hast testified thy will unto us ; which makes me the more careful faithfully to observe them.

Ver. 130.] When a man doth but begin to be acquainted with thy word, he finds his mind marvelously enlightened with such clear and useful knowledge, as directs the most simple people how to live happy.

Ver. 131.] Which hath excited me to the most eager pursuit of this most excellent wisdom ; for I longed to have a perfect understanding of thy commandments, which at first sight affords such abundant satisfaction.

Ver. 132.] Favour my desires, I most humbly beseech thee ; and vouchsafe me the same grace which thou art wont to bestow on those that sincerely love thee, and study, as I do, thy honour and glory.

Ver. 133.] And first of all enable me to walk steadily, according to the rule of thy word, that I may not be a slave to any sin whatsoever.

134 Deliver me from the oppression of man : so will I keep thy precepts.

135 Make thy face to shine upon thy servant ; and teach me thy statutes.

136 Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law.

TZADDI.

137 Righteous art thou, O LORD, and upright are thy judgments.

138 Thy testimonies that thou hast commanded are righteous and very faithful.

139 My zeal hath consumed me, because mine enemies have forgotten thy words.

140 Thy word is very pure : therefore thy servant loveth it.

141 I am small and despised : yet do not I forget thy precepts.

142 Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and thy law is the truth.

143 Trouble and anguish have taken hold of me : yet thy commandments are my delights.

144 The righteousness of thy testimonies is

everlasting : give me understanding, and I shall live.

KOPH.

145 I cried with my whole heart ; hear me, O LORD : I will keep thy statutes.

146 I cried unto thee ; save me, and I shall keep thy testimonies.

147 I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried : I hoped in thy word.

148 Mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I might meditate in thy word.

149 Hear my voice according unto thy loving-kindness : O LORD, quicken me according to thy judgment.

150 They draw nigh that follow after mischief : they are far from thy law.

151 Thou art near, O LORD ; and all thy commandments are truth.

152 Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever.

RESH.

153 Consider mine affliction, and deliver me : for I do not forget thy law.

Ver. 134.] And then deliver me from the oppression of him (1 Sam. xxvi. 24), who unjustly seeks to destroy me; that I may have the greater liberty to study and observe thy precepts.

Ver. 135.] Put an end to the troubles of thy servant, who is devoted to thy obedience; and for this reason, above all others, desires to see better days, that he may have better opportunities to learn thy statutes.

Ver. 136.] Which it is a very great grief to me, to behold so universally neglected; and hath cost me many a tear, when I consider, not merely the persecution which I suffer, but how thereby my enemies violate thy law.

TZADDI. PART XVIII.

Ver. 137.] I leave it to thee, O Lord, to redress these evils; who art both just and good, and governest all things with an unerring equity.

Ver. 138.] For as all the laws thou hast given us are perfectly righteous; so thou dost exactly and most faithfully fulfil all the promises or threatenings which thou hast made to the observers, or against the breakers, of them.

Ver. 139.] The consideration of which moves my indignation to such a degree, that I am tormented to see my enemies so forgetful of their own interest, as not to regard thy words.

Ver. 140.] Which I know to be infallibly true, and perfectly free from all falsehood and deceit: which is the reason of that ardent affection thy servant hath unto them.

Ver. 141.] Which will not suffer me, though I am mean and contemptible in the eyes of my enemies (who are honourable and mighty), to be guilty of neglecting any of thy precepts.

Ver. 142.] For still I think with myself, that thy justice, goodness, and fidelity, are unchangeable; and whatsoever thou hast said in thy law is the very truth; upon which we may certainly depend, and never be deceived.

Ver. 143.] And therefore, though I am unexpectedly (1 Sam. xx. 3) involved in very sore straits and difficulties, yet I do not forsake, but find great consolation in the study of thy commandments.

Ver. 144.] Especially in this consideration (which comes often into my mind, ver. 142), that all the de-

clarations thou hast made of thy will to us are so just and true, that they will never fail our expectation: O give me wisdom to order my life according to them! and then it shall not be in the power of my enemies to make me miserable.

KOPH. PART XIX.

Ver. 145.] I have besought thy favour in this sorrowful and distressed condition, with most vehement cries and hearty affection: be pleased to rescue me out of it, O Lord, and I promise with the greater care to observe thy statutes.

Ver. 146.] I have made it my constant business to cry unto thee for help; from whom alone I seek it: deliver me, I again beseech thee, and I will not fail to make good my promise of observing thy testimonies.

Ver. 147.] I have sent up early cries unto thee, before the morning-light appeared: constantly expecting the performance of thy promise to me.

Ver. 148.] Nor have I been less forward in the study of my duty than in the imploring of thy mercy; but have awaked before all the watches were set, to meditate in thy word.

Ver. 149.] Let my prayer prevail with thee, O Lord, for that favour and kindness which I have oft experienced; and preserve my life, as thou hast done hitherto, by such means as thou judgest best for me.

Ver. 150.] I am closely beset, thou seest, and in danger to be seized (1 Sam. xxiii. 26), by those who, as they persecute me, and seek my ruin, so care not by what wicked arts they compass their design: for they have no regard at all to thy law.

Ver. 151.] My only comfort is, that they cannot approach so near to hurt me, as thou, O Lord, art to defend and preserve me; and that all thy promises annexed to thy commandments (still I think of that, ver. 142) shall faithfully be fulfilled.

Ver. 152.] This hath ever been my support, long before I fell into these troubles; that whatsoever thou hast testified to be thy will and pleasure, is firm and steadfast, and shall never fail those that depend upon it (ver. 144).

RESH. PART XX.

Ver. 153.] Show then that thou dost not neglect

154 Plead my cause, and deliver me: quicken me according to thy word.

155 Salvation is far from the wicked: for they seek not thy statutes.

156 Great are thy tender mercies, O Lord: quicken me according to thy judgments.

157 Many are my persecutors and mine enemies; yet do I not decline from thy testimonies.

158 I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved; because they kept not thy word.

159 Consider how I love thy precepts; quicken me, O Lord, according to thy lovingkindness.

160 Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.

SCHIN.

161 Princes have persecuted me without a cause: but my heart standeth in awe of thy word.

162 I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil.

me; but art as mindful of me, as I am of thy law in this afflicted condition, out of which I beseech thee to deliver me; for none of the evils that have befallen me have made me forget my duty to thee.

Ver. 154.] I appeal to thee, whether I have not a righteous cause; beseeching thee to do me justice upon mine enemies (1 Sam. xxiv. 15), and rescue me from their persecutions: for I am in great danger of perishing, but depend upon thy promise for my safety.

Ver. 155.] Far be from thee to afford any help to the wicked: for they have no regard to thy statutes; but seek only how they may satisfy their own lewd and cruel desires.

Ver. 156.] To which I oppose the bowels of thy compassion, O Lord, whose tender mercies are many and great: and will preserve my life, I hope, according to thy wonted care over me, and kindness to me (ver. 149).

Ver. 157.] I am not discouraged, either by the number or the strength (which are both very great) of those that persecute me with a deadly enmity: which doth not move me in the least to depart from thy testimonies (Lev. xix. 18), by seeking their destruction as they do mine (Lev. xxiv. xxvi.).

Ver. 158.] It only provokes my sorrow, to see that there is no faith, nor truth, nor gratitude, in them (1 Sam. xxiv. 17, &c.; xxvi. 2), and troubles me beyond measure, that they have no regard to what thou commandest or forbiddest.

Ver. 159.] Such is the love I have to thy precepts; which I beseech thee, let the world see thou dost observe: and both preserve my life, O Lord, and, according to the exceeding greatness of thy goodness, deliver me out of this sad condition.

Ver. 160.] As I doubt not thou wilt; for none of thy promises have ever failed: but the very first of them, which thou madest to our forefather Abraham (Gen. xii. 2), hath been faithfully fulfilled; and so shall every thing else, which thou hast resolved and declared to be thy will, be punctually performed to the end of the world.

SCHIN. PART XXII.

Ver. 161.] The rulers and prime counsellors of the kingdom persecute me, for pretended crimes, of which as I am not guilty; so I do not fear so much what they can do against me, as lest I should do any

163 I hate and abhor lying: but thy law do I love.

164 Seven times a day do I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments.

165 Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.

166 Lord, I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments.

167 My soul hath kept thy testimonies; and I love them exceedingly.

168 I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies: for all my ways are before thee.

TAU.

169 Let my cry come near before thee, O Lord: give me understanding according to thy word.

170 Let my supplication come before thee: deliver me according to thy word.

171 My lips shall utter praise, when thou hast taught me thy statutes.

thing in my own vindication against thy word (1 Sam. xxiv. 6; xxvi. 9).

Ver. 163.] I would not purchase my liberty, my peace, or the honour they enjoy, by any unlawful actions: for I take far more delight in doing thy will, and in what thou hast promised to do for me, than in the completest victory over all my enemies.

Ver. 163.] I hate all fraud and deceit; even to the degree of abhorrence and abomination: but most heartily love these honest courses to which thy law directs me.

Ver. 164.] It is the subject of my perpetual thanks and praise, that I have the happiness to be acquainted with the justice and goodness of those laws, whereby thou governest us.

Ver. 165.] The observance of which gives such inward satisfaction, and brings so many and great blessings to those who truly love them, that they take all things which befall them in good part; and nothing will tempt them to turn aside and leave those virtuous paths wherein they lead them.

Ver. 166.] I have met with the most grievous discouragements: but, Lord, in the midst of the greatest straits I have expected deliverance only from thee; and never done any thing, for my preservation, contrary to thy commandments.

Ver. 167.] All my care hath been still most heartily to observe thy testimonies: which I prefer infinitely before all earthly enjoyments.

Ver. 168.] There is not one of thy laws, of any sort, but I have carefully observed; even then when I might have privily broken them, and been a gainer by it (1 Sam. xxiv. 4, &c.): for I knew that nothing can be done so secretly but thou art perfectly acquainted with it.

TAU. PART XXII.

Ver. 169.] As thou art also with my most earnest petitions; to which, I beseech, thee, O Lord, vouchsafe a gracious answer: and in the first place teach me, according as thou hast promised, to walk, not only innocently, but prudently, in the midst of all the snares that are laid for me.

Ver. 170.] Do not deny admittance to this humble suit; but in due time grant this farther request: that I may, according to the same promise, be perfectly delivered from this long persecution.

Ver. 171.] Then will I praise thee without ceasing;

172 My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteous.

173 Let thine hand help me; for I have chosen thy precepts.

174 I have longed for thy salvation, O LORD; and thy law is my delight.

first, for instructing me how to please thee in all things;

Ver. 172.] And next, for fulfilling thy promise to me: which I will loudly proclaim with my thankful acknowledgments; that whatsoever thou hast said is truly and faithfully performed.

Ver. 173.] Let thy divine power therefore succour me in this weak and distressed condition wherein I am; for I rely on that alone; having resolved to be guided wholly by thy precepts.

Ver. 174.] And I have long expected, with most ardent desires, thy help, O LORD, for my deliverance: delighting myself, in the mean time, in thy laws; while thou art pleased to delay it.

Ver. 175.] O let me not perish in these straits

175 Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee; and let thy judgments help me.

176 I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments.

wherein I am involved; but spare my life, according to thy wonted kindness, and I will spend it in thy praises: send me relief, by executing the judgments thou hast decreed against my enemies.

Ver. 176.] Who have so chased me from place to place during this tedious banishment; that, like a wandering sheep, which hath lost its way, I know not whither to betake myself for safety: but be thou pleased, like a careful shepherd, to look after me, and to put thy servant into the right way of escaping all the dangers to which I am exposed, and of recovering my liberty, rest, and peace again: for, how hard soever my condition hath been (I can still seriously profess it) I have not been careless in the observance of thy commandments.

PSALM CXX.

A Song of degrees.

1 IN my distress I cried unto the LORD, and he heard me.

2 Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue.

3 What shall be given unto thee? or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue?

4 Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper.

5 Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!

6 My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace.

7 I am for peace: but when I speak, they are for war.

PSALM CXX.

ARGUMENT.—There can no certain account be given, why this and fourteen other psalms, which follow, are called *songs of degrees*, or *ascents*. Their conjecture seems to me most probable, who think the title denotes, either the *elevation* of the voice in the singing these songs, or the *excellence* of the composure, or of the music to which they were set, or the *high esteem* they had of them upon some account or other; particularly because they were so fit for their use (though most of them composed in former times), at and after their return from the captivity of Babylon. Then, some think, this title was given to them because they sang them as they *went up* to their own country again.

But this present psalm seems to have been made by David, when the calumnies of Doeg, and others, forced him to flee his country, and to go as far as the Kedarens, or Arabians, (ver. 5), whose company was very irksome to him. We do not read, indeed, in his history that he was there: but we may well think he sought for safety in more places than are particularly mentioned; and might as well be there, as among the Moabites, and in the wilderness of Paran (1 Sam. xxv. 1), which was not far from them. As for Mesech, I take that to signify not a place, but the length of time which he stayed there, before he durst stir from thence; or which he was forced to spend in exile; as all the ancient interpreters, except one, understand it (See Bochart, in his *Phaleg*. lib. iii. cap. 12).

Ver. 1.] I have had frequent experience of the

goodness of the Lord; who, when I have earnestly implored his help in my straits and difficulties, hath constantly relieved me.

Ver. 2.] May it please thee, O LORD, still to continue thy mercy towards me: and now that men strike at my life, by calumnies and cunningly-devised lies (1 Sam. xxii. 9; xxiv. 9), to preserve me from the danger into which they have thrown me.

Ver. 3.] O thou false accuser! what dost thou hope to get by these specious tales which thou hast forged? What will they add to that heap of wealth which thou treasurest up? (Ps. lii. 7.)

Ver. 4.] They shall be so far from turning to thy advantage, that they shall prove thy undoing: for the mighty Lord (whom none can resist) shall take a sharp and a swift vengeance on thee; which shall never cease, till it hath utterly consumed thee.

Ver. 5.] For it is but fit thou shouldst smart for the mischief thou hast done, under which I groan most sadly; not only in a tedious banishment from my own country, but in that I am forced to seek for shelter among the barbarous Arabs.

Ver. 6.] Where my mind cannot but perpetually reflect upon the implacable spirit of my enemies; whose bitter hatred will not suffer them to come to any terms of agreement.

Ver. 7.] As I never gave them the least offence, so there is nothing that I more vehemently desire than peace and reconciliation; but when I make a motion of it, they are the more exasperated: and, as if I distrusted my cause, or craftily sought advantage by a treaty, betake themselves more fiercely and resolutely to their arms.

PSALM CXXI.

A Song of degrees.

1 I WILL lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.

2 My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth.

3 He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.

4 Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

5 The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand.

6 The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.

7 The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.

8 The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even forevermore.

PSALM CXXI.

ARGUMENT.—If David was the author of this psalm, (and to whom can we with so much likelihood ascribe it!) it is an expression of the high trust and confidence which he reposed in God, when he was in great straits, and saw no hope of human help: being either environed by Saul's forces, or pursued by his son Absalom. It is hard to say to which it belongs; but if by *hills* in the first verse we understand Zion and Moriah, where David's palace and the ark of God were placed; then it must be referred to the latter: for Zion was not theirs, during Saul's persecution.

There are those, indeed, who, following Kimchi, take the first verse to be a military form of speech; and supposed David to have looked round about him, as a captain in danger doth, to see if he could spy any assistance coming to him down the neighbouring hills wherewith he was encompassed. But the other sense seems to me more simple; which therefore I have followed: though, if we should adhere to that conjecture, still it will best agree to the distress into which Absalom had reduced him. For then he might well look to see if any of his subjects, continuing their fidelity to him, would appear to defend him. Why called a *song of degrees*, see Ps. cxx.

Ver. 1.] Though I am driven not only from my own palace, but from God's dwelling-place (2 Sam. xv. 14, 25), yet my eyes shall be ever directed thitherward: from whence I expect a powerful aid against those numerous enemies that are combined to destroy me.

Ver. 2.] I have no dependence on any other help,

but wait for deliverance wholly from the presence of the Lord: to whom all creatures are subject, and who hath angels at his command, to send to the succour of his servants; for he made the heaven as well as the earth.

Ver. 3.] And methinks I hear his ministers calling to me out of his holy place, and saying, Fear not, since thou hast placed thy confidence in the Lord alone, he will not let thee be subverted: thou hast a stronger guard than the most valiant army would be to thee; for they may be tired and fall asleep, but he that hath thee in his custody will exercise a most unwearied care over thee.

Ver. 4.] Be confident of it; he that is the protector of all good men, will never in the least neglect thee; much less abandon the care of thee: but, by a most watchful providence, keep thee in safety.

Ver. 5.] The omnipotent Lord of the world is thy guardian; the very same Lord that covered your forefathers with a glorious cloud (Exod. xiii. 21), is always present with thee, to defend and assist thee against all the enemies that assault thee.

Ver. 6.] Be not troubled that thou art forced to take up thy quarters in the open field: for the sun shall do thee no hurt by its vehement heat in the day, nor the moon by its cold and moisture in the night (2 Sam. xvii. 1, 6, 22.)

Ver. 7.] The Lord shall preserve thee from all manner of harm: he will preserve thy life, and not suffer thee to fall into the hands of those that contrive to take it away (2 Sam. xvii. 1, 2, 11.)

Ver. 8.] The Lord shall secure thee whithersoever thou marchest; and prosper thee all along in thy undertakings, either abroad or within doors: not only now, but in all future times, to the end of thy days.

PSALM CXXII.

A Song of degrees of David.

I I WAS glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD.

2 Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem.

PSALM CXXII.

ARGUMENT.—The title satisfies us that David was the author of this Psalm: who having settled the ark (which before had no certain place) at Jerusalem, and being at that time, upon some occasion, in the country, heard the good people there speak one to another, as some of them did to him, of going to worship God, at some of the three solemn feasts: which devotion of theirs, as it rejoiced his heart, so it moved him, I conjecture, to compose this Psalm, for their use, at such times.

If the Talmudists may be believed, they were wont to sing the first verse of this Psalm as they went out of the country towards Jerusalem, carrying their first-fruits to the house of the Lord; as the law (Dent. xxvi. 2) directed them: and when they entered within the gates of the city, they sang the second verse. There they were met by some of the citizens, who, if this be true, sang the rest of the Psalm, it is likely, together with them, as they went towards the temple. Of this custom Mr. Selden treats, lib. iii. De Synedr. cap. 13. Of a *song of degrees*, see Ps. cxx.

3 Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together :

4 Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the LORD.

5 For there are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David.

Ver. 1.] I was exceedingly pleased with the cheerful devotion of those who came unto me, before the approaching feast, and said, Let us go and pay our thankful acknowledgments to the Lord in the place where he dwells, and makes himself present among us.

Ver. 2.] Which motion ought to be the more readily embraced, because now he hath fixed his habitation: and we need not travel farther than Jerusalem, to inquire after the ark of his presence.

Ver. 3.] To Jerusalem, I say, that fair and beautiful city, whose buildings do not now lie scattered and divided: but are all compacted, and united together (as we ought to be) in a goodly order (1 Sam. v. 9; 1 Chron. xi. 8).

Ver. 4.] Thither all the twelve tribes of Israel, who own the great Lord for their God, go up from all the parts of the country, by his special commandment (Exod. xxiii. 17), to acknowledge, before the ark of his testimony (xxv. 21, 22), all the benefits they have received from his almighty goodness; and this above the rest, that he thereby testifies his singular care and providence over them.

Ver. 5.] Thither also they repair for justice; for

6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.

7 Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.

8 For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee.

9 Because of the house of the LORD our God I will seek thy good.

the supreme judicatory of the kingdom sits here (2 Chron. xix. 8), and there is the seat of the royal family (where David and his sons have their residence, and govern the people, (2 Sam. viii. 15, 18).

Ver. 6.] O let this be part of your devout prayers, when you come there; that God would preserve Jerusalem in peace: happy shall they be, who, out of love to the religion and justice which are administered in thee (O beloved city), contribute their endeavours, as well as their prayers, for thy safety and prosperity.

Ver. 7.] Let no enemy (this shall be my constant prayer) approach so much as to thy outworks to disturb thee; and let plenty of all good things abound within thy palaces.

Ver. 8.] The kindness I have for my kindred, and my neighbours and friends, whether in the city or the country, will not let me cease my earnest prayers to God, that he will confer his blessings on thee.

Ver. 9.] But above all, the love I have to the Lord our God, whose house is here (whither all his devout servants resort to worship him, and celebrate his name), shall excite not only my prayers, but my study, to promote thy welfare.

PSALM CXXIII.

A Song of degrees.

1 UNTO thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens.

2 Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the LORD our God, until that he have mercy upon us.

PSALM CXXIII.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm, it is certain, was composed in a time of great distress; when they were extremely afflicted by some haughty and insolent enemies (ver. 3, 4). Who those enemies were there are several conjectures; and I will add mine: that this short form of prayer was made by some pious person, when the king of Assyria (whose pride the prophet Isaiah describes viii. 7, and many other places) sent Rab-shakeh, and other of his captains, to besiege Jerusalem: where they poured out most contemptuous, nay, blasphemous words, against God and his people (2 Kings xviii; xix.). It is probable, if this conjecture be admitted, that it is made by Isaiah, whom Hezekiah desired to lift up his prayers for the remnant that was left (2 Kings xix. 4; Isa. xxxvii. 4). Accordingly we read (2 Chron. xxxii. 20), both he and Hezekiah cried unto the Lord: and, we may suppose, lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said these words.

Ver. 1.] Though all human help fail us in this sore

3 Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy upon us: for we are exceedingly filled with contempt.

4 Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud.

distress; yet I do not despair of relief from thee, O Lord: whose majesty and power incomparably excel all earthly monarchs.

Ver. 2.] Behold, how, not only I, but the rest of thy faithful people, wait upon thee: submitting ourselves to this severe punishment, as poor slaves do to the stroke of their offended master or mistress; and resolving to bear it patiently, till thou our Lord, who dost inflict it, wilt be pleased to show thyself our most gracious God; and in much pity towards us remove it.

Ver. 3.] O be gracious unto us, good Lord, be gracious unto us; and in much mercy take away this heavy scourge from us: for we are become so beyond all measure contemptible (2 Kings xviii. 23, 24; xix. 34), that we can scarce any longer endure it.

Ver. 4.] We have a long time groaned under the intolerable load of the derision and contempt of those whose constant prosperity puffs them up with pride; nay, makes them insolently oppress all those who are unable to resist them.

PSALM CXXIV.

A Song of degrees of David.

1 IF it had not been the LORD who was on our side, now may Israel say;

2 If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, when men rose up against us:

3 Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us:

4 Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul:

5 Then the proud waters had gone over our soul.

6 Blessed be the LORD, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth.

7 Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped.

8 Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth.

PSALM CXXIV.

ARGUMENT.—If the title had not told us that this is a Psalm of David's, I should have thought it had been composed by the author of the former; to acknowledge the wonderful power and goodness of God in delivering them from Sennacherib's army; which came in like a flood (Isa. lix. 19), and had overflowed all the country as far as Jerusalem (viii. 7, 8), which might well make them be called *proud waters* (as the psalmist here speaks, ver. 5), because they fancied nothing could stand before them. Such it seems were, either the Philistines, upon whom, when they spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim, the Lord broke forth as a *breach of waters* (2 Sam. v. 19), or the Ammonites and their associates (x. 6, 15, 16). Of *A song of degrees*, see Ps. cxx.

Ver. 1.] If we had not had such a mighty helper as the Lord, who took our part, may Israel now most thankfully acknowledge;

Ver. 2.] If it had not been the Lord (whom none can resist) who took our part, when such numerous enemies united their forces, as one man, to make war upon us:

Ver. 3.) They would then have made but one morsel of our small army: and in the furious rage wherein

they were, have immediately devoured us; as monstrous beasts do their prey, which they greedily swallow down alive.

Ver. 4.] Then they would have overrun all the country like a violent torrent: and we should have been buried in the flood.

Ver. 5.] Having once made a wide breach, by the overthrow of our army, they would have poured in more numerous forces upon us: till, like an inundation of water, which swells more and more, they had wholly overwhelmed us.

Ver. 6.] Thanks be to the Lord, to whose infinite mercies we ought to ascribe it; that he hath not permitted them to domineer over us, and execute their cruel intentions against us.

Ver. 7.] They thought they had laid their design so strongly, that we could not escape; no more than a little bird, which a fowler hath taken in his snare: but, blessed be the Lord, who hath assisted our weakness, their plot is defeated, they are broken in pieces; and we thereby most wonderfully delivered.

Ver. 8.] This was not a work of our wit, no more than of our power; nor were we beholden to the help of any of our neighbours; but we owe it wholly to his almighty goodness; who commands, because he made, all creatures: in whom we ought to place our confidence for ever.

PSALM CXXV.

A Song of degrees.

1 THEY that trust in the LORD shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.

2 As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the LORD is round about his people from henceforth even for ever.

3 For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous; lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity.

4 Do good, O LORD, unto those that be good, and to them that are upright in their hearts.

PSALM CXXV.

ARGUMENT.—We may well look upon this Psalm as a pious exhortation to the people to trust in God; when Sennacherib's army threatened to destroy Jerusalem. And perhaps these were some of the comfortable words which we read, 2 Chron. xxxii. 6—8. Hezekiah then spake to them; when God chastised them by that rod of anger (as he calls Sennacherib, Isa. x. 5), which the psalmist here foretold (ver. 3) should not long afflict them. Of *A song of degrees*, see Ps. cxx.

Ver. 1.] There are none so safe as they that repose a pious confidence in the Lord: by which they shall both maintain themselves in a settled peace and

tranquility; and remain for ever, as unmovable, conspicuous, and illustrious, as mount Zion.

Ver. 2.] For as Jerusalem is surrounded with high hills, which make it not easily accessible by any enemies, so the divine providence encompasses his people who depend upon him, to guard and defend them from all dangers; not only now, but in all succeeding ages, to the end of the world.

Ver. 3.] The power of wicked tyrants, indeed, may heavily afflict the righteous for a time: but they shall not always harass their country, nor continue their oppression so long, as quite to tire out the patience of the righteous, and tempt them to forsake their pious confidence in him, and lay hold on any means, though never so unjust, of obtaining deliverance.

5 As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the LORD shall lead them forth with the

Ver. 4.] To prevent so great an evil, be pleased now, good Lord, to deal well with those who are truly good, and reward their fidelity; who, notwithstanding all these calamities, sincerely persist in thy ways, and preserve their integrity.

Ver. 5.] But as for those who, instead of growing

workers of iniquity: *but peace shall be upon Israel.*

better by these oppressions, decline more and more from the ways of piety, unto the most perverse and crooked courses: the Lord shall deliver them over to be punished with their oppressors; when Israel, after all these sore afflictions, shall be settled again in peace and happiness.

PSALM CXXXVI.

A Song of degrees.

1 WHEN the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.

2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them.

3 The LORD hath done great things for us; *whereof* we are glad.

PSALM CXXXVI.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm is so universally thought to be a joyful song composed by Ezra, or some such good man, when they returned out of Babylon, that I shall seek for no other interpretation: but observe, with Theodoret, that when Cyrus gave them all leave to return to their own land, some were so ill-minded that they chose to continue where they were: but such as had any sense of the piety of their forefathers, and desired to see the worship of God, according to the law, restored, gladly embraced the opportunity of returning to their own country: where they thought themselves so happy in the liberty which they enjoyed, that they pray (ver. 4) all the rest of the nation, who remained still behind, would come and partake of it.

This is the most received sense; else I should have thought the deliverance from Sennacherib might be here celebrated; who had carried many of them captive (Isa. v. 13, and other places), and when they were delivered from his oppression, they were, indeed, “like men that dreamed,” as the psalmist here speaks. For awaking in the morning, and seeing his vast army to be dead corpses (2 Kings xix. 35), they could scarce believe what they beheld with their eyes, it was so wonderful.

And, perhaps, it was first made then, and afterward applied, with some alteration, to their return from Babylon (see Ps. cxxxiii.).

Ver. 1.] To the Lord alone must we ascribe this wonderful change (which is like the sudden recovery of health, out of a tedious and desperate sickness); for when the proclamation unexpectedly came forth,

4 Turn again our captivity, O LORD, as the streams in the south.

5 They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

6 He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves *with him.*

to give us liberty to return to our own country, out of a long captivity (Ezra i. 2, 3), we could scarce believe it; but were apt to look upon ourselves, as only in a dream of so great a happiness.

Ver. 2.] Which presently turned our heaviness into such a height of joy, that it filled all places with our mirth, especially with cheerful hymns; in which the heathen themselves accompanied us, saying, This truly is the Lord's work, who hath magnified his power in the strange deliverance of this nation.

Ver. 3.] And truly so he hath (we should be very ungrateful, if we should not thankfully acknowledge the singular benefits which strangers admire); the Lord hath not only restored our liberty, but declared the greatness of his power in this deliverance; which justly fills us with joy and triumph.

Ver. 4.] O that the Lord would be pleased to perfect what he hath begun! and bring back, in greater numbers, the rest of our brethren that still remain in Babylon: which would be as welcome to this desolate country, as streams of water to the dry and thirsty grounds.

Ver. 5.] Then this small handful of people, who are come to plant themselves here again, and have laid the foundation of the temple, with a great mixture of sadness and tears (Ezra iii. 12), shall shout for joy, to see so great an increase, and this pious work, by their help, brought unto perfection.

Ver. 6.] Just as we behold the poor husbandman, going to and fro with a little seed, which in a scarce year he throws with a heavy heart into the ground, returning again and again from the field, with songs of joy in his mouth, when the harvest comes to reward his past labours with a plentiful crop of corn.

PSALM CXXXVII.

A Song of degrees for Solomon (see cxx.).

1 EXCEPT the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD

keep the city, the watchman waketh *but* in vain.

PSALM CXXXVII.

ARGUMENT.—The Hebrew particle which here we translate *for*, is thought by our interpreters, in most

other places, to signify *of*: and so they translate it a little before, in the title of Ps. cxxiv. and a little after in that of the hundred and thirty-first. Therefore I shall look upon this Psalm as composed by

2 *It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.*

3 *Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.*

Solomon; who, you read, 1 Kings iv. 32, made above three thousand songs: though none of them (except that large poem called the *Song of Songs*, and, as some think, Ps. cxxxii, and, as I suppose, the next to this) have been transmitted to posterity, but only this: which is a commentary upon a pious maxim of his, often repeated in the book of his Proverbs, that it is in vain to attempt any thing, if the Lord do not prosper it. Teaching us, therefore, in all our ways, to acknowledge him (Prov. iii. 6; xvi. 3), and not to presume, that it is in our power "to direct our own way" (that is, our designs, enterprises, and actions) to what issue we please. For, "though a man's heart deviseth his way, yet it is the Lord that directeth his steps" (Prov. xvi. 9; xx. 24; xxi. 30, 31). A truth to be deeply pondered by all, especially by princes; in whose affairs this overruling providence is most visible. Of *A song of degrees*, see Ps. cxx.

Ver. 1.] The success of all our undertakings depends so entirely upon the Lord's blessing, that it is in vain, by building houses and cities, to enter into societies, unless he prosper the design: and when they are framed, all the care of the soldier and the magistrate is to no purpose, unless his good providence be their guard.

Ver. 2.] And as fruitless, unless he favour it, is the toil and solicitude of you the artificers and tradesmen

4 As arrows *are* in the hand of a mighty man; so *are* children of the youth.

5 Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.

in the city; who rise betime, and go to bed late, and fare hardly: when they whom he loves (because they own his providence, and depend upon his blessing, more than their own diligence) live securely, and want nothing that is fit for them; though they have no such strong guard of soldiers to defend them; nor break their sleep with labour and care, to supply their necessities.

Ver. 3.] Observe it also; it is not in the power of the strongest and most healthful persons (though nature designs, above all things, the propagation of mankind) to have children when they please, to inherit the riches they have got: but the Lord bestows them as freely as parents do their estates; and makes those women fruitful, whose pious reliance upon him he thinks good to reward.

Ver. 4.] And yet there is nothing of which we are more desirous than a numerous issue; especially in the flower and vigour of our youth: for they will be no less defence to us in our age, than arrows or darts are in the hand of a valiant champion, to beat off his assailants.

Ver. 5.] Happy is that man who hath obtained so much favour of the Lord, as to have his house as full of them as the champion's quiver is of arrows; they will undauntedly appear for him, to answer any challenge sent him by his enemies (see Theodoret); or any accusation put in against him before the judges.

PSALM CXXVIII.

A Song of degrees.

1 BLESSED is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in his ways.

2 For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.

3 Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table.

PSALM CXXVIII.

ARGUMENT.—It is not unlikely, that this Psalm was composed by the same author that made the former; to excite men to be truly religious, as the only way to obtain the blessings there mentioned of the Lord. Which, as he there shows we must have from his free gift, and not think to acquire merely by our own industry: so here he shows the Lord is wont to bestow on those who, fearing to offend him, sincerely keep his commandments.

Some think this was a form prescribed to be used at the blessing of their marriages; when they wished the new-married couple all manner of happiness: especially a long life in peaceable times (ver. 5, 6). Of *A song of degrees*, see Ps. cxx.

Ver. 1.] Whosoever thou art that desirest to be happy, be sure to add unto the devout worship of the Lord the practice of justice and charity, and all other virtues: and thou shalt never miss of it.

Ver. 2.] For then he will prosper thy honest labours; and give thee a heart also to enjoy the

4 Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the LORD.

5 The LORD shall bless thee out of Zion: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life.

6 Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel.

fruit of them: yea, this will seem no small part of thy happiness, that thou art able to live of thyself, and not be beholden unto others.

Ver. 3.] He will bless thee also in thy wife; and make her as fruitful as the vine, which spreads itself, laden with full clusters, over all the sides of thy house: and in thy hopeful children too, who shall grow up and flourish like the young olive-plants, that are set in thy arbour, round about thy table.

Ver. 4.] Observe it, that this shall be the comfortable portion of the man that religiously serveth the Lord; who alone can bless our labours, and continue the product of them in our families.

Ver. 5.] Address thyself unto him in his holy place; and the Lord shall bestow on thee whatsoever blessings thou askest of him; yea, mayest thou be so happy as to see Jerusalem, the seat of justice and religion, in a flourishing condition all thy life long.

Ver. 6.] And long mayest thou live, to such a good old age, as to see thy children's children; and the whole nation, all the time, in a prosperous tranquillity.

PSALM CXXIX.

A Song of degrees (see cxx.).

1 MANY a time have they afflicted me from my youth, may Israel now say :

2 Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth : yet they have not prevailed against me.

3 The plowers plowed upon my back : they made long their furrows.

4 The LORD is righteous : he hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked.

5 Let them all be confounded and turned back that hate Zion.

6 Let them be as the grass upon the house-tops, which withereth afore it groweth up.

7 Wherewith the mower filleth not his hand ; nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom.

8 Neither do they which go by say, The blessing of the LORD be upon you : we bless you in the name of the LORD.

PSALM CXXIX.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm was made when some new calamity threatened them, either by Sennacherib, or, as Theodoret thinks, by those nations which combined to destroy the Jews, as soon as they returned from the captivity of Babylon. When they were taught by Ezra, or some such holy man, to recount what God had done for them ever since they were a people ; and to denounce the divine vengeance against those that now sought their ruin. The former conjecture seems the truer ; because as yet, he saith (ver. 2), their enemies had not prevailed against them ; unless we expound that phrase, as I have done in the paraphrase (according to the received interpretation of the Psalm), that they had not quite destroyed them, and made them cease to be a nation.

Ver. 1.] Our adversaries, may Israel now upon this occasion say, have very often, and very sorely, distressed us ; ever since we began to be a people.

Ver. 2.] It is hard to number how oft, or to tell into how great straits, they have reduced us, ever since we began to be a nation : and yet, by the special favour of God, they have not been able to compass their desire of our utter extirpation.

Ver. 3.] They have laid us sometimes exceeding

low ; and not only scourged us so severely, that the marks of it might be seen as plain as the furrows are which the plough makes in the ground, but long continued also our vexation and torment.

Ver. 4.] But the Lord at last, in much mercy, hath made good his faithful promises, and broken in pieces the power of wicked oppressors ; that they might not always hold us under their yoke, and thus miserably tyrannise over us.

Ver. 5.] And may all those that still hate us and our religion, never have better success, but be shamefully defeated, and forced to desist in all their attempts upon us.

Ver. 6.] Let none of their designs ever come to maturity ; but be blasted like the grass upon the house-top, which, having no root, withers of itself, and needs nobody's hand to pluck it up.

Ver. 7.] And as it lies unregarded by those that reap, or that carry in the fruits of the earth ; so let these men and all their enterprises become contemptible, and be looked upon as good for nothing.

Ver. 8.] Let all their hopes so speedily vanish, that there be none to favour them ; nor so much as to wish prosperity to them : no more than there are gatherers of such withered grass appear, to whom the passengers (after the usual form, Ruth ii. 4) should say, The Lord give you a good harvest : we pray God you may reap the fruits of your labours.

PSALM CXXX.

A Song of degrees (see cxx.).

1 OUT of the depths have I cried unto thee, O LORD.

2 LORD, hear my voice : let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.

3 If thou, LORD, shouldst mark iniquities, O LORD, who shall stand ?

4 But *there is* forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.

PSALM CXXX.

ARGUMENT.—Some think David made this prayer, after he had plunged himself into a very deep guilt, by his sin with Bath-sheba. I rather think, when he was persecuted by Saul, and reduced to so low a condition, that his heart began to sink within him. For “the floods of ungodly men (as he speaks, Ps. xviii. 4) made him afraid,” that he should one day perish in them (1 Sam. xxix. 1), and he complains elsewhere, “that he sunk in the mire, where there was no standing,” &c. (Ps. lxi. 2, 14, 15).

In this condition he implores the divine mercy with great earnestness : and beseeches him to pardon his sins, and the sins of all the people ; which made

them deserve that ill government under Saul and his flatterers.

It is the last but one of the seven penitential Psalms.

Ver. 1.] In the greatest straits, when I can see no bottom, no end of my troubles, but I still sink lower and lower into them ; I never despair of thy mercy, O Lord ; but cry unto thee most earnestly to deliver me.

Ver. 2.] Vouchsafe, good Lord, the governor of all things, to grant my petition : do not reject it, I humbly beseech thee ; but give me a favourable answer when I deprecate thy displeasure.

Ver. 3.] I do not plead any merits of mine, but rather excuse myself before thee ; knowing that if I

5 I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.

6 My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: *I say, more than they that watch for the morning.*

were the most innocent person in the world, yet if thou, Lord, shouldst strictly examine my life, and proceed against me, according to my deserts (Lord, what would become of me)? I should certainly be condemned.

Ver. 4.] But thou most graciously investest us unto thy service, by thy readiness to pardon all those that are truly penitent; without the hope of which, we could not so much as think of becoming religious.

Ver. 5.] This encourages me to wait and expect when the Lord will deliver me; my soul is earnestly bent to expect this happy time, which I believe will come; because I have his promise for it, on which I depend.

7 Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD *there is mercy*, and with him is plenteous redemption.

8 And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

Ver. 6.] I direct my thoughts to the Lord alone for safety and relief; which I implore incessantly with my early prayers: for they that watch in the temple for the break of day; I say, the priests that watch in the temple for the break of day, are not more forward than I to offer up their morning sacrifice to the Lord.

Ver. 7.] In whom let all his people place their trust and confidence; for the Lord is very ready to do good; and hath more ways than we can imagine to rescue those that hope in him out of the sorest distresses.

Ver. 8.] And he will at last free them from all those troubles; which he hath inflicted on them as a punishment for their iniquities.

PSALM CXXXI.

A Song of degrees (see cxx.).

1 LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.

2 Surely I have behaved and quieted myself,

as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child.

3 Let Israel hope in the LORD from henceforth and for ever.

PSALM CXXXI.

ARGUMENT.—Though David could not purge himself from all manner of guilt (as he confesses in the foregoing Psalm, ver. 3), yet in that matter, which he was charged withal by his enemies (of affecting the kingdom), he could safely protest he was as innocent as a little child. Which he doth in this Psalm particularly; and in several parts of other Psalms.

Ver. 1.] O Lord, I am accused of traitorous designs against my sovereign, and of aspiring to the throne wherein thou hast placed him: but thou, who searchest the hearts, knowest that I harbour no such ambitious thoughts; nor hath my behaviour betrayed

any such intentions: for I never looked upon any man superciliously; nor meddled with affairs of state, or anything else that is above my place and calling.

Ver. 2.] But have levelled my mind (else let me perish) to an equality with my condition; and resolved to acquiesce in the present state of things, committing myself unto thy care, and depending on thy providence, as a child that is newly weaned doth upon its mother; just so do I silence my natural desires; and am content to be disposed of as thou pleasest.

Ver. 3.] And let all good men, in like manner, modestly place their confidence and hope in the Lord as long as they live; and choose rather to be depressed, than by any undue means raise themselves to greatness and honour.

PSALM CXXXII.

A Song of degrees (see cxx.).

1 LORD, remember David, and all his afflictions:

2 How he sware unto the LORD, and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob;

PSALM CXXXII.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm seems to have been composed by some holy man; after God had given commandment to David, by Gad the seer, to build an altar in the thrashing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite (where the destroying angel stood); and the Lord had answered him by fire upon that altar (1 Chron. xxi. 18, 26), whereby David knew, what he had till now been ignorant of, that this was the place where God would be worshipped, and have his temple built (xxii. 1). Accordingly we read expressly, that Solomon therefore built the temple in this place; because God here appeared to David his father, and David designed and prepared this

place for it (2 Chron. iii. 1): that there God's habitation might be fixed; and not removed from place to place, uncertainly, as it had been in former times. For the tabernacle, which the Hebrews call *Mischkan*, had been in an unsettled condition, except one period of time, ever since they came into the land of Canaan. It was first pitched in Gilgal, and stayed there twenty-four years. Then it was removed to Shiloh, where it remained to the death of Eli, three hundred and sixty-nine years. After his death, Shiloh being laid waste, it was translated to Nob, where it remained, they say, thirteen years (but was now no better than a cabinet without its jewel; the ark being in another place, and never restored to it after that desolation of Shiloh;

3 Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed;

4 I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids,

5 Until I find out a place for the LORD, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.

6 Lo, we heard of it at Ephrathah: we found it in the fields of the wood.

7 We will go into his tabernacles: we will worship at his footstool.

8 Arise, O LORD, into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength.

9 Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy.

10 For thy servant David's sake turn not away the face of thine anointed.

11 The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.

12 If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore.

13 For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation.

14 This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it.

15 I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread.

16 I will also clothe her priests with salvation: and her saints shall shout aloud for joy.

see Ps. lxxviii.). After the death of Samuel, they say, Nob was also destroyed: and then it was carried to Gibeon, where Solomon found it, and from thence fetched it, when he had finished the temple. Which the Hebrews therefore call *Beth-olamim*, the eternal house; because it was fixed to a place, and out of it the ark never departed, as it had done out of the tabernacle: but there (as the Psalmist here speaks, ver. 14), the Lord took up his rest for ever: never to depart, that is, to any other place, till the Messiah came; who was the temple of God, "in whom the fulness of the God-head dwelt bodily."

There are those who think Solomon penned this Psalm; because (in 2 Chron. vi. the last two verses) he concludes his prayer at the consecration of the temple with some part of it, viz. ver. 8—10. And truly, since he speaks as if the priests were just taking up the ark to carry it into this resting place, and there begs that God would not, for David's sake, turn away the face of his anointed (i. e. refuse to hear his prayer), it is not an improbable conjecture; which I shall follow in my paraphrase, and connect also this Psalm with the former; to which it seems to have respect: if we render the last word of the first verse, as the ancient interpreters do; not *affliction*, but *humility*, *meekness*, or *modesty*. Yet I have not forgot to take notice of the other signification: and, in like manner have expounded that phrase, *the mighty God of Jacob*, two several ways (ver. 2, 5).

Ver. 1.] Let it appear, O Lord, that thou art not unmindful of the pious humility of my father David (cxxx. 1), who chose to endure many afflictions, rather than by unlawful means to prefer himself to a kingdom.

Ver. 2.] Which when he enjoyed, his principal care was to provide a settled place for the worship of God: for he bound himself with a solemn oath unto the Lord, and vowed unto the mighty one, who had preserved him, as he did Jacob, in all his troubles:

Ver. 3.] Saying, I am resolved, as I hope to prosper, that I will not come into the new palace, which I have built for myself (1 Chron. xiv. 1), much less go to dwell and take up my lodging there;

Ver. 4.] Nay, I will not lay myself down to rest, nor take a wink of sleep;

Ver. 5.] Until I have found out a convenient place for the ark of the Lord (1 Chron. xv. 1; xvi. 1. 43), a habitation for that mighty one; who there makes himself present to his people, the posterity of Jacob.

Ver. 6.] And now, behold, the Lord himself, to our great joy, hath told us the very place where he will

fix his habitation (1 Chron. xxi. 18, 26), in the territory of Beth-Jehem-ephratah (Gen. xxxv. 16, 19), in the fields of that forest, where the angel stood, and directed David to build an altar unto the Lord (1 Chron. xxi. 18; xxii. 1).

Ver. 7.] Let us go therefore into his tabernacles; and prostrating ourselves before his majesty, let us take up the ark on which his glory stands (1 Chron. xxviii. 2), with humble reverence, and bring it unto the temple which is now built for it (2 Chron. v. 2—4, &c.).

Ver. 8.] And be pleased, O Lord, together with the ark, the token of thy powerful presence among us, to translate thy divine glory thither (2 Chron. v. 13, 14; vii. 1—3), there to settle itself, and stir from thence no more for ever.

Ver. 9.] Guard also thy priests, who minister unto thee here, and encompass them with thy goodness (2 Chron. vi. 41): that they may procure thy blessings for others; and make all thy pious worshippers, who are dear unto thee, triumph in thy kindness to them.

Ver. 10.] I beseech thee, have a respect to the sincere piety of my father David, and thy gracious promise to him (1 Chron. xxii. 2, 10, 14; xxviii. 2, 6, &c.), and upon that account deny me not; but grant the petitions of thy servant, who, by thy special appointment, succeeds him in the government of thy people.

Ver. 11.] According to that oath, whereby the Lord secured the kingdom to his family; that faithful oath, which he will never break, saying; One of thy sons will I advance to sit upon thy throne, when thou shalt leave it (1 Chron. xvii. 11; xxviii. 5; 2 Chron. vi. 10).

Ver. 12.] Yea, I will perpetuate this royal dignity to thy children in all succeeding generations (and not take it from them, as I did from Saul, 2 Sam. vii. 15, 16), if they prove faithful and constant in their religion; and observe all the commandments, whereby I will teach and instruct them how my pleasure is, that they should worship and serve me (1 Kings ii. 4; ix. 4, 6).

Ver. 13.] For the Lord hath such a love to Zion, the seat of the royal family (2 Sam. v. 7, 9), that he hath chosen to place his own dwelling very near unto it (2 Chron. iii. 1; vii. 12).

Ver. 14.] Saying, This is the place where my glory shall fix itself for ever (2 Chron. vii. 16). I will remove no more; but here will I take up my abode: for I have pitched on this place, and declared it is acceptable to me above all other (1 Chron. xxi. 26; xxii. 2).

Ver. 15.] From whence I will dispense my blessings so abundantly, that Zion (which is become the city of God as well as of David) shall never be in any want.

17 There will I make the horn of David to bud : I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.

but I will make such liberal provision for it by fruitful years, that the poorest person there shall be satisfied with food (2 Chron. vii. 13, 14).

Ver. 16.] I will also defend her priests, and they shall be giving continual thanks and praise for the blessings they shall procure for my pious worshippers : who shall exceedingly triumph in my kindness towards them.

Ver. 17.] There will I make the regal power and majesty of David to put forth itself afresh in his royal successors ; no sooner shall one be extinguished but

18 His enemies will I clothe with shame : but upon himself shall his crown flourish.

another shall shine (1 Kings xi. 36. 2 Chron. xxi. 7), in such splendour as shall give a lustre to the name of that anointed servant of mine ; till the great prince, the Messiah, appear.

Ver. 18.] And whosoever they be that go about to destroy this succession, they shall be so miserably defeated that they shall not be able to show their faces ; while, with shame and confusion, they behold the regal dignity in his family (notwithstanding all their attempts against it) in an unfading glory.

PSALM CXXXIII.

A Song of degrees (see cxx.).

1 BEHOLD, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity !

2 *It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard : that went down to the skirts of his garments ;*

3 As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion : for there the LORD commanded the blessing, *even life for evermore.*

PSALM CXXXIII.

ARGUMENT.—When there was no other strife among all the tribes of Israel, than who should be most forward in returning their allegiance ; and the children of Judah also were inclined as one man to bring back David to his kingdom, from which his son Absalom had driven him (2 Sam. xix. 9. 14), he fell into a rapturous admiration of that happy unity and concord which made them meet together in one place to worship God (for so, I think, Zanchius rightly understands the last word of the first verse, which we translate *together in unity*, to relate to the public assemblies) : which unity he commended to them afterward in this Psalm, as their best preservative and security in future ages. This seems to me more probable to be the occasion of it than the concurrence of all the tribes to make him king after Saul's death (which is the common account that is given of it), for then Zion was not in his possession ; and it is not likely he would then have made such mention of it as he doth here, while it remained in the hands of the Jebusites. But whatsoever was the first occasion, it was aptly applied to their condition after the return of their captivity from Babylon ; when, as Theodoret notes, the tribes which had been divided by the imprudence of Rehoboam, were then again united ; living under one and the same government, and worshipping God in the same place and the same manner as the law prescribed.

It was as fitly used by the first Christians, to express their joy for the blessed union of Jews and gen-

tiles ; and may now serve the uses of all Christian societies, whose happiness lies in holy peace and concord.

Ver. 1.] O consider, how beneficial and delightful it is, beyond all expression, for those that come from the same stock, and are of the same religion, to have no differences one with another ; but to live and worship God together, in such a friendly agreement, as if they had but one soul among them all.

Ver. 2.] I cannot resemble it to anything better than to that excellent ointment compounded of several spices (Exod. xxx. 21, &c.), which consecrated the high-priest to the divine service (Lev. viii. 12), and was poured in such plenty, that, running over all his face, even to the collar of his garment (where he did bear the names of all the tribes of Israel), it perfumed all the place with its fragrant odour ; for just so doth this holy concord make you both dear to God, and procure you an excellent fame among men ; who cannot but be pleased to see such variety of humours and inclinations all conspiring with one accord to promote the common good of the whole society.

Ver. 3.] The dew of heaven is not more necessary for the parched mountains, which, though never so distant one from another (as far as from Hermon to Zion), are refreshed with it, than this is for men of all ranks and conditions, who everywhere perceive the comfortable fruits of it ; for to this the divine favour is immutably annexed, which will pour upon such societies innumerable blessings ; giving them a happy and long life (an earnest of endless felicity), in a constant enjoyment of all manner of good things.

PSALM CXXXIV.

A Song of degrees.

1 BEHOLD, bless ye the LORD, all ye servants of the LORD, which by night stand in the house of the LORD.

PSALM CXXXIV.

ARGUMENT.—It is uncertain by whom this Psalm was composed, but it seems to have been made to be sung by some one or more of the Levites, at the shutting up of the gates of the temple; to excite the rest, whose turn it was to watch that night, to be diligent in their office of singing Psalms, and making devout prayers for the people. It is the last of those that have the title of a *Song of Degrees*: concerning which, see Ps. cxx.

Ver. 1.] Attend to your duty, O ye ministers of the Lord; who not only by day, but by night also, rever-

2 Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the LORD.

3 The LORD that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion.

rently wait upon him in his house (1 Chron. ix. 33): cease not to declare how great and how good the Lord is.

Ver. 2.] Be fervent in your devotion; and, disclaiming all dependence on any thing else, praise the Lord in his sanctuary with pure hearts and clean hands; and give thanks for all his benefits.

Ver. 3.] Pray also for his people Israel, and say; The great Lord, who, though he cannot be confined, being the creator of all things, yet hath his special residence in this place, dispense his blessings, both heavenly and earthly, from hence, unto every one of you.

PSALM CXXXV.

1 PRAISE ye the LORD. Praise ye the name of the LORD; praise him, O ye servants of the LORD.

2 Ye that stand in the house of the LORD, in the courts of the house of our God,

3 Praise the LORD; for the LORD is good: sing praises unto his name; for it is pleasant.

4 For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure.

PSALM CXXXV.

ARGUMENT.—This perhaps was the morning hymn, which the precentor (ver. 4, 5), called upon the Levites to sing, at the opening of the gates of the temple: as the former was sung at the shutting up of the gates in the evening. It recounts several of the great works of the Lord; especially towards that nation: whom it excites to steadfastness in their religion: and to contempt of idols and idolaters. It both begins and concludes with an exhortation to give praise to God; and so was entitled, as several other Psalms are (cvi. cxi. &c.), *Hallelujah*, or *Praise the Lord*: that is, by this hymn set forth the most excellent perfections and works of the Lord.

There are those who conjecture, from what we read ver. 14, of this Psalm, that when it was composed they were (or rather had been lately) infested by some of their idolatrous neighbours. Whose gods the Psalmist derides in the very same manner as he doth Ps. cxv. For the four following verses of this Psalm, 15—18, differ very little from 4—6. 8, of that, which it is certain was composed in a time of great distress; as this was when it was over.

Ver. 1.] Let all here present praise the most wise omnipotent goodness of the Lord: let him especially be praised, by you, his priests, who minister unto his majesty.

Ver. 2.] And by the Levites who attend upon him in his house; together with all the rest of his people that frequent the courts of God's house, who is our constant and most liberal benefactor.

5 For I know that the LORD is great, and that our Lord is above all gods.

6 Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.

7 He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain; he bringeth the wind out of his treasures.

Ver. 3.] Let this excite you all to praise the Lord: for, as his nature is most excellent, so he is the fountain of all the good we enjoy: and no employment is so delightful as to acknowledge his perfections, and commemorate the benefits we have received from him, by singing psalms and hymns of praise and thanks unto him.

Ver. 4.] I invite you above all other people to this heavenly duty: both because the Lord had a peculiar kindness for Jacob your forefather; and doth still exercise a special providence over you his children, as far more dear and precious to him, than the rest of mankind, who are under his care:

Ver. 5.] And because I am sensible that the Lord, under whose government we are, is so great and powerful above all other beings, though called by the name of gods; that you can never praise his majesty enough.

Ver. 6.] His own will alone gives bounds to his power: for, as none act without his leave, so none can hinder him from doing what pleases himself; in the heavens as well as in the earth, and the seas, and other deep waters.

Ver. 7.] He raises vapours, for instance, from any quarter of the earth, and makes them go up into the air; where some of them break forth in flashes of lightning; and that (which is strange) is followed with great showers of rain: and, from unknown places and causes, strong and violent winds blow with such continuance, as if they came out of some treasury, where he had gathered, and long locked them up, till he had occasion to bring them forth.

8 Who smote the firstborn of Egypt, both of man and beast.

9 *Who* sent tokens and wonders into the midst of thee, O Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his servants.

10 Who smote great nations, and slew mighty kings;

11 Sihon king of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan, and all the kingdoms of Canaan:

12 And gave their land for an heritage, an heritage unto Israel his people.

13 Thy name, O LORD, *endureth* for ever; and thy memorial, O LORD, throughout all generations.

14 For the LORD will judge his people, and

Ver. 8.] He made the Egyptians feel how much superior he was to all their gods (Exod. xii. 12), who could not defend them from his stroke; but he sent his angel, and, in one night slew all the first-born in the country, both of man and beast (ver. 29).

Ver. 9.] Before which terrible blow, he had given many other wonderful demonstrations of his power, in several miraculous plagues; which he openly inflicted on thee, O Egypt; not only on the meaner sort, but upon the king and all his court (Exod. vii.—ix. &c.).

Ver. 10.] And after he had, by these means, brought you out of their bondage, he overthrew several great nations and slew potent kings: who, presuming of their strength, opposed the accomplishment of his promises to you.

Ver. 11.] First of all Sihon king of the Amorites, who were esteemed invincible (Numb. xxi. 24; Amos ii. 9), and then Og, that giantly king of Bashan (Numb. xxi. 33; Deut. iii. 11), and at last, all the kingdoms and kings of the land of Canaan (Josh. xii. 7, 24).

Ver. 12.] Which he graciously bestowed upon us, the children of Israel, as an inheritance we should hold of him, by a divine right; of which none, while we continue his obedient people, shall be able to dispossess us.

Ver. 13.] O Lord, how astonishing is this thy omnipotent goodness! the fame of which shall never be forgotten: but an illustrious memory, O Lord, shall be continued of it, from generation to generation.

Ver. 14.] For though our enemies may sometimes oppress us, when we offend him, yet the Lord, at last, will take the part of his people, and deliver them, and being reconciled unto his servants, will turn his severity into kindness towards them.

he will repent himself concerning his servants.

15 The idols of the heathen *are* silver and gold, the work of men's hands.

16 They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not;

17 They have ears, but they hear not; neither is there *any* breath in their mouths.

18 They that make them are like unto them: *so is* every one that trusteth in them.

19 Bless the LORD, O house of Israel: bless the LORD, O house of Aaron:

20 Bless the LORD, O house of Levi: ye that fear the LORD, bless the LORD.

21 Blessed be the LORD out of Zion, which dwelleth at Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD.

Ver. 15.] It is not in the power of the idols, which the heathen worship, to divert his kindness from us; for they are of no more value than the silver and the gold of which they are made: and are so far from being able to do any thing, that they themselves are made by those that adore them.

Ver. 16.] They are mere images of things, without their life: having mouths, but cannot give a word of advice, or comfort, to their supplicants; and eyes also but cannot see, much less prevent any danger that doth approach them.

Ver. 17.] Ears they have; but cannot hear a word that is said to them: and noses also; but they do not so much as breathe, much less can they smell the odours that are offered them.

Ver. 18.] They that make them therefore, or put any confidence in them, are as senseless as themselves; having eyes, for instance, but do not see that brutes are more excellent than such gods; and that no help is to be expected from them.

Ver. 19.] O how much then are we all bound to bless the Lord, the creator of all, who hath freed us from this stupid blindness. Let the whole nation of the children of Israel, especially the priests of the Lord, praise him and give thanks to him, who hath better instructed them.

Ver. 20.] Let all the Levites declare how gracious he is: yea, let all his pious worshippers, of whatsoever nation they be, join in this heavenly employment, of speaking good of the Lord.

Ver. 21.] Let them all say, with one accord, The Lord be ever praised in this holy place; who, though he be the owner of all the world, yet makes his special residence at Jerusalem.

The honour the heathens give to their lifeless images ought to excite you all, with the greater devotion to praise the Lord of the world.

PSALM CXXXVI.

I O GIVE thanks unto the LORD; for *he is* good: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

PSALM CXXXVI.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm, like the former, is a commemoration of the goodness of God, expressed in his wonderful works: particularly those he had done for that nation. And, it is likely, was composed to be sung upon the great festivals; as every day, I suppose, they sung the foregoing; which is of the same strain with this, and contains much of the same matter: only here, at every half verse, one half of the choir answers to the other, in these

2 O give thanks unto the God of gods: for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

words: "For his mercy endureth for ever." A form of acknowledgment prescribed by David, to be used continually in the divine service (1 Chron. xvi. 41), and accordingly followed by Solomon (2 Chron. vii. 3, 6), when he dedicated the temple; and by Jehoshaphat, when, by the encouragement of a prophet, he went out to encounter a vast army with small forces (xx. 21); and here is repeated six-and-twenty times, to make them the more sensible that they owed all they had to the mere bounty of God, and to excite them to depend

3 O give thanks to the Lord of lords : for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

4 To him who alone doeth great wonders : for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

5 To him that by wisdom made the heavens : for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

6 To him that stretched out the earth above the waters : for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

7 To him that made great lights : for his mercy *endureth* for ever :

8 The sun to rule by day : for his mercy *endureth* for ever :

9 The moon and stars to rule by night : for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

10 To him that smote Egypt in their first-born : for his mercy *endureth* for ever :

11 And brought out Israel from among them : for his mercy *endureth* for ever :

12 With a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm : for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

13 To him which divided the Red sea into parts : for his mercy *endureth* for ever :

14 And made Israel to pass through the midst of it : for his mercy *endureth* for ever :

15 But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea : for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

16 To him which led his people through the wilderness : for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

17 To him which smote great kings : for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

18 And slew famous kings : for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

entirely upon it, and rest assured it would never fail them if they did piously and most heartily acknowledge it. Such repetitions we use now in our earnest prayers, when we say, "Lord, have mercy upon us," &c. which are no more vain than these. I have variously expressed the sense of this repeated acknowledgment, according as the other part of the several verses seemed to direct me.

Ver. 1.] Offer your thankful hymns unto the Lord of all; who is as good as he is great, and will continue his kindness (which hath been exceeding abundant towards us) unto all succeeding generations.

Ver. 2.] He is the sovereign of all the heavenly hosts; and therefore praise him, and give thanks unto him: for he can employ them all for your help and protection (as he hath in former times), and you need not doubt of his kindness, which continues unto all ages.

Ver. 3.] All the kings and princes of the earth are his subjects; upon which account also, give him praise and thanks: for his kindness endures throughout all ages, to defend you, as he hath done hitherto, from their tyrannical violence.

Ver. 4.] He it is, and he alone, whose works are so great, that they surprise all those who seriously consider them with wonder and astonishment; and therefore give him praise and thanks: for his kindness will never fail, still to employ his infinite power for the good of those who are truly grateful to him.

Ver. 5.] Look upon the heavens, and behold, with admiration and praise, the splendour and the order wherein his wisdom hath contrived and settled them: for his kindness is as large, and as firm, and durable as they.

Ver. 6.] And then look down to the earth; thankfully praise him who brought it out of the waters, and preserves it in its just extent from being again overflowed by them; for his kindness is no less immovable, and by length of time can never be impaired.

Ver. 7.] Witness those great lights which never go out, but always call upon us to praise and give thanks to him; who made them to illuminate the world, and to be the emblems of his kindness; which sends its benign influence continually upon us unto all generations.

Ver. 8.] By day the sun exerts his power to quicken all inferior beings; and excites us to praise him, and be thankful to him; whose kindness thereby perpetually administers to us all necessary things, and will do so to the end of the world.

Ver. 9.] And by night the moon or the stars supply its place: and let us see how much we are bound to praise and thank him, whose kindness is so constant,

that, in the worst condition, it will never quite forsake us.

Ver. 10.] We must needs say so, and think ourselves engaged above all others to give him thanks, if we call to mind that memorable night (Exod. xii. 29) when he punished the Egyptians with the loss of all their first-born: for his kindness still continues for ever to relieve those that are injured, and to punish their insolent oppressors.

Ver. 11.] Let us not forget how after that stroke he brought our forefathers out of the cruel bondage, wherein they had long held them (Exod. xii. 41, 42), but thankfully acknowledge that wonderful deliverance; for it is an argument why we should never distrust his kindness, in the sorest straits that can befall us.

Ver. 12.] His power, let us remember, is irresistible; which first by lesser, then by greater signs and wonders, delivered us out of their hands (Exod. vi. 5, 6; vii. viii. &c.), to praise and magnify him, whose kindness is stupendously great, and will never cease to succour those who depend upon him.

Ver. 13.] Let us therefore give thanks to him; who, when our forefathers utterly despaired of safety (Exod. xiv. 10, 11), commanded the Red sea to retire, and leave a broad way for them to pass (ver. 21), which plainly proves that his kindness is inexhaustible, and always ready to help us in the most dreadful dangers.

Ver. 14.] For he led them safely through the very midst of the sea (which rose up like a wall on either hand of them, Exod. xiv. 22), and will by his kindness eternally secure all those that piously confide in him:

Ver. 15.] But throw those that oppose him headlong into destruction, as he did Pharaoh and his host, in the very same place where Israel was preserved (Exod. xiv. 27, &c.): for his kindness loves to complete his favours, and perfect what he hath begun for his people.

Ver. 16.] And accordingly, when he had thus delivered them, he led his people, by the direction of a glorious cloud, through an untrodden desert; and there (with our thankful praises let it be remembered) made a miraculous provision for them (Exod. xvi.). For his endless kindness, wheresoever they went, still with new benefits pursued them.

Ver. 17.] When potent kings opposed their passage to the promised land, he utterly discomfited them (to his praise be it thankfully acknowledged): for his kindness was not stopped by difficulties, but ever overcame them.

Ver. 18.] Though they were kings famous for their prowess; yet, such was his for-ever-to-be-praised

19 Sihon king of the Amorites : for his mercy *endureth* for ever :

20 And Og the king of Bashan : for his mercy *endureth* for ever :

21 And gave their land for an heritage : for his mercy *endureth* for ever :

22 *Even* an heritage unto Israel his servant : for his mercy *endureth* for ever .

kindness towards us ; he gave us as easy and as absolute a victory over them, as he had done before over Pharaoh and his host.

Ver. 19.] Over Sihon, king of that fierce nation of the Amorites, who were thought invincible (Amos ii. 9) : for his kindness was mightier than they, and gave us this as an earnest of future conquests over our enemies.

Ver. 20.] Over that huge tyrant Og, the king of Bashan (Deut. iii. 11) : for his kindness added that, as a new pledge of what he intended to do for us, when we came into Canaan.

Ver. 21.] And gave both their countries to be held of him, as a perpetual inheritance : for his kindness doth not decay (nor loves to revoke his favours), but continues to the latest posterity.

Ver. 22.] An inheritance they were, which he settled upon us, the children of Israel, as long as we continue his faithful servants ; for his kindness hath no end ; but delights to perpetuate his mercies to those who are worthy of them.

23 Who remembered us in our low estate : for his mercy *endureth* for ever :

24 And hath redeemed us from our enemies : for his mercy *endureth* for ever .

25 Who giveth food to all flesh : for his mercy *endureth* for ever .

26 O give thanks unto the God of heaven : for his mercy *endureth* for ever .

Ver. 23.] Nay, when for our sins we were severely afflicted, and in danger to be thrown out of this good land into which at last he brought us (Judg. ii. iii. iv. &c.) ; he was pleased graciously to relieve us : for his kindness pardoned our ingratitude, and was as forward as ever to bestow fresh benefits upon us.

Ver. 24.] And rescued us many a time, when we cried unto him, from the power of those that tyrannised over us : for his kindness was not spent by the frequent deliverances it had given us ; but still granted new matter for our thanksgivings to him.

Ver. 25.] Whose bounty, is not confined to us alone, but supplies the wants of all mankind, yea, of all living creatures : for his kindness hath no bounds ; nor will ever cease to make a plentiful provision for them.

Ver. 26.] O raise your hearts to give him thanks with the highest praises ; whose power extends itself beyond this earth, even unto the highest heavens : for his kindness is so unwearied, that we may hope from thence to be ever receiving more and more his blessings.

PSALM CXXXVII.

1 By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.

2 We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.

3 For there they that carried us away captive

required of us a song ; and they that wasted us *required of us* mirth, *saying*, Sing us *one* of the songs of Zion.

4 How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land ?

PSALM CXXXVII.

ARGUMENT.—This is a mournful song, composed by some of the captive Levites in Babylon : when he reflected upon their sad parting with their dear country, and the scorn wherewith their insulting enemies treated them in that strange land. Which he foresaw God would severely punish, by the hand of some other cruel people ; who should show them as little mercy as they had showed the Israelites.

The Vulgar Latin ascribes this Psalm to Jeremiah ; upon which inscription, Theodoret (who found it also in some Greek copies in his time) passes this censure ; That the bold author of it wanted wit, as the inscription itself openly proclaims : for Jeremiah was not carried captive into Babylon ; but, when he had stayed some time in Judea, was compelled by the disobedient Jews to go down with them into Egypt. Yet there are those who, to excuse this, would have us think that Jeremiah sent this Psalm to the captives in Babylon : and that it is called *A Psalm of David* (for so it is in the Vulgar Latin also), because made after the example of his Psalms : as Virgil said he sung *Ascreum carmen* among the Romans ; when he made his *Georgics* in imitation of Hesiod.

In the paraphrase of the first verse, I have followed a conjecture of St. Chrysostom's, that the captives were not suffered (at their first coming thither) to dwell within any of their towns or cities ; but were dispersed all along several rivers of the country ;

where they built tabernacles, or cottages, for themselves : and, perhaps, were forced to drain those moist places to make them wholesome.

Ver. 1.] When we were transported from our own country into the land of Babylon, and had the sides of Euphrates, and several of its rivers (Ezek. i. 1 ; Baruch i. 4), assigned for our habitation, there we sat down in a sorrowful posture ; and could not refrain from tears, when we called to mind the happy days which we enjoyed in the holy hill of Zion.

Ver. 2.] We brought our harps along with us, wherewith we were wont to praise the Lord (1 Chron. xv. 16) ; but as our fruitful vines and fig-trees, under which we formerly sat, were turned into barren willows and osiers ; so all our mirth and joy were turned into such heaviness and sorrow of heart, that we let all our instruments of music hang neglected upon the boughs of those doleful trees.

Ver. 3.] For when our new masters, who had carried us away captive, they that had laid Jerusalem on heaps, and had power to do what they pleased with us, required us (between jest and earnest) to entertain them with our music ; and to let them hear one of those songs, which were wont to be sung in the temple :

Ver. 4.] Neither fear nor favour could extort this service from our Levites, but they resolutely answered ; As those songs were not made for pastime and sport, but in honour of the great lord of the world ; so, how can you imagine that miserable slaves are disposed to

5 If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget *her cunning*.

6 If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

7 Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said,

sing? and to sing those songs, in the land where we are exiles, which recount the mercies of God unto us, in our once most flourishing country?

Ver. 5.] No (said I then within myself), if I forget thy desolations, O Jerusalem (though never so far removed from thee), so as to gratify their desires, by profaning thy music and thy songs; then let my right hand be benumbed, or quite lose its skill of touching the harp any more.

Ver. 6.] Let me be struck dumb, and never be able to move my tongue; if I be not so mindful of thee, as never to sing again; till I see Jerusalem, and her holy solemnities restored.

Ver. 7.] Which joyful day I hope will come; when thou, O Lord, wilt call our enemies to an account: and first of all, reckon with the Edomites (Jer. xlix. 10; Ezek. xxv. 12), who, instead of pitying Jerusalem, as became kind neighbours and relations, were glad to see the day of its desolations; and encouraged

Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof.

8 O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us.

9 Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.

our destroyers with their acclamations, saying, Lay it flat, lay it even with the ground upon which it stands.

Ver. 8.] And then shall your turns come, O ye Babylonians; who have laid waste so many nations, but shall one day be made desolate yourselves (Isa. xlii. 19, &c.); and may that prince and people prosper and be happy (Jer. l. 9, 41), who shall pay you in your kind; and use you as barbarously as you used us (li. 24, 35, 49).

Ver. 9.] He shall be praised and thought to have done a worthy work, who shall snatch your sucking children from their mothers' breasts; and have no more mercy on them, than upon the whelps of wolves, or such-like creatures; but shall dash out their brains against the walls of your houses, or stones in the street (Isa. xlii. 16), that there may be no remains of such a cruel generation (Jer. li. 62).

PSALM CXXXVIII.

A Psalm of David.

1 I WILL praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto thee.

2 I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.

3 In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.

PSALM CXXXVIII.

ARGUMENT.—This is one of David's Psalms (as the title assures us), wherein he thankfully acknowledges God's goodness to him, in advancing him from a low and afflicted condition to the royal dignity; which remarkable change would invite, he thought, other kings and princes to have a very great regard to his divine majesty: who, he hoped therefore, would support and defend him in his new-gotten kingdom, by the same almighty power which raised him unto it.

Ver. 1.] I will make thee my thankful acknowledgments, O Lord, with the devoutest affections of my heart: thy holy angels shall be witnesses of my gratitude, which I will express in psalms and hymns, in the presence of the great assembly of the judges (Exod. xxii. 9; Ps. lxxxii. 1, 6), that they may remember to whom they owe their power and authority.

Ver. 2.] I will prostrate myself in the humblest adorations of thee, towards the place where the monument of thy divine presence is; and acknowledge how much I am indebted to thy almighty goodness: first, for promising me, out of thy mere grace and favour, the royal dignity; and then for performing thy promise most faithfully: for thou hast manifested thy most excellent power and goodness to me, in nothing

4 All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O LORD, when they hear the words of thy mouth.

5 Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the LORD: for great is the glory of the LORD.

6 Though the LORD be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.

7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou

so much as in punctually fulfilling thy promise (1 Sam. xvi. 13), notwithstanding all the opposition which was made to it; nay, in raising me higher than I expected.

Ver. 3.] I had long ago fallen short of this honour to which I am advanced, hadst not thou, during all the time of Saul's persecution, as readily relieved me, as I cried to thee: and mightily supported my spirit, by a courageous faith and hope in thee.

Ver. 4.] Which will move, sure, all our neighbouring kings, who have any knowledge of my affairs (2 Sam. v. 11, 12; viii. 10) to join with me, in praising thee, O Lord: when they shall hear by how many strange providences thou hast brought to pass, that which thou promisedst to me by thy prophet.

Ver. 5.] The wonderful ways whereby the Lord brings things about, shall be the subject of their songs; and they shall think it their greatest happiness to be guided and governed by him: for they shall confess, that none can do such glorious things as the Lord hath wrought.

Ver. 6.] Whose sublime greatness doth not make him neglect (as they see in me) the meanest persons; especially when their minds are as humble as their condition: but will not let him stoop to the loftiest princes (as they may see in Saul), whom he despises, when they are forgetful of him, and ungrateful to him for his benefits.

Ver. 7.] Which have been so great to me, that,

wilt revive me: thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me.

should I fall again into the same straits wherein I was before, and be encompassed with them, I should hope that thou wouldest preserve me, and bring me safe out of them all. Thy power, I am confident, will repress the violent assaults of my enemies; and by thy almighty goodness I shall be delivered from their wrath and fury (2 Sam. v. 17, &c.; viii. 1, &c.).

Ver. 8.] The Lord, who hath begun, will go on to

8 The LORD will perfect *that which concerneth me*: thy mercy, O LORD, *endureth for ever*: forsake not the works of thine own hands.

finish his gracious intentions towards me; not for my merits (I know they are none at all,) but for thy own mercy's sake, O Lord; which, as it was the sole motive to what thou has done for me, so will I hope (for it is still the same, and ever will be) incline thee to preserve and settle me in that dignity, to which not my ambition, but thy own goodness and pleasure, hath promoted me.

PSALM CXXXIX.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

1 O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me.

2 Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.

3 Thou compassedst my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.

4 For *there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.*

5 Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.

6 *Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.*

7 Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

8 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.

9 If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;

10 Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

11 If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.

12 Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee;

PSALM CXXXIX.

ARGUMENT.—The last two verses of this Psalm seem to me a sufficient indication that David (to whom the title ascribes it) composed it, when he lay under the imputation of having evil designs upon Saul (1 Sam. xxiv. 9); which, as he protests against, in several parts of other Psalms, and calls God often to witness his integrity; so here he appeals unto him in a set and solemn meditation, composed on purpose to represent before him the clearness of his intentions: which never suffered such designs to enter into his thoughts. And who could believe that a man who seriously acknowledged it was impossible to conceal any thing from God's all seeing eye, who forms us in the womb, should be so impudent as to make this appeal unto him, if he were conscious to himself of any such guilt? And, which is more, how could he be confident (as he declares he was, ver. 19) that God would make his innocence evidently appear, by destroying his opposers, if he did not know they were calumniators? whose vile aspersions when God had effectually confuted, he delivered this Psalm to the master of the music, as a lasting testimony of his sincerity all along, before he came to the kingdom; and a constant admonishment to himself and others, never to promote any designs for the future by sinister arts, though managed so secretly that they lay hid from the eyes of all the world: since God cannot but be privy to them; who loves righteousness, and hates all iniquity.

Ver. 1.] I am accused, O Lord, of grievous crimes; but my comfort is, thou seest I am not guilty of them: for the exactest survey cannot make any thing so well known to us, as I am to thee; who art thoroughly acquainted with me.

Ver. 2.] Thou knowest what designs I have, when I sit musing at home; and what I go about when I

stir abroad: nay, my inclinations are so perfectly understood by thee, that before I have conceived any design it is visible unto thee.

Ver. 3.] Nothing can be so narrowly sifted, as all the motions of my body and mind, both by day and by night, are scanned by thy all-penetrating eye: which comprehends and is intimately privy to all the ends which I pursue.

Ver. 4.] When I am about to speak, thou, O Lord (such is thy most admirable wisdom), needest not to be informed what it is: but knowest before I open my mouth every thing I intend to utter.

Ver. 5.] Whatsoever I have done long ago, is as well known to thee, as that which is lately passed, or which I am about to do: for I am so environed by thee, and so absolutely in thy power, that I cannot possibly escape thy notice, nor so much as stir without thy leave.

Ver. 6.] O amazing height of understanding! It is in vain to think I can hide any thing from it; which so far surpasses all I can say or conceive, that it exceeds even my admiration.

Ver. 7.] Into what world shall I go, where thou art not as present as thou art in this? It is impossible for me, should I make never so much haste, to get out of thy sight.

Ver. 8.] If I could get up into the highest part of heaven, I should not be out of thy reach; or go down and lie in the lowest depth of the earth, I should find thee still as near unto me.

Ver. 9.] If I could move as swiftly as the light of the rising sun, and in an instant fly from hence, and take up my dwelling in the remotest parts of the world:

Ver. 10.] I should not be a jot the farther from thee; without whom, as I could not get thither, so I should be still subject to thy government, and as much under the care and protection of thy almighty providence there, as any where else.

Ver. 11.] If I should have such a thought as this

but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light *are* both alike to thee.

13 For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.

14 I will praise thee: for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous *are* thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.

15 My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.

16 Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all *my members* were written, *which* in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.

17 How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!

in my mind, that though thou art present every where, yet, in the dark, I may lie undiscovered by thee; it would be very foolish: for when the sun is gone down, all that is in me is as apparent unto thee, as if it were noon-day.

Ver. 12.] The darkness cannot conceal any thing from thee; who, being the fountain of light, seest as well in the blackest night as in the brightest day: the night and the day, the most open and the most covert practices, are equally clear unto thy view.

Ver. 13.] For my very thoughts (and what is there more abstruse than they?) my most retired thoughts and contrivances, and my most secret desires, are apparent to thee; whose I am, and by whom I was wrapped up in those skins, which enclosed me in my mother's womb; than which there is nothing more hidden and dark.

Ver. 14.] Yet there (such is thy stupendous wisdom, which I will never cease to praise and thankfully acknowledge) I was, I know not how, in such a wonderful manner formed, that the thoughts of it strike me with astonishment: thy operations in that work are most admirable; and of that I am exceeding sensible; but I can say no more, for they are incomprehensible.

Ver. 15.] Though I was made in so secret a place, yet not the least joint in my body was concealed from thy eyes; but I received from thee there (where no more light can come, than there doth in the lowest depths of the earth) such a comely distinction of parts, and variety of powers, that no embroidery can be so curiously wrought.

Ver. 16.] For when the matter out of which I was made was without any form, it was visible to thee how every muscle, vein, and artery, with all the rest of my body, should be wrought out of the pattern of them which was in thy mind; and accordingly, in time, when there was not so much as one of them, they were all fashioned for the several uses to which they are designed; and not the smallest of them omitted, or left imperfect.

Ver. 17.] How invaluable, also, and incomprehensible (O God, I am not able to express the high and grateful sense I have of it), is thy tender care and providence which thou hast exercised over me ever since I was born! All the secret passages of it amount

18 *If* I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.

19 Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God: depart from me therefore, ye bloody men.

20 For they speak against thee wickedly, and thine enemies take *thy name* in vain.

21 Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee?

22 I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:

24 And see if *there be any* wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

to such a sum, that I am not able to give an account of them.

Ver. 18.] When I attempt to reckon how many they are, I find that I may as well undertake to number the sand; for, though I continue the whole day in this employment, and, after a night's rest, begin again in the next morning to think how numerous thy mercies are; I am still as far as ever from seeing any end of them.

Ver. 19.] Which makes me confident, O God, thou wilt not now desert me; but rather destroy that wicked man (Ps. cxl. 1), who, forgetting thy all-seeing eye, regards not by what means he plots my ruin: and therefore it will be the best for you all, O ye men of blood, who have slain the priests of the Lord (1 Sam. xxii. 18), and now thirst after my life, to make your retreat, and desist from persecuting me any farther.

Ver. 20.] For it is not so much me that they persecute, as virtue and piety; to which, though they are not open, yet they are the most dangerous enemies, because they make it serve their wicked ends: having godly pretences for their doing mischief; and not sticking (so little belief have they of thy omniscience) to call thee to witness the truth of their lies and calumnies.

Ver. 21.] And have I not reason then, O Lord, to hate those who have such an inveterate hatred unto thee? and to take the greatest distaste to them that oppose themselves so industriously to thy holy laws?

Ver. 22.] I detest them with all my heart; and, as their impiety is the only cause of it, so I cannot loathe them more than I do: but declare myself upon that account to be their utter enemy.

Ver. 23.] If I have any other ground of my enmity or am guilty of so much as designing any evil to them, merely because they have done so much evil to me, I desire to find it out, and submit myself to the severest trials, which may discover to me any such thought that lurketh in my heart.

Ver. 24.] For I would not continue in such a pernicious course: but if in any thing I do, I intend them any hurt, or so much as to be grievous to them, my humble request is, either that I may not live, or live more exactly by the unchangeable rules of righteousness, sincerity, and truth.

PSALM CXL.

To the chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

1 DELIVER me, O LORD, from the evil man : preserve me from the violent man ;

2 Which imagine mischiefs in their heart ; continually are they gathered together for war.

3 They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent ; adders' poison is under their lips. Selah.

4 Keep me, O LORD, from the hands of the wicked ; preserve me from the violent man ; who have purposed to overthrow my goings.

5 The proud have hid a snare for me, and cords ; they have spread a net by the wayside ; they have set gins for me. Selah.

6 I said unto the LORD, Thou art my God : hear the voice of my supplications, O LORD.

7 O God the LORD, the strength of my salvation, thou hast covered my head in the day of battle.

8 Grant not, O LORD, the desires of the wicked : further not his wicked device ; lest they exalt themselves. Selah.

9 As for the head of those that compass me about, let the mischief of their own lips cover them.

10 Let burning coals fall upon them : let them be cast into the fire ; into deep pits, that they rise not up again.

11 Let not an evil speaker be established in the earth : evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him.

PSALM CXL.

ARGUMENT.—There is no doubt (for the title ascribes it to him) but this Psalm was made by David. And it is little less undoubted that he composed it (as Theodoret well judges) when he was persecuted by Saul: who was instigated thereunto, by the calumnies of Doeg, and the information of the Ziphites: whose falseness and pestilent malice he here describes; beseeching God to preserve him from the mischief they intended him, and to turn it upon themselves: as he rests assured he would. When he came to his kingdom, and had settled the service of God in that manner, which we read 1 Chron. xvi. xxiii. &c. he delivered it to the master of the music; to be sung at certain times in the tabernacle. But it was not found, I suppose (no more than the two foregoing, and the four following), till some time after the other books of Psalms were published: and so were placed here all together by him that collected this book.

Ver. 1.] Defeat, O Lord, the wicked designs of that naughty man (1 Sam. xxii. 9, &c.), who makes no conscience of what he saith or doeth to compass his ends; and let me not fall into the hands of that injurious prince (xxiii. 7), whom I have never wronged, but done him faithful service.

Ver. 2.] They are zealously bent to do me all the mischief they are able: which they studiously plot, and do nothing all the day but contrive how to oppress me with armed force; which in several places they have laid to intercept me.

Ver. 3.] And they have so traduced me by their calumnies and false accusations, that they have already given my reputation a deadly wound: for the tongue of the serpent, or the teeth of the adder or viper, do not more effectually convey their poison into men's bodies, than they have infused these venomous slanders into the people's minds.

Ver. 4.] And therefore I most humbly again beseech thee, O Lord, to keep me from falling into the power of that naughty man (ver. 1), who instigates his prince to the most injurious proceedings against me: be thou my preserver, O Lord; for otherwise I shall never escape the trains they have devised and laid, to supplant and utterly undo me.

Ver. 5.] There is no hunter or fowler more industrious and cunning in laying snares and toils, in spreading nets, or setting gins and traps, for the

beasts or the birds in the places which they are wont to frequent; than they are to trace me in all my motions (1 Sam. xxii. 23), and to invent all manner of wiles and subtle arts to surprise me; which they proudly presume will have their desired success.

Ver. 6.] To which I have neither cunning nor power of my own to oppose, no friend whose aid I can implore; but only commend myself unto the Lord, saying, I have always owned thee for my protector, and thou hast hitherto owned me, and been my merciful deliverer: do not now, O Lord of all power and might, deny my earnest request; who depend on thee alone for succour.

Ver. 7.] O most mighty Lord, whom no creature whatsoever can withstand; O thou who disposest of all events; I again profess, that I look for safety from thy almighty power alone: by which I was protected (having no other helmet or armour, but only that, 1 Sam. xvii. 39, 40, 50), in the day when I fought with Goliath.

Ver. 8.] Suffer not him, O most mighty Lord, who now seeks my destruction, to effect his desire; let him not succeed in any of his mischievous designs and projects against me: lest he and his partakers grow so insolent, as to dare to attempt all manner of violence against other innocents.

Ver. 9.] Let the poisonous and pernicious calumnies of those that now beset me round retort upon themselves; and let them be overwhelmed by those very devices, which with laborious lies they have contrived for my ruin.

Ver. 10.] Let their slanders (which I can compare to nothing better than burning coals, that are not easily quenched) be the instruments of their own destruction: let them perish in the flames which they themselves have kindled; and be irrecoverably thrown headlong into those dangers and mischiefs which, like dreadful deep pits, they prepared for my destruction.

Ver. 11.] This I am confident shall be their portion; for though a false informer may for a time be believed, and thrive by his lies and slanders, yet truth will at last prevail; and not suffer him to establish his greatness by such base and wicked practices: and as little shall violence and injustice avail him that relies upon them; but bring upon him one evil after another, which shall pursue him to his ruin; as the hounds do the wild beast, which, after all its windings and turnings, becomes a prey unto them.

12 I know that the LORD will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor.

Ver. 12.] For I am sure the Lord, who is stronger than all, will assert the cause of the oppressed: and do right to those who are destitute of human help, by punishing all that are injurious to them.

Ver. 13.] Let the righteous rely on this as an undoubted truth, that they shall give thanks to thy al-

13 Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name: the upright shall dwell in thy presence.

mighty goodness, for appearing in their vindication; and, when these false and violent men shall be extinct, they that are sincerely honest shall remain in thy favour; and receive the marks of it in thy constant care and providence over them.

PSALM CXLI.

A Psalm of David.

1 LORD, I cry unto thee: make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee.

2 Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

3 Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.

4 Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practice wicked works with men that work iniquity: and let me not eat of their dainties.

5 Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an

excellent oil, which shall not break my head: for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities.

6 When their judges are overthrown in stony places, they shall hear my words; for they are sweet.

7 Our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth, as when one cutteth and cleaveth wood upon the earth.

8 But mine eyes are unto thee, O GOD the LORD: in thee is my trust; leave not my soul destitute.

9 Keep me from the snares which they have

PSALM. CXLI.

ARGUMENT.—If the title had not told us that David was the author of this Psalm, the matter of it would have led our minds to think of him, and his many sufferings, during the persecution of Saul. Which he prays to God (as Theodoret observes upon the third and fourth verses) he may be able to bear so patiently, that it may not exasperate his spirit to speak irreverently of Saul, much less to do him any mischief: but leave it unto God, to take his enemies in the snare they had laid for him.

Nobody need wonder, that there are so many prayers found upon the same subject; for that persecution endured long, and they were made upon different occasions, or to different purposes: and if they had been all to the same purpose, it would not have been strange to him that considers the pious disposition of David; who loved to spend his time in such devout meditations. And this seems to have been composed about the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice (ver. 2), when his afflictions also pressed him sorely, that they tempted him to speak something which was, *οὐκ ἐνσπετίς* (as Theodoret's phrase is), unbecoming God's anointed (Saul), and the profession he made of duty to him.

Ver. 1.] The danger wherein I am, O Lord, is exceeding great (1 Sam. xxiii. 25; xxiv. 1, 2), which makes me double my cries, and beseech thee the more importunately, speedily to succour me (when my distresses call for it) with seasonable relief.

Ver. 2.] Though I am now in a wilderness, and thereby disabled from offering thee any other sacrifice but my prayers; yet they shall be as acceptable to thee, as if they were accompanied with the sweetest odours; and my fervent devotion in them, with entire dependence on thee alone for help, be as prevalent as if I now could present thee, at the tabernacle, with an evening oblation.

Ver. 3.] And in the first place, I humbly desire thee, O Lord, to lay such restraints upon my tongue, and to enable me so vigilantly to observe all the mo-

tions of it; that none of the troubles I endure, though never so grievous, may make me burst out into any intemperate speeches; which may give a just offence to them that persecute me.

Ver. 4.] Yea, govern all the motions of my will so steadily, that I may not listen to evil counsels (1 Sam. xxiv. 4, 6, 7), much less engage with men, who have no regard to right and justice, in any evil practices; but always refuse to partake in their designs; though invited with the specious promises of the greatest felicity.

Ver. 5.] I had rather much that a righteous man should give me a severe rebuke, than be enticed by evil-doers to accompany them in their sins: for it will do me a real kindness, and be so far from giving me any vexation, that it will be as acceptable to me as the most excellent ointments are unto the head; and only make me continue my prayers with the greater earnestness, that I may not run into those mischievous courses, from which I am deterred by their pious reproofs and admonitions.

Ver. 6.] The effect of which their greatest rulers have seen, when, being left by their masters on the sides of the rock (1 Sam. xxiv. 2, 3), while he went into a hole of it to uncover his feet, they heard that I spake not a reviling word (much less did I stretch out my hand against him), but in the mildest and most dutiful language addressed myself unto him (1 Sam. xxiv. 8, 9, &c.).

Ver. 7.] And yet this gentleness hath been so far from mollifying their hearts, that they still persecute me, and the small body of men that follow me (1 Sam. xxvi. 2; xxvii. 1), whom they have reduced to such extremities, that, like the earth when it is ploughed up, we break in pieces; and are ready to disperse and flee for our lives, with little hope of safety.

Ver. 8.] But in this sore distress I fix my thoughts on thee, O mighty Lord, the governor of all things; in whom I repose an assured confidence, that thou wilt not abandon me to the malice of those that seek to take away my life from me.

Ver. 9.] Preserve me, I beseech thee, from all the

laid for me, and the gins of the workers of iniquity.

subtle plots which they have laid to destroy me: and though they stick at nothing (though never so unjust), and have various arts to blind the world, and hide their perfidious designs; suffer me not to be ensnared by them.

PSALM CXLII.

Muschil of David. A Prayer when he was in the cave.

1 I CRIED unto the LORD with my voice; with my voice unto the LORD did I make my supplication.

2 I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble.

3 When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me.

4 I looked on *my* right hand, and beheld, but

10 Let the wicked fall into their own nets, whilst that I withal escape.

Ver. 10.] But let all the contrivances of such wicked men prove pernicious to themselves; and bring upon them the evils which they intended me: whilst I, and they that are with me, by thy care of us, escape untouched by any of them.

PSALM CXLII.

ARGUMENT.—When David hid himself for fear of Saul, in the cave of Adullam (1 Sam. xxii. 1), or as others think, more probable, in the cave of Engedi (1 Sam. xxiv. 1—3), this was the meditation he had in that disconsolate place, before Saul came thither to uncover his feet in it. Which was set afterward to the tune of *muschil* (see Ps. xxxii.); or called by that name, because it admirably instructs posterity in the most forlorn, nay desperate, condition, to recommend themselves to God, and to depend on him with a resolved faith. Who, by an unexpected means, granted the desire of David, which he makes in the conclusion of this Psalm (ver. 7), and brought him out of those straits wherein he was imprisoned. I say *resolved faith*, because in the Hebrew words of the first and second verses run thus: “I will cry unto the Lord; I will make my supplication; I will pour out my complaint before him,” &c.

Ver. 1.) Though I am destitute of human help, I will not despair of safety; but with the more fervent cries implore the divine succour: and with vehement sighs and groans deprecate the Lord’s displeasure.

Ver. 2.] I will lay before him at large all the sad thoughts which perplex my heart: and, representing the inextricable straits and difficulties wherein I am, expose myself unto him; as an object of his pity.

Ver. 3.] Now that I am utterly at a loss, and ready to faint away in a confusion of thoughts, thou know-

there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul.

5 I cried unto thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.

6 Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I.

7 Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me.

est very well a way for my escape: though, by the intelligence they hold with mine enemies (1 Sam. xxiv. 1), they have blocked up all the passages which I am acquainted withal; and laid ambushes for me in every road.

Ver. 4.] Look about thee, O my soul, and see if thou canst spy any hope of relief from thy best and most powerful friends: there are none of them that dare own thee; nor do I know whither to fly for safety, if any of them would be so kind as to invent a means, and open my way, for my deliverance from the present danger.

Ver. 5.] All that I can do, is to recommend myself to thee, O Lord, by fervent prayers, saying, I trust myself with thy almighty goodness, as in a sure sanctuary; I have nothing else in the world to depend upon, but thee alone; by whom I will hope to be protected and provided for as long as I live.

Ver. 6.] O let my importunate cry prevail for some relief, which will come most seasonably in this exceeding great necessity: rescue me now, that I may not fall into the hands of my persecutors; who are every way (except in these cries unto, and confidence, in thee) much too strong for me.

Ver. 7.] Bring me, with life and liberty, out of this dismal cave, wherein I am pent up: that I may make my thankful acknowledgments to thy almighty goodness: which shall attract the admiration of all good men, and provoke them unanimously to join together with me in praising thee; when they see that thou art the most righteous judge, and bountiful benefactor, of those that commit themselves unto thee.

PSALM CXLIII.

A Psalm of David.

1 HEAR my prayer, O LORD, give ear to my supplication: in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness.

2 And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.

PSALM CXLIII.

ARGUMENT.—To the title of *A Psalm of David*, Theodoret says he found, in some Greek copies, these

words added (to explain the time of its composition), “when Absalom his son persecuted him.” Which he confesses was not then in the Hebrew (no more than it is now), nor in other interpreters

3 For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead.

4 Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate.

5 I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands.

6 I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul *thirsteth* after thee, as a thirsty land. Selah.

7 Hear me speedily, O LORD: my spirit faileth: hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit.

8 Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the

morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee.

9 Deliver me, O LORD, from mine enemies: I flee unto thee to hide me.

10 Teach me to do thy will; for thou *art* my God: thy spirit *is* good; lead me into the land of uprightness.

11 Quicken me, O LORD, for thy name's sake: for thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble.

12 And of thy mercy cut off mine enemies, and destroy all them that afflict my soul: for I *am* thy servant.

of the Psalms; but agrees well enough, he thinks, with the truth of the story. So he that was the author of the Vulgar Latin thought also: though there are some passages in the Psalm, which sound as if it had been made during the persecution of Saul; at some time when he was in the like distress with that described in the foregoing. For ver. 3, 4, he uses some of the same expressions which we find there; and represents himself as in danger to be buried in some such cave as that mentioned in the last verse of Ps. cxlii. where he begs, as he doth here, for a speedy deliverance. Yet, for all this, there are other passages, which will incline us to adhere to the forenamed addition, and apply the Psalm to his flight with Absalom. For then it was he had most reason to fear, lest God should deal with him according to his sins; which he deprecates (ver. 2), with such a deep sense of his unworthiness, that it hath made this to be numbered among the penitential Psalms, and is the last of them. The memory also of God's former deliverances of him, a great while before (ver. 5), may well refer to what he had done for him, not only against Saul, but before he knew him; which, as he doth not forget, so he hoped the Lord would now remember, and grant him the like again, when he was in the like distresses.

Ver. 1.] I renew my requests and my earnest supplications unto thee, O Lord, for some relief, in these new straits and difficulties into which I am fallen: hoping, though I am very unworthy, yet, in thy abundant mercy, thou wilt faithfully fulfil the promises thou hast made to me.

Ver. 2.] My sins, indeed (2 Sam. xii. 9—11), have justly brought these troubles upon me; but I humbly beseech thee to own me still for thy servant, and not to call me unto a severe account for what I have done amiss; but to deal favourably with me: for if thou shouldst proceed according to the rigour of the law, the best man living (much less so great a sinner as I), will not be acquitted at thy tribunal.

Ver. 3.] And I am not so bad, but my enemy that persecutes me is far worse: who without any provocation seeks my life, and hath already utterly spoiled me of all the comforts of it (2 Sam. xv. 13), and forced me to seek my safety in holes and obscure places, in the wilderness (xvii. 16), where I seem to be buried alive without any hope of a resurrection.

Ver. 4.] Which, as it calls to mind the distress wherein I was, when, in my flight from Saul, I hid myself in caves (see cxlii. 3), so it hath the same effect upon me; for I am ready to swoon away in this great perplexity; which hath struck me with such astonishment, that I have no strength remaining in me.

Ver. 5.] Till I call to mind, withal, not only what thou didst for me in that former persecution, but long before, in my younger days, when I was delivered by thee from the greatest dangers (1 Sam. xvii. 34, &c.): on these wonderful works I meditate; and consider with myself, that not by my own strength, but by thy stupendous power, I was then preserved.

Ver. 6.] And then I feel my fainting spirits return again; and though I despair of human help, I make my prayer unto thee, with a cheerful confidence for thy relief; which I long for, and expect with as eager desire as the parched ground gasps for a refreshing shower.

Ver. 7.] Do not delay it, O Lord, I most earnestly beseech thee; for I am not able to hold out much longer in this great extremity: deny not my humble request, lest I be utterly lost (as I am in danger), without all hope of recovery (2 Sam. xvii. 16).

Ver. 8.] Though this night be very sad, yet let me hear (according to the confidence I repose in thy mercy) better news, and see my affairs in a more comfortable posture, in the morning (2 Sam. xvii. 22, 23). Show me which way I shall direct my course, and provide for my safety, (ver. 24, 27), for I depend entirely upon thee.

Ver. 9.] Let me not fall into the hand of my enemies, from whom I am now flying; but know not whither to go, but only to thee, for shelter and protection.

Ver. 10.] Whose guidance I beseech, as well as defence, that I may do nothing (no, not for my preservation) but what is perfectly agreeable to thy laws; for thy favour is my security, which I know is not otherways to be obtained: and therefore I desire the conduct of thy good Spirit (which is ready to assist those that seek it), as well to lead me in the plain path of justice and piety, as to suggest to me the ways and means of escaping the snares of my enemies; and of coming into an honest country, where I may be free from the fear of being betrayed to them.

Ver. 11.] I have nothing to move thee to it, but only the honour it will be unto thy majesty; in respect to which I hope, O Lord, thou wilt preserve me from perishing, and restore me again to thy kingdom: for though my straits are so great that my life is in extreme danger, yet nothing can hinder the performance of thy just and faithful promise to me.

Ver. 12.] Thy mercy also surpasses all the malice of my enemies; whom I trust thou wilt cut off and destroy, rather than let me continue in these hazards: for I am thy minister, and, though never so unworthy, am appointed by thee to govern thy people; in which office I will do thee all faithful service.

PSALM CXLIV.

A Psalm of David.

1 BLESSED be the LORD my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight:

2 My goodness, and my fortress; my high tower, and my deliverer; my shield, and he in whom I trust; who subdueth my people under me.

3 LORD, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him! or the son of man, that thou makest account of him!

4 Man is like to vanity: his days are as a shadow that passeth away.

5 Bow thy heavens, O LORD, and come down: touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.

PSALM CXLIV.

ARGUMENT.—The inscription will not let us doubt that David was the author of this Psalm; but that it was a triumph after his victory over Goliath (as the Vulgar Latin hath it), is asserted without ground. For though some Greek copies have such an addition to the inscription; yet Theodoret says, that as he could not find it in the Hebrew, so it was not to be met withal in any other interpreters, no, not in the LXX. in the Hexaplus. And it plainly appears by the second verse, that it was composed after he came to the kingdom; and not then, till he had got some victories over those that opposed him. Nay, there are so many expressions here like to those we meet withal in Psalm xviii. that it hath inclined some to think it was made at the same time, and for the same purpose, with that; of which it looks like a compendium, and might be intended for a short form of thanksgiving for his deliverance from all his enemies. But if the expressions be carefully examined, their opinion will appear to be truer, who think it was composed, not after God had given him rest from all his enemies, but after those two victories over the Philistines, mentioned 2 Sam. v., if not before them: for as he still mentions more opposers who were unsubdued (ver. 7, 11), so he doth not say, as in Ps. xviii. that God had cast forth lightnings, and shot his arrows against them, &c., but desires him here (ver. 5, 6), that he would appear in that manner for him; acknowledging that not only his kingdom, but his courage, his victories, and successes, were all to be ascribed unto God.

Ver. 1.] Praised be the Lord, by me, and by all men else; by whom I have been kept in safety, as in an impregnable fortress: and who hath given me both strength and skill to handle my arms, whensoever I engaged, either in a single combat or in battles.

Ver. 2.] I ever found him very merciful unto me, when I was in any danger; for he still preserved me as in a strong hold; nay, set me out of the reach of the most potent enemies; either making a way for my escape when they surrounded me, or protecting me in their most furious assaults upon me: and, as I reposed a constant trust in him, so he hath never failed my expectation; but, after long contests, made all Israel submit themselves unto thy empire (2 Sam. v. 7, &c.).

6 Cast forth lightning, and scatter them. shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them.

7 Send thine hand from above; rid me, and deliver me out of great waters, from the hand of strange children;

8 Whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood.

9 I will sing a new song unto thee, O God: upon a psaltery and an instrument of ten strings will I sing praises unto thee.

10 It is he that giveth salvation unto kings: who delivereth David his servant from the hurtful sword.

11 Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of

Ver. 3.] I am astonished, O Lord, at this thy wonderful goodness; and know not what to say, but only admire that thou shouldst take such care of so poor a thing as man is, at the best: especially of me, a miserable wretch; whom thou hast honoured with most glorious successes.

Ver. 4.] Man, alas! is but a breath which presently vanishes: what a marvel is it then, that I should have strength to achieve such things! His life is exceeding short and uncertain; and yet, such is thy stupendous goodness, I am not only alive, notwithstanding all the hazards through which I have run; but, in a little time, have performed such memorable acts, that the fame of them will last for ever.

Ver. 5.] Proceed, O Lord, to perfect my conquest; and now that my enemies are combined against me (2 Sam. viii.), let thy majesty appear, as it hath done formerly (see Ps. xviii. 9), for my assistance and defence: and as soon as the proudest opposers feel that thou art present, they will vanish away like smoke.

Ver. 6.] Let them be dispersed by flashes of lightning in their faces: and so terrified with thunder and hail, that they may not be able to re-collect their forces.

Ver. 7.] Send powerful aid unto me from heaven (Ps. xviii. 16), for I rely upon nothing on earth: relieve me in all my straits; and deliver me out of these great and manifold dangers, wherewith I am threatened by a foreign power of idolatrous people, which now invade me:

Ver. 8.] Who, as they have been wont to brag of more than they do, so promise more than they will ever perform: for whatsoever treaties of peace and leagues of friendship I make with them, they break them all; and falsify so shamefully both their words and their oaths, that there is no trust to be given to them (ver. 11).

Ver. 9.] I will never prove ungrateful to thee for so great a benefit: but here solemnly vow to compose, with my best skill, new hymns of thanks unto thee, O God; and with the usual instruments of music sing thy praises, saying,

Ver. 10.] It is not merely by the conduct and valour of our captains and soldiers that we have overcome; but the most powerful kings owe their safety, and their victories, unto the Lord: to whom I am more particularly bound; first, for the high honour he hath done for me, in making me his minister; and now, for this deliverance from these mighty armies, which threaten my destruction (2 Sam. viii.).

strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood:

12 That our sons *may be* as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters *may be* as corner stones, polished *after* the similitude of a palace:

13 That our garners *may be* full, affording all

Ver. 11.] Grant my renewed request, therefore, I beseech thee, (ver. 7, 8), and send me seasonable relief and deliverance from this foreign invasion of an idolatrous people: who have no faith nor honesty, but shamefully falsify both their words and their oaths; and when they shake hands with others, as if they were their friends, intend thereby to deceive them.

Ver. 12.] Let not our country be overrun by such barbarians; but be so preserved by thee in peace and tranquillity, that our hopeful sons may grow up like young flourishing trees, till they attain their full strength and stature, and our daughters be tall and beautiful, like those polished pillars, which are the ornaments of a royal palace.

Ver. 13.] Our granaries also and storehouses, being

manner of store: that our sheep may bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets:

14 That our oxen *may be* strong to labour; that there be no breaking in, nor going out; that there be no complaining in our streets.

15 Happy is that people, that is in such a case: *yea*, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord.

as full as they can hold, may afford us all sorts of provision from year to year: and our flocks of sheep bring forth thousands; which may multiply into ten thousands, in their walks.

Ver. 14.] Our cows also, being great with young, may neither be driven away by the irruption of our enemies, nor cast their calves at home; but we may be free from this and all other causes of crying, or complaining, in our streets.

Ver. 15.] Happy is that nation, which is settled in such a prosperous condition! That is, happy is that nation which truly worships the great Lord of the world; who hath promised (Deut. xxviii.), to bless his faithful servants with these and all other fruits of his love.

PSALM CXLV.

David's Psalm of praise.

1 I WILL extol thee, my God, O king; and I will bless thy name for ever and ever.

2 Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever.

3 Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable.

4 One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts.

5 I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works.

6 And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts: and I will declare thy greatness.

PSALM CXLV.

ARGUMENT.—After David had obtained those favours of God for himself and for the nation, which he begs in the foregoing Psalm, he composed (according to his promise there, ver. 9), this admirable hymn: which is contrived with such art, that it is manifest from thence, he made it when he was much at leisure; and God had given him rest from all his enemies (2 Sam. vii. 1), for every verse begins with a new letter of the alphabet in order: which are all here, except the letter *nun*, which is wanting (ver. 13), I suppose it was lost when this Psalm came to the hands of the collector of this book; and he would not adventure to supply it with one of his own inventing. The Greek, indeed (that is, the present Greek copies; for Theodotion, and Aquila, and the ancient LXX. had it not), and Latin, and Arabic (which in effect are but one and the same), have another verse, which we may well think, if it ever were in the Hebrew, began with that letter *nun*: but it differs so little from the seventeenth verse (when there is no repetition in any other part of the Psalm), that it doth not, in my opinion, look like the true original verse. And it may be doubted, whether there ever was any such verse in that place (where we suppose one wanting), for the psalmist might be carried (see Ps. xxv.), by the strength of the inspiration, which was upon him, out of the method he had at first proposed to himself.

Certain it is, this Psalm was always esteemed so excellent, that the title of the whole book of Psalms

is taken from this; which is wholly spent in praising God with such admirable devotion, that the ancient Hebrews were wont to say (as Valentine Schindler hath long ago observed), "He could not fail to be a child of the world to come, who would say this Psalm three times every day." And for that reason, perhaps, it was composed alphabetically; that so useful a Psalm might be the more easily learnt, and remembered by every body.

Ver. 1.] I will proclaim to all the world, O my God, the supreme governor of heaven and earth, how excellent thy majesty is; infinitely surpassing the highest of our thoughts: and will never cease to express the delightful sense I have of all thy glorious attributes; whereby thou art made known unto us.

Ver. 2.] This shall be my daily employment; and I will sing joyful hymns in praise of thy glorious perfections, without any end.

Ver. 3.] For the Lord is immensely great, in power, and dominion, and all other ways, and therefore to be honoured with our highest, and with our endless praises: but when we have said all we can, our best praise of him will be, to confess that his transcendent excellences cannot be comprehended.

Ver. 4.] For there are none of thy works, which we see, that we are able to understand; but, though this age transmit its observations to the next, and that recommend the study of them to posterity, yet still we are ignorant, and cannot praise them enough; no, nor sufficiently declare the prodigious acts of thy inscrutable providence, for the preservation of thy people, which shall be perpetually commemorated.

7 They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness.

8 The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.

9 The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works.

10 All thy works shall praise thee, O LORD; and thy saints shall bless thee.

11 They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power;

12 To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom.

13 Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.

Ver. 5.] It shall be my business, in this present age, to speak of the dazzling splendour and beauty of thy majesty; which I want words to express, but appears in thy stupendous works.

Ver. 6.] Which they that come after shall rehearse; and from the narratives that I shall make of thy magnificent greatness, declare to their posterity, what dreadful things were done by thy irresistible power, for the subversion of our enemies.

Ver. 7.] And with the same diligence shall they continue the constant memory of thy numerous benefits to us: which they shall no more cease to celebrate with their praises, than a spring doth to pour out water; but publish, in their perpetual hymns, how just and faithful thou art to thy word.

Ver. 8.] For the Lord (this shall be the subject of their and of my song) is exceeding propense to do us good; and very indulgent when we do amiss; which makes him that he doth not presently punish, but rather chooses to bestow new and greater benefits upon us, if we repent of our faults.

Ver. 9.] Nor is his goodness confined unto us; but extends itself in various acts of bounty to all mankind: who need not doubt of his kindness, when they see he takes so tender a care of all his creatures.

Ver. 10.] Who all in their several kinds declare, O Lord, throughout all generations, how great, how wise, how powerful, and provident, thou art; which such as we, who are particularly bound unto thee for special favours bestowed upon us, ought most sensibly to acknowledge with thankful praises.

Ver. 11.] It is their duty to discourse of the incomparable wisdom, and goodness, and care, which thou exercisest in the government of the whole world; especially of us; and to recount the memorable acts of thy invincible power among us.

Ver. 12.] That all mankind, who regard not such things so much as they ought, may be made sensible how mighty the Lord is: and adore the amazing splendour of his illustrious works; and the admirable order he observes in his government of all things.

Ver. 13.] Which as they are all entirely subject to him, so his empire over them is immovable; and neither ends nor decays: but when earthly kingdoms fall, and are transferred from one to another, his dominion is still the same throughout all successions.

14 The LORD upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down.

15 The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season.

16 Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.

17 The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.

18 The LORD is high unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.

19 He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them.

20 The LORD preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy.

21 My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD: and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.

Ver. 14.] In which he doth not neglect any of his subjects that depend upon him (as mortal princes too frequently do), but supports and comforts the meanest of them that are oppressed with grievous afflictions; and gives them a seasonable deliverance, when they are in danger to sink and perish under the heavy weight of their burdens.

Ver. 15.] He makes a constant provision also for them; which every creature, when their necessities call for supply, daily receive from thee, O Lord, in the proper season for it.

Ver. 16.] And thou art not sparing of thy blessings; but dispensest them with such a bountiful hand, that there are none of them live without satisfactions, but have all their appetites filled, by thy liberality to the smallest of them.

Ver. 17.] And therefore let us not doubt, but thankfully acknowledge, that the Lord is not only just in all the dispensations of his providence to us (though perhaps we do not apprehend it), but exceeding merciful and kind in every thing that befalls us.

Ver. 18.] We need do no more but piously commend ourselves to him, and he will take care of us: for he is ready, on all occasions, to relieve every one that addresses himself unto him, with a sincere heart, truly disposed to be faithful to him.

Ver. 19.] He that satisfies the appetite of all creatures (ver. 16), will not fail, we may be confident, to gratify in their desires, such religious persons as fear to offend him: but though he let them fall into troubles and straits, in due time will be moved, by their importunate prayers, to send them a seasonable deliverance.

Ver. 20.] For since they love him so well, that they had rather suffer any thing than disobey him; the Lord undoubtedly will preserve them: and destroy all those impious men, who have no regard to his laws; nor make any scruple to abuse and oppress such virtuous persons.

Ver. 21.] For which, and all the rest of his benefits, I will never cease to sing hymns of praise unto the Lord: and let all mankind (remembering how weak and frail they are) join together with me in this employment (as the greatest support, and comfort, and security they have), to bless his incomparable goodness, and power, and careful providence, for ever and ever.

PSALM CXLVI.

Hallelujah.

1 PRAISE ye the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul.

2 While I live will I praise the LORD: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.

3 Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom *there is* no help.

4 His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

5 Happy *is he* that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope *is* in the Lord his God:

6 Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein *is*: which keepeth truth for ever:

7 Which executeth judgment for the oppressed: which giveth food to the hungry. The LORD looseth the prisoners:

8 The LORD openeth *the eyes of* the blind: the LORD raiseth them that are bowed down: the LORD loveth the righteous:

9 The LORD preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.

10 The LORD shall reign for ever, *even* thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the LORD.

PSALM CXLVI.

ARGUMENT.—This Psalm, and the other four which follow, both begin and conclude with the word *Hallelujah*, i. e. Praise ye the Lord. And therefore might, if the Jews had pleased, have been called *The great Hallelujah*: being all of them exhortations and incitements to the people; to stir up themselves to that heavenly employment: which this Psalm recommends to them, from the consideration of several of the divine excellences: which make him the proper object of our confidence in all conditions. The Vulgar Latin, and the present Greek, entitle it to Haggai and Zechariah: but there is no such thing in the Hebrew, nor in other ancient interpreters, nor in the LXX. in the Hexaplas, as Theodoret tells us. And we might rather think it not unlikely to have been composed by David; when Saul, who at first had a great kindness for him, afterward turned his most bitter enemy; were it not for one word, viz. the mention of Zion; which was not then in David's possession. This, it is possible, inclined those that made the foregoing title to think it was not composed till aftertimes: and they could find none so likely, as that after the captivity: when they soon found it was in vain to rely upon the favour of princes; some of which hindered the building of the temple, as much as Cyrus, at the first, had furthered it. I shall not trouble the reader with any other conjectures: but only note, that the eighth verse was most exactly and literally fulfilled in our Lord Christ; when he came to give salvation to us.

Ver. 1.] Stir up thyself, O my soul, to give the Lord, who gave being to all things, those affectionate praises which are due unto him.

Ver. 2.] The best resolution thou canst make is this; I will praise the Lord all my life long; and never cease to give thanks unto my God, who never ceases to bestow his benefits on me.

Ver. 3.] And let all mankind, if they would be happy, preserve his favour by being grateful to him; and not (with the neglect of his service) court the favour of princes, and settle upon them their dependence: for the greatest king on earth, though never so just, never so bountiful, as well as rich and powerful, is still but a man; who cannot be present every where when we are in danger, nor be able always to help us in our greatest needs.

Ver. 4.] For there is a time when he cannot help himself, nor, by the whole power of his empire, keep

his soul from leaving his body: nay, a small accident may carry him away suddenly; and then a clod of earth can do as much as he, and whatsoever designs and projects he had laid (for any man's preferment suppose), they all die together with him.

Ver. 5.] He, and he alone, is the truly happy man, who expects help from the mighty God, by whom Jacob was fed all his life long (Gen. xlviii. 15), who trusts to him that is Lord of the world; and hath made him his friend so much, that he can call him his God.

Ver. 6.] For, as he never dies, so there can be no defect in his power, nor want of his presence in every place; the heavens, the earth, and the sea, and all that is in them, being his own works: and, as nothing can hinder him from doing what he pleases, so, he will never alter his mind, nor go back with his word; but faithfully keep his promises for ever, with those that rely upon them.

Ver. 7.] There are innumerable instances of the careful providence of this great king: who doth not slight or forget the cries of his grieved subjects, but in due time asserts the rights of those who are oppressed, and can find no relief in other courts of judgment: he supplies also the needs of poor hungry wretches, who are ready to famish: and is so gracious a Lord, that he sets them at liberty, who, by unjust or pitiless men, have been held in miserable captivity.

Ver. 8.] The Lord sends help, when there are no hopes of human cure; for he restores sight to the blind (as we shall see most remarkably when the Lord Christ appears), and lifts up those who are bowed together, by tedious weaknesses (Luke xiii. 11), or crushed under other insupportable burdens: and, above all, the Lord delights to do good to them who have done good to others.

Ver. 9.] The friendless strangers are preserved by the Lord from those injuries which men are apt to do them, when they commit themselves to his protection: and so do the disconsolate widows and fatherless children find support and relief from him, against the injustice and violence of their wicked oppressors, whose designs and practices he utterly confoundeth.

Ver. 10.] Be of good comfort, then, O ye inhabitants of Zion, who sincerely worship this great Lord, that doth all these wondrous things: for his power and authority never fail, but from age to age will ever succour those pious souls who are destitute of human help; therefore praise perpetually this everlasting king.

PSALM CXLVII.

Hallelujah (see *exlvi.*).

1 PRAISE ye the LORD : for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely.

2 The LORD doth build up Jerusalem : he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.

3 He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.

4 He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names.

5 Great is our LORD, and of great power : his understanding is infinite.

6 The LORD lifteth up the meek : he casteth the wicked down to the ground.

7 Sing unto the LORD with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God:

8 Who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains.

9 He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.

10 He delighteth not in the strength of the horse : he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man.

11 The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.

12 Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem; praise thy God, O Zion.

PSALM CXLVII.

ARGUMENT.—St. Chrysostom and Theodoret think this Psalm hath respect to the return of the Jewish nation from the captivity of Babylon, and the instauration of Jerusalem, which followed upon it. And the second and thirteenth verses may well incline us to be of the opinion, that it was made by some holy man at that time (Haggai or Zechariah some ancient interpreters imagine; or rather Nehemiah, who built the walls and set up the gates); especially if we observe that there are some phrases in it which savour of the Chaldean language. And though this can be no more than a conjecture, yet it is very certain and evident, that, in that deliverance, God gave such illustrious proofs of his power, wisdom, mercy, and justice, as the Psalmist here exhorts the people to celebrate with their thankful praises. I shall follow it therefore in my paraphrase; it being reasonable to suppose that devout persons would be as forward to acknowledge the wonderful providence of God in their restoration, as they were to bewail (which they do, Ps. cxxxvii.) the ruin of their country; and that posterity would be no less careful to preserve what was composed in memory of the one, than they had been to continue the memory of the other: and there is no hymn we can find so suitable to that occasion as this.

Ver. 1.] Let all the nations praise the Lord; who will send us new benefits when we are truly thankful to him, our great benefactor, for the old: for it is a thing highly acceptable to him, as well as delightful to those who are employed therein, and best becomes us of all other things; there being nothing so decent as to see men grateful to him that hath obliged them.

Ver. 2.] To which we stand bound above all other men: for the Lord hath not only delivered us out of a sad captivity; but, in spite of all the opposition our enemies have made to it (Ezra iv. 12), hath raised Jerusalem out of its ruins; whereby he invites the rest of our brethren, who remained behind, to return to their own country, from whence they are expelled.

Ver. 3.] He comforts us after our long sorrows, which had, in a manner, broken our heart with grief and sadness; and hath, in some measure, repaired our breaches, which, like a festering wound, endangered the life of our nation.

Ver. 4.] Whom he knows how to gather, out of all their dispersions, and to find every one of them wheresoever they are, though as numerous as the stars of heaven (Gen. xv. 5), which he as directly and exactly understands (how confusedly soever they seem to us

to be scattered in the sky), as we do those things which we call by their proper names.

Ver. 5.] Let us not despair of it, for nothing is impossible with our Lord and governor: who is not like earthly kings, that rule over a few petty provinces, but the great sovereign of the whole world; whose power and wisdom are so unlimited, that he is able to do whatever he pleases, and knows how to compass whatever he designs.

Ver. 6.] And doth not, because he is so great, despise the afflicted; but, if they meekly commit themselves to his care, will raise them up to a better condition; and throw down the mightiest princes that proudly oppress them as low as the very ground.

Ver. 7.] Celebrate therefore with your thankful songs (you cannot make a less return unto him), this infinite power, and wisdom, and goodness: begin now, with the usual instruments of music, to sing hymns of praise unto our God, for all his benefits.

Ver. 8.] Particularly for the great plenty he hath given us by his almighty goodness (Hag. ii. 4), which shows itself, first in raising vapours from the earth; and then turning them into clouds, wherewith he covers the face of heaven; and then bringing forth rain out of those clouds: which he sends back to the earth again; and makes not only the green pastures but the parched mountains and desert places become fruitful.

Ver. 9.] By which wonderful providence he provides food even for the wild goats, and such-like beasts, that live upon the top of craggy rocks: for he neglects not the vilest creatures, but satisfies the hunger of the young ravens; though it be so ravenous, that they are continually crying for new supplies.

Ver. 10.] Let us not doubt, then, but he that takes care of crows, will much more take care of us; and not be afraid, though we are of little force (Neh. iv. 3, 4; vii. 4), and have no armies of horse and foot to defend us: for the Lord (who fights for us, Neh. iv. 20), hath no need of these; and will not take part with our enemies, because they are superior to us in the strength of their horses, and the nimbleness of their soldiers.

Ver. 11.] But delights to give those his assistance and protection, who, worshipping him devoutly, fear to offend him; and having no help in themselves, nor any earthly refuge to fly unto, depend notwithstanding with a steadfast faith on his infinite mercy.

Ver. 12.] Praise the Lord, O ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; sing joyful hymns unto your God, O ye people of Zion (Neh. xii. 27, 31, 40, 43), who have seen this truth abundantly demonstrated in your days.

13 For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates; he hath blessed thy children within thee.

14 He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the finest of the wheat.

15 He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth: his word runneth very swiftly.

16 He giveth snow like wool: he scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes.

Ver. 13.] For he hath made this city, which was lately without walls and gates, so strong a place, that no enemy dare assault it (Neh. vi. 14—16), and hath increased the number of thy citizens, which were but few (vii. 4; xi. 1, 2), by the manifold blessings he hath poured on them.

Ver. 14.] Which are not confined within the walls of that city; but he hath settled all the country in peace: no enemy appearing to infest thy borders, and to disturb the husbandmen in their labours, which have produced so rich a crop, that plentiful provision is made for all our satisfaction.

Ver. 15.] This we ought to ascribe to his merciful providence, who shows, by the fruitful seasons he sends, after all things seem to be killed by a hard winter, that he doth not intend by our affliction to destroy us; and that he can easily bring all our brethren hither who remain still in captivity: for when he would have any alteration made in the earth, it is done as speedily as we can speak.

Ver. 16.] He sends, for instance, a sudden cold; which sometimes turns the moist vapours, in the air, into flakes of snow, to cover the earth as with a fleece of wool, and defend the corn from the biting winds, and sometimes into hoary frost, which he gently scatters and strews, like ashes, upon the earth.

Ver. 17.] And sometimes congeals them into ice; which he breaks into bits, and throws down in violent

17 He casteth forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold?

18 He sendeth out his word, and melteth them: he causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow.

19 He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel.

20 He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the Lord.

hail; accompanied with such extremity of cold, that neither man nor beast, nor the fishes in the ponds and rivers, are able long to endure it.

Ver. 18.] But then to prevent the hurt that might ensue by its continuance, he issues forth another command, which as suddenly (ver. 15), makes a thaw; and, by the warm breath of softer winds, loosens the waters which were bound up, and causes them to flow again.

Ver. 19.] In such things as these the whole world see how powerful and how good he is; but we have more peculiar reasons to depend upon him, for a happy return of our nation; whom he doth not teach merely by the snow, the hoar-frost, and the ice; but by another sort of word than that which sends them upon the earth (ver. 15): even by his ten commandments delivered from heaven (Exod. xx. 1), in a most glorious and astonishing manner (ver. 18), and by laws of all sorts, which he hath given us for the government of our life.

Ver. 20.] This is a privilege which no other nation in the world enjoys (Deut. iv. 32, 33). For though they all receive the showers and snow out of the clouds, yet laws from thence they have no acquaintance withal. Therefore let not us dishonour him so much as to distrust his providence; but continually praise the Lord and acknowledge his bounty to us.

PSALM CXLVIII.

Hallelujah (see cxlvi.)

1 PRAISE YE THE LORD. Praise ye the Lord from the heavens: praise him in the heights.

2 Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts.

PSALM CXLVIII.

ARGUMENT.—It doth not appear who was the author of this hymn, nor upon what occasion it was composed. But the last verse sufficiently shows the nation was then in a very flourishing condition; and therefore probably it was made by David, when God had given him rest from all his enemies: which filled his heart with such love to God, that it transported him into this rapture. Wherein, finding how short his own praises were, he wishes all creatures in heaven and earth would conspire in a sweet symphony, as Theodoret speaks, of singing hymns unto him. And first he calls upon the world above, and all that is therein, from the first verse to the seventh: where he descends to the world here below; and calls upon all things on the earth to praise the Lord; concluding (ver. 13,) that as there is one maker of both, so all that they can say of him, when they have joined all their powers together in one choir, falls infinitely short of his most excellent majesty; who hath set forth his most transcendent wisdom, power, and munificence, in such variety of stupendous work, that

there is not the smallest of them, but ministers such matter of praise, nay, admiration, to those that attentively consider them: that they cannot but wish, with the Psalmist here, that every one of them were able to tell us how much skill and kindness he hath shown in their contrivance; or that we were able to find it out, and comprehend it. Thus he is to be understood when he calls upon all creatures to praise the Lord; or it is as if he had said, *the Lord is to be praised by, or in, all these things, as long as the world lasts.*

This I take to be the true account of this Psalm, which I refer to the times of David, because the two following seem to have been then made: and there is no other we can so well fix upon; unless we will conceive that it was a meditation, when they were perfectly settled in a peaceable enjoyment of their religion, after the captivity; of which there is not the least intimation of this Psalm.

Ver. 1.] Let all creatures praise the Lord. First let the celestial choir begin, and sing their thankful hymns to him, who hath raised them so high above us in power and might, as well as in dignity and place.

3 Praise ye him, sun and moon : praise him, all ye stars of light.

4 Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens.

5 Let them praise the name of the LORD : for he commanded, and they were created.

6 He hath also established them for ever and ever : he hath made a decree which shall not pass.

7 Praise the LORD from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps :

8 Fire, and hail ; snow, and vapours ; stormy wind fulfilling his word :

9 Mountains, and all hills ; fruitful trees, and all cedars :

Ver. 2.] Praise him, all ye angels, who have the honour to be the prime ministers of his excellent majesty : O let their several hosts and companies, in whatsoever rank or order they stand, praise him whose sovereign authority commands them all.

Ver. 3.] Praise him, ye sun and moon, who are his greatest visible ministers, and unwearied in his service : praise him all the rest of the shining stars : and declare to all future generations, as ye have done for so many ages past, how glorious he is.

Ver. 4.] Let all the heavenly regions praise him : particularly the clouds, which hang in the air, and distil in fruitful showers to enrich the earth.

Ver. 5.] Let all these set forth the adorable wisdom, and power, and goodness, of the Lord : for by his omnipotent word these, whom the mistaken world calls gods, were created ; not to be worshipped, but perpetually to proclaim his praise.

Ver. 6.] Who hath made them not only illustrious, but everlasting monuments of his splendour and glory : having fixed and settled them in an admirable order, which they constantly observe ; and prescribed them laws which they never transgress.

Ver. 7.] O let all creatures here below accompany those celestial hosts, in their praises of the Lord : whose power the vast whales in their several kinds, and all that move in the profound depth of the sea, abundantly declare.

Ver. 8.] Let the lightnings, thunder, and hail ; the snow, hoary frost, and ice ; the winds, storms, and tempests ; all make a part of this song : for they constantly execute his sovereign will, and serve his wise designs.

Ver. 9.] The lofty mountains also and the lesser hills ; the fruit-bearing trees, with the stately cedars ; the pines, the firs, and all the rest (which he hath created for several ends and uses), let them all be called upon to tell how great and how bountiful he is.

Ver. 10.] The wild beasts also of the forest, and all

10 Beasts, and all cattle ; creeping things, and flying fowl :

11 Kings of the earth, and all people ; princes, and all judges of the earth :

12 Both young men, and maidens ; old men, and children :

13 Let them praise the name of the LORD : for his name alone is excellent ; his glory is above the earth and heaven.

14 He also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints ; even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the LORD.

the cattle that feed in the fields ; whatsoever creeps upon the earth, or swims in the sea, or flies in the air ; let it join in this hymn of praise to him : who hath shown his manifold wisdom and diffusive goodness in them all.

Ver. 11.] But especially let mankind praise him ; who (after he had made these things) brought them into the world, last of all, to contemplate his wonderful works : and first let kings (who here on earth resemble the angels or the sun in heaven), and then let their ministers of state, and lieutenants in their several provinces ; and next, all the judges of the earth (who are like the moon and the stars) give a good example unto all the subjects ; and stir them up to meditate his praise.

Ver. 12.] Let no sex, no age, think themselves exempted from this heavenly employment ; but let the young men praise him for their strength, and the virgins for their beauty : they that are going out of the world, for all that they have seen and heard of him : and they that are newly come into it, for all the goodly spectacles that are before them.

Ver. 13.] Let them praise the incomparable wisdom, goodness, and power of the Lord : for how great soever any other beings are, there is no other god but he ; whose most excellent majesty infinitely surpasses all that the earth or the heavens can tell us of him.

Ver. 14.] And yet so great is his condescension unto us (who are bound therefore more particularly to praise him), he takes a peculiar care of us ; and hath set over us a powerful prince for the defence and safety of his people (Ps. lxxxix. 19). Whose fame he hath thereby raised to the highest pitch of honour ; having obliged the children of Israel by many peculiar benefits, especially this ; that they are a people more nearly related to him than any other whatsoever : for he dwells among them in his holy place, where they approach to him. O praise him there for this singular favour.

PSALM CXLIX.

Hallelujah (see cxlvi.).

1 PRAISE ye the LORD. Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints.

2 Let Israel rejoice in him that made him : let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.

PSALM CXLIX.

ARGUMENT.—Theodoret thinks this Psalm was made for them that, after their return from captivity, had many opposers ; but, by the di-

vine assistance, overcame them : and that it is a prediction of those great things which were done by the Maccabees. Certain it is, that some signal victory was the occasion of it ; and thence St. Chrysostom hath here given us a full ac-

3 Let them praise his name in the dance: let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp.

4 For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation.

5 Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds.

6 Let the high praises of God be in their

mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand;

7 To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people;

8 To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron;

9 To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the LORD.

count, I think, of the meaning of a new song, which according to the use of the word *new* in other places (when they would express a thing very wonderful, such as hath not been seen nor heard of before, Numb. xvi. 30, Jer. xxxi. 22), he takes to denote "an illustrious and famous hymn, made for victories, for great achievements and trophies."

Which were never more remarkable in this nation than in the days of David; and therefore this Psalm may very well relate to his reign; who subdued several kingdoms, which had stood out, and would not submit to Israel till his time, though God had promised to give their countries to them (Gen. xv. 18; Exod. xxiii. 31; 2 Sam. viii. 1, 2, &c. x. 19). The interpretation which I have given of the sixth verse, need not seem strange to any one, who considers that it hath been and is the custom of all nations, to stir up themselves to fight by the sound of some musical instrument or other. "The ancient inhabitants of Etruria (saith Clemens Alexandrinus, in the second book of his *Pædagogus*, cap. 4) used the trumpet for this purpose; the Arcadians the whistle; the Sicilians an instrument called *pectids*; the Cretans the harp; the Lacedæmonians the pipe; the Thracians the coronet; the Egyptians the drum; the Arabians the cymbal;" but it was proper to the Israelites to go forth against their enemies, singing psalms of praise to God (as we read, 2 Chron. xx. 21, 22), who had given great victories to their ancestors, and had promised never to forsake their posterity; while they served him only, and piously confided in him.

Ver. 1.] Sing a new hymn unto the Lord, for the fresh and singular benefits he hath bestowed upon us: let him be praised not only in private, but in the public assemblies of those who have received special marks of his favour to them.

Ver. 2.] Let all the Israelites rejoice in him that made them his peculiar people; and hath now raised them to great splendour among the nations of the world: let the inhabitants of Zion, more particularly, be exceeding glad, that the Lord, who is our king,

hath there settled his royal throne (2 Sam. v. 9, vi. 12).

Ver. 3.] Let them leap for joy, and unanimously praise his most excellent majesty, in their dances to the flute (2 Sam. vi. 16): let them testify their gratitude to him by singing psalms, with the timbrel and the harp.

Ver. 4.] For the Lord taketh pleasure in doing good unto his people: and will not only deliver them after they have been oppressed many years; but, if they meekly depend upon him, make them as great and illustrious as they have been contemptible and mean (1 Chron. xiv. 2).

Ver. 5.] Which shall fill the hearts of good men (who are dear to him) with the highest triumph, in the honour that he hath done them: and make them shout for joy in the security and peace he shall bestow upon them.

Ver. 6.] Which they shall not doubt to maintain against all opposers; for in assured hope of victory they shall go to war, with psalms and hymns in their mouths concerning the great acts of the Lord: which they shall courageously sing with a loud voice, when they shall fall upon their enemies; and prefer to the two-edged sword which they carry in their hand.

Ver. 7.] Wherewith they shall take a just revenge upon the heathen, for all the injuries they have done us: and so chastise the insolence of the people, that they shall fear again to molest us (1 Chron. xiv. 17).

Ver. 8.] For their victories shall be so complete, that they shall not only rout their enemies and put them to flight, but lead away their kings captive in chains; and take their great captains and commanders prisoners, and keep them fast in fetters of iron.

Ver. 9.] In order to the executing upon them the judgment which God hath long ago decreed, and is recorded in his law (Deut. vii. 24, xxxii. 41—43). This is the honour which all Israel shall have, when they are in favour with God; and such shall be their glorious victories, and such hymns and melodious songs shall they sing, saying; Hallelujah, praise the Lord, by whose power and might we have done all this.

PSALM CL.

Hallelujah (see cxlvi.).

1 PRAISE ye the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power.

2 Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness.

PSALM CL.

ARGUMENT.—Theodoret takes this also to be *Ἕπαισιος*, "a song of triumph after some victory;" and the mention of the "mighty acts of the Lord," ver. 2, seems to countenance this conjecture: which consists well enough with what others conceive; that it was at first particularly directed to the Levites (by David I suppose), whose office it was to

praise the Lord with musical instruments (1 Chron. xvi. 4, 5); and excite others to his praises, not only for victory, but for all other his benefits. For if the tradition of the Jews be true, which we read at large in Maimonides (in a treatise on that subject), when the people of any place brought up their first-fruits to present them to the Lord at Jerusalem (according to the law, Deut. xxvi.), with a pipe going before them; as soon as they came to the

3 Praise him with the sound of the trumpet :
praise him with the psaltery and harp.

4 Praise him with the timbrel and dance :
praise him with stringed instruments and organs.

mountain of the temple, every one took his basket into his hand, and sung this whole Psalm : till they came to the courts of the Lord's house, where the Levites met them singing the thirtieth Psalm.

And, indeed, it might well be used upon occasion of any exceeding great joy ; for it seems to be intended (by the repetition of these words, *praise the Lord, or praise him*, thirteen times ; and by the calling for no less than ten instruments of music) to express the height and fulness of their joy, and thankfulness to God for his benefits : nor can music be so well employed to any other use, as this divine and heavenly exercise of praising God, by hymns, and psalms, and spiritual songs : to which the psalmist seems to me to excite all creatures, in heaven and in earth ; from the highest to the lowest. And with this the collector of these five book of Psalms thought good to conclude the whole ; and not unfitly : for in whatsoever condition we be (as there are Psalms adapted to several purposes), we should never forget to praise the Lord ; but after we have prayed, or complained, &c., still end with thankful acknowledgments to God for his goodness to us.

Here are several sorts of musical instruments mentioned ; which I have not adventured to explain, because the Hebrews themselves acknowledge they do not understand them. We have no way (saith Aben Ezra upon those words, ver. 5, which we translate *loud cymbals*) to know what these musical instruments were : there being many found in the country of the Ishmaelites (i. e. Mahometans)

5 Praise him upon the loud cymbals : praise him upon the high sounding cymbals.

6 Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD.

which are not among the men of Edom (i. e. Christians), and others among them, which the wise men of Ishmael never heard of.

Ver. 1.] Praise the mighty God, ye angelical ministers that attend upon him in his celestial sanctuary ; praise him all ye inhabitants of heaven, where you see the brightest demonstrations (and most lasting monuments) of his power.

Ver. 2.] Praise him all ye ministers of his upon earth, for the miraculous things which he hath done for our deliverance and exaltation ; let your praises bear some proportion to the excellence of his majesty, and the multitude of those great and magnificent acts of mercy towards us.

Ver. 3.] Let the priests of the Lord (Numb. x. 8) praise him with the sound of the trumpet ; and let the Levites (1 Chron. xxv. 6), praise him with psalteries and harps.

Ver. 4.] Let some praise him with the timbrel and the flute ; and others praise him with the stringed instruments and organs.

Ver. 5.] Let all sorts of cymbals accompany their psalms and hymns in his praise : both those of daily use, and those that are wont to be employed in times of the highest joy and triumph.

Ver. 6.] Finally, let every man living join himself to this sacred choir ; and let every breath praise the Lord, the giver of life and of all good things. To him let all the world, with one consent, give perpetual praise.



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